



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Cambodia Hosts ASEAN Dialogue on Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems

Phnom Penh, Cambodia – 25 August 2026 – The National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (UN FAO), co-organise Parliamentary Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Responsible Investment for Food and Climate Security on 25-26 August 2026.

Held at the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Dialogue brought together approximately 175 participants, including parliamentarians from ASEAN Member States, representatives of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat, private sector, academia and civil society. Attended by the Cambodian Minister of Environment, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology, the two-day policy dialogue explores how responsible agricultural investment can strengthen food security, expand economic opportunities and build resilience to climate change in Cambodia and across ASEAN.

The opening session featured remarks from **Hon. Kittisethabindit Cheam Yeap** First Vice-President of the National Assembly; **H.E. Dith Tina**, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; **Hon. Santibindit Loy Sophat**, Chairman of Commission on Planning, Investment, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Development, Environment, Water Resources and Meteorology of the National Assembly; **H.E. Dr. Chem Widya**, Secretary-General of AIPA and **Ms. Rebekah Bell**, FAO Representative in Cambodia.

“Climate resilience is fundamental to food security; and it demands a holistic and coherent legal, policy, and societal response. Strengthening the resilience of our agricultural and food systems is essential. It is the only way we can ensure a stable food supply for our fast-growing populations, protect the livelihoods of our communities, and sustain our long-term economic and social development. It is our constitutional duty to translate the high-level principles of the ASEAN RAI into actionable, enforceable national realities. We need to strengthen our oversight role to ensure that the implementation remains on track.”, said Hon. Kittisethabindit Cheam Yeap, First Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia.





Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

H.E. Dith Tina, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Cambodia emphasised, “responsible agricultural investment is not a collection of isolated goals. Agricultural sector must serve one integrated vision that is economically viable for farmers, responsive to consumers, environmentally respectful, and socially beneficial. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has put this vision into practice including stabilizing markets and incomes, empowering farmers at the doorstep, and scaling Modern Agricultural Communities”.

“This dialogue highlights the urgent need for unified action to tackle the intertwined crisis of climate change and food security, particularly in Cambodia where shifting weather patterns threaten agriculture, the backbone of its economy. By relying on its fertile lands, various water networks like the Mekong River and Tonle Sap, Cambodia is positioned to advance sustainable food production by translating ASEAN frameworks and parliamentary tools into policy. However, adapting to modern food demands requires a multi-stakeholder alliance linking parliamentarians, government, private investors, researchers, and local communities to turn commitments into action. Ultimately, progress depends on three core principles: responsibility through equitable and transparent investments, resilience by modernizing infrastructure, supporting SMEs, and promoting local processing, and solidarity through resource and knowledge-sharing across the ASEAN community”, said Hon. Santibindit Loy Sophat, Chairman of Commission on Planning, Investment, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Development, Environment, Water Resources and Meteorology of the National Assembly.

“Responsible agricultural investment is essential to building more sustainable and climate-resilient food systems that protect both livelihoods and the environment. Through their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions, parliamentarians have an important role in ensuring that investments in food, agriculture and forestry are aligned with food security and climate priorities. Strong cooperation among parliamentarians, governments, the private sector, academia and civil society is essential to translate the ASEAN RAI into concrete actions that respond to national priorities while contributing to greater resilience across the ASEAN region,” said H.E. Dr. Chem Widhya, Secretary-General of AIPA.

“The public sector and agrifood businesses need more investment, but equally important is how investments are made, where investments occur, and who benefits from the investment. Responsible investment should create opportunities for small





Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

holder farmers and agribusinesses big and small, while strengthening climate resilience and protecting natural resources”, said Ms. Rebekah Bell, FAO Representative in Cambodia.

The closing session features remarks of Honourable Mr. Suos Yara, Chairman of the Commission on Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Information, National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia emphasizing the need to embrace science, technology and innovation, predictable legal frameworks, effective regulatory governance and enforcement, fiscal support and blended finance schemes for smallholder farmers, the integration of micro, small- and medium-sized agrifood enterprises (MSMEs), crop varieties resistant to climate change, Research and Development (R&D), food science and engineering, technological transfer, market access, as well as food system management, including land, water, environmental and natural resources. He emphasised responsible investment and responsible consumption of food. He suggested the establishment of ASEAN Food Bank as a regional hub of food stockpiles for the region to secure food availability, accessibility and food trade supply chain in tackling regional food insecurity incidences resulting from climate-induced disasters.

Cambodia’s agriculture sector contributed 16.1 percent of GDP in 2025 and generated more than USD 8 billion in value added, while remaining highly exposed to climate-related risks that affect rural livelihoods and food security. The Dialogue highlighted how responsible agricultural investment, guided by the ASEAN RAI Guidelines and its Parliamentary Implementation Framework 2024–2030, can support more resilient food systems and create opportunities for farmers and businesses. It also provided a platform to bring regional perspectives and practical experiences from across ASEAN into Cambodia’s national context, including on trade, market access and stronger partnerships among parliaments, governments, businesses and other stakeholders.

The discussions also came ahead of the **Cambodia Agriculture Forum and Exhibition (CAFE26)**, to be held from **23–25 October 2026** under the theme **“Investing in Cambodia’s Agrifood: Partnerships, Value Addition and Innovation.”** Led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, in partnership with FAO under the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, CAFE26 will connect government, farmers, businesses, investors, financial institutions and development partners around concrete investment and partnership opportunities. Last year, the event generated USD 1.3 million in on-site trade and explored USD 78 million in potential investments.





Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

For More Information:

Ehsan Kabir

Communications Manager, FAO

Ehsan.kabir@fao.org

Putri Maha Lima

Deputy Secretary-General, AIPA

dsg@aipasecretariat.org

Nurul Amirah

Director of External Stakeholders' Engagement, AIPA

external@aipasecretariat.org

H.E. MEAN Essarayoss

Director of International Relations Department

National Assembly of Cambodia

ir.nacambodia@gmail.com

