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ASEM forum on food security opens in HCM City

**More than 60 delegates from the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) gathered in Ho Chi Minh City on July 5 to discuss ways to ensure food security in sustainable manner.**

They also included representatives from international organizations, such as the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Addressing the forum, Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Bui Ba Bong affirmed that Vietnam is committed to strengthening international co-operation to address food security issues. Given the fact that the world agriculture market is withstanding a negative impact from the global economic crisis, the forum will help ASEM member countries to share experience and discuss measures for food security issues, said Mr Bong.

Mr Bong emphasised Vietnam is one of five countries seriously affected by rising sea levels, so the country has devised agricultural development strategies and food security policies while considering national socio-economic development, industrialisation guidelines and poverty reduction policies for farmers. Agricultural development must ensure food security, in which rice is the key product, he said, adding that the State has encouraged all economic sectors to join hands with farmers to produce more rice to eliminate hunger in remote and mountainous areas.

The forum focused discussions on the impact of the global economic crisis on food security as well as the rising prices of food, new epidemics, and the narrowing of agricultural land and water resources. Participants agreed to strengthen coordination among ASEM member countries by accelerating technological transfer, and boosting the public-private partnership.

On July 6, delegates will made a fact-finding tour of rice cultivation areas which apply the GAP model and a rice processing mill in Tien Giang province.

The forum is being held on the initiative of Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, which was approved at the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEM in Beijing, China in October 2008 aimed at ensuring global food security.



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