

**Agricultural and Rural Development for Reducing Poverty and Hunger in Asia:  
In Pursuit of Inclusive and Sustainable Growth**

**Policy Forum**

**organized by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)  
and the Asian Development Bank**

**at the  
Asian Development Bank  
Manila, Philippines  
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**Context**

In the last thirty years Asia has experienced dynamic growth and structural transformation, and has achieved substantial poverty reduction. The extension of current trends will create a dramatically transformed Asia by 2015. The incidence of people living in poverty in the region fell from more than 50 percent in the mid-1970s to 18 percent in 2004, and the incidence of hunger fell to 16 percent. Currently the region is home to 520 million hungry people and 600 million poor people.

By 2015 Asia's share of global GDP will approach 42 percent, however Asia will still be home to half of the world's poor and projections indicate that three-quarters of these poor will live in rural areas. Currently 85 percent of those who live on less than a dollar a day live in rural areas.

The continued concentration of the Asian population in rural areas implies agricultural and rural development remains a critical component of an inclusive growth strategy for the region. However, today's Asia faces new challenges and opportunities and inclusive agricultural and rural growth strategies need to be adapted accordingly.

**Purpose**

This high-level policy forum will bring together 70 leaders and stakeholders in the public sector, civil society, private sector, research and academia from all over Asia as well as those working for Asia to examine the role agricultural and rural development plays for reducing poverty and hunger in a changing region that remains predominantly rural.

The forum will examine the scale and nature of poverty and hunger in rural Asia and explore growth and structural changes in Asian agriculture and rural non-farm activities. Strategies for economy-wide and trade policies to encourage inclusive rural growth will be discussed. Key emerging risks such as climate change and instruments for mitigating and managing risks will be examined. The forum will address how effective institutions can be developed to promote inclusive agricultural and rural growth. Another major focus will be investment priorities and donor harmonization. The agenda of the forum reflects these emerging challenges and opportunities.

**Expected outputs and next steps**

The policy forum will contribute to broader consensus on the role of agricultural and rural development in reaching and going beyond the poverty and hunger Millennium Development Goal and in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in Asia. Discussions between diverse stakeholders will facilitate greater exchange of insights and experiences on which strategies and actions to implement, scale up and transform in order to reduce and end hunger and poverty in Asia.

Written proceedings of the forum will be prepared. The proceedings will include an executive style summary of the meeting and brief versions of the papers written for the forum.