

Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda

The **Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)** is one of the regional research and training centres of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), an intergovernmental body founded in 1965 to promote cooperation among Southeast Asian nations through activities in education, science, and culture. SEARCA's programmes are designed to strengthen institutional capacities in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia through graduate education, short-term training, research, and knowledge exchange. It is hosted by the Philippine Government on the campus of the University of the Philippines Los Baños, which is based in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. It is supported by donations from SEAMEO member and associate member states, other governments, and various international donor agencies.

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Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda

Lessons Learned and
Emerging Challenges in Asia

Arsenio M. Balisacan
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Editors



S E A M E O
SEARCA

SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL CENTER FOR
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CONTENTS

<i>Tables</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Figures</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Contributors</i>	<i>xv</i>
1 Challenges and Policy Options for Agricultural Development - Overview and Synthesis	1
<i>Arsenio M. Balisacan and Nobubiko Fuwa</i>	
2 The Economics of Agricultural Development: What Have We Learned?	33
<i>James Roumasset</i>	
3 The Role of Social Structures and Norms in Agricultural Development: Africa and East Asian Communities Compared	63
<i>Yujiro Hayami</i>	
4 Food Security in a Globalised Setting	81
<i>Jock R. Anderson</i>	
5 Poverty and Vulnerability	121
<i>Arsenio M. Balisacan and Nobubiko Fuwa</i>	
6 Asian Agricultural Development: From the Green Revolution to the Gene Revolution	159
<i>Prabhu Pingali and Terri Raney</i>	
7 Dryland Agriculture in Asia: Ideas, Paradigms, and Policies	191
<i>William D. Dar, M.C.S. Bantilan, P. Anand Babu, G.V. Anupama, H. Deepthi, and R. Padmaja</i>	
8 Establishing Efficient Use of Water Resources in Asia	227
<i>Randolph Barker and Mark Rosegrant</i>	

9	Improving the Delivery of Extension Services to Rural People: New Perspectives	267
	<i>Dina Umali-Deininger</i>	
10	Land Tenure and Forest Resource Management in Asia	303
	<i>Keijiro Otsuka</i>	
11	Globalisation and the Poverty-Environment Link in Asian Agriculture	335
	<i>Ian Coxhead</i>	
12	The Supermarket Revolution with Asian Characteristics	369
	<i>Thomas Reardon and C. Peter Timmer</i>	
	<i>Index</i>	395

TABLES

1.1	Income Growth	3
1.2	Agricultural Performance	6
1.3	Population Living Below \$1 (PPP) a Day	7
3.1	World Food Production by Region, 1963-2000	66
4.1	Overview of Hunger and Poverty in Developing Countries in 2005	85
6.1	Performance Advantage of Bt Over Conventional Cotton, Percentage	179
6.2	Performance Advantage of Bt over Non-Bt Cotton in India, by State, 2002-03, Per cent	181
7.1	Total Cereal Area, Yield, and Production in Rainfed Areas: 1995 Baseline Data Compared to 2025 Projections	194
7.2	Descriptive Statistics of Crop Yield in Rainfed and Irrigated India, 1966-97	199
7.3	Number of Rural Poor (in millions) in Developing Countries Categorized by Agro-ecological Zone, 1996	203
8.1	Growth in Irrigated Area of Asian Countries, 1962-2002	230
8.2A	Increase in Rough Rice Production ('000 mt) in Selected Asian Regions, 1963-2003	239
8.2B	Percentage Increase in Rough Rice Production in Selected Asian Regions, 1963-2003	240

8.3	Investments in Infrastructure Development in the Irrigation and Drainage Sector by the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter American Development Bank, and World Bank Region, 1961-2002	248
9.1	National Producer Federations/Associations and their Main Activities	279
9.2	Direct and Indirect Determinants of Cost and Returns to Private-for-Profit Extension	289
10.1	Importance of Forest, Rate of Change in Forest Area, and Importance of Fuelwood Across Major Regions of the Developing World	307
10.2	Hypothesised Relationships Among the Cost of Protection, Management Intensity, and Efficient Land Use and Land Tenure Institutions	319
10.3	Characterisation of Study Sites	321
11.1	Growth Indices of Rice Production, Area, and Yield	352
11.2	Agricultural Land Use Trends in Southeast Asian Economies (Per cent of Land Area)	355

FIGURES

2.1	Incentive Compatibility in Irrigation Finance	50
4.1	Snapshots of Future Food Insecurity from the IFPRI IMPACT Model	86
5.1	Growth Convergence	123
5.2	Poverty Convergence	124
7.1	The Global Extent of Drylands	193
7.2	All-India Production, Yield, and Cultivation Area of Coarse Cereals, Rice, and Wheat, 1950-2003	195
7.3	Yields of Cereal Crops in Irrigated and Rainfed India, 1966-97	197
7.4	Population in Asia, 1961-2003	201
7.5	Entry Points for Development in Dryland Agriculture	217
7.6	ICRISAT's Research for Development Model	220
8.1	Evolution of Large Dam Construction in Asia (Pre-1900 to Post-1980)	231
8.2	Trend in Cereal Grain and Urea Prices (Computed as Five-Year Moving Average)	232
8.3	Trend in Area Irrigated by Groundwater in India	234
8.4	Number of Irrigation Pumps in Agriculture in Bangladesh and Vietnam, 1975-2000	235
8.5	Trend in Water Supplied by Zhanghe Reservoir and Rice Production in Zhanghe Irrigation District, 1965-2003	257
9.1	Economic Classification of Agricultural Information and Technologies	271
9.2	Accountability Relationships Between Farmers, Extension Providers, and Policymakers	273

9.3A	Alternative Channels for Public and Non-Profit Sector Extension Service Delivery	276
9.3B	Alternative Channels for Private Sector Extension Service Delivery	277
10.1	Choice of Natural-Resource-Intensive vs Labour-Intensive Land Use Systems	313
10.2	Evolutionary Changes in Stock of Natural Resources	317
11.1	The Environmental Kuznets Curve: Relationships Between Per Capita Income, Policies, Institutions, and Environmental Change	340
11.2	The Harris-Todaro Model and Effects of Population Growth	343
11.3	Effects of the Green Revolution in Lowland Agriculture	346
11.4	Effects of Industrial Job Growth	348
11.5	Southeast Asia: Area of Oil Palm Harvested, 1980-2005	356
11.6	Southeast Asia: Area of Coffee Harvested, 1990-2005	357

PREFACE

This volume is the final product of efforts to revisit familiar themes and controversies that have played a crucial role in shaping the way we view rural development. We are in deep gratitude to all the colleagues and organisations that have assisted us in the different stages of the project.

The idea for this volume drew inspiration from a SEARCA initiative in 1979, which, in cooperation with then Agricultural Development Council (ADC) of New York (now Winrock International), resulted in the publication of a book entitled *Risk, Uncertainty and Agricultural Development*, featuring such respected authors as Hans Binswanger, Jean-March Boussard, Robert Evenson, David Newberry, James Roumasset, Inderjit Singh, and Joseph Stiglitz, to name a few. Now, three decades and many global changes after, SEARCA has found it timely and relevant to revisit their views of agricultural development vis-à-vis the current situation in the region. The main objective is to draw up policy lessons from the major ideas and paradigms that have influenced academic and policy thinking in agricultural and rural development in the past 30 years.

SEARCA began formulating the plan for a conference as early as the first quarter of 2004, with the end goal of producing this book. It was decided that the conference would mark the beginning of the celebration of SEARCA's 40th Anniversary in November 2006. We sought the assistance of Emmanuel Esguerra in drafting a concept paper for the conference. We are thankful to him for the initial discussions and thoughts he shared with us toward this volume.

By bringing together an international group of acknowledged research scholars in agricultural and rural development in dialogue with policymakers

from the Asian region, the conference, held in November 2005, provided a venue for articulating policy options on emerging development issues in the region. The discussions focused on several thematic and issue papers on agriculture and rural development, food security, population and environment, institutions, and biotechnology, among others. The papers presented were revised accordingly, taking into account the suggestions from the editors and discussants. The resulting volume attempts to identify the rural development challenges in the next 10 years and draws up possible directions for future academic and policy research. In addition, a separate publication, a monograph entitled *Challenges and Priorities for Agricultural Research in the Next Decade*, synthesizes the issues raised at the panel discussion among Mahfuzuddin Ahmed, Taco Bottema, William Dar, Mark Rosegrant, and Robert Zeigler during the conference.

Richard Day, in his foreword in the 1979 volume, said that the volume “is no doubt an intermediate product, for evidently much remains to be done in the field and doubtless, as well, the present works will stimulate many new investigations in what must surely be a most crucial branch of economic research.” Certainly, much has been done in the field of development, in particular, agricultural development. Nevertheless, the work is a continuing saga and it will remain to be as people, technology, and institutions continue to evolve and propel development.

Special thanks are in order to all the book’s contributors: Jock Anderson, K.V. Anupama, P. Anand Babu, Ma. Cynthia S. Bantilan, Randolph Barker, Ian Coxhead, William Dar, Deepthi Harkar, Yujiro Hayami, Keijiro Otsuka, R. Padmaja, Prabhu Pingali, Terri Raney, Thomas Reardon, Mark Rosegrant, James Roumasset, C. Peter Timmer, and Dina Umali-Deininger, who contributed papers with only gratis in exchange. Without their support and enthusiasm, this volume would not have been possible.

We are also grateful for the financial support and generosity given by the following organizations: AusAID International Seminar Support Scheme (ISSS), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Australia Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries-Queensland Government (DPIF), Worldfish Center, Philippines Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Agricultural Research, and Lapanday Foods Corporation.

Discussants and other speakers at the November 2005 conference in Makati City, Philippines helped enhance the quality and usefulness of the papers and this volume. A note of thanks to the following colleagues who participated in this respect: Mahfuzuddin Ahmed, Germelino Bautista, Taco Bottema, Ramon Clarete, Cristina David, Larry Digal, Desiree Hautea, Mahabub Hossain, Eliseo Ponce, Agnes Rola, Sushil Pandey, and Robert Zeigler.

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This project could not have been possible but for the concerted effort of the people at SEARCA, particularly the staff of the Research and Development Department managed by Arnulfo Garcia. Majah-Leah Ravago and Jessaine Soraya Sugui were not only efficient assistants but also kind naggers, always demanding adherence to deadlines. Administration and other logistics were ably accomplished by Ruby Johnson. Vivian Teresa M. Ledesma and the staff of the Knowledge Management Unit headed by Lorna Malicsi worked under a tight deadline to deliver the conference program and in transforming the manuscript to the final polished version of this volume. A number of people from all departments and units of SEARCA assisted during the conference and in various stages of the project: Althea Aragon, Nelia Belen, Edith Cedicol, Jaymark Dia, Vic Evan, Jess Fernandez, Susan Fernandez, Randy Foronda, Jolo Logon, Nyhria Rogel, Toti Menorca, Sonny Tababa, Lily Tallafer, Carol Tolentino, and Wanah Velo. Collectively, they did a good job.

We thank our co-publisher, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) of Singapore, for its support to this project, particularly to K. Kesavapany, Chin Kin Wah, Triena Ong, Tan Kim Keow, and Rahilah Yusuf for their interest in seeing the volume through to its present form.

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