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Front Page

News

Life

Business

Travel

Culture

Sports

Mailbox

Study Vietnamese



Editor-in-Chief
DINH THE HUYNH

About Nhan Dan
Newspaper

Sitemap

Politics | Development | Law | Profile |

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ASEM forum seeks solutions to food security



The first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) forum on food security began in Ho Chi Minh City on July 5.

Co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the meeting was initiated by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and approved at the seventh ASEM Summit in Beijing, China, in October 2008.

The forum brings together more than 60 delegates from Vietnamese ministries and agencies, as well as diplomats and experts from ASEM member countries, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Bui Ba Bong said that Vietnam attaches a great deal of importance to international co-operation to ensure food security as the global agricultural product market faces many serious challenges, especially after the recent global financial-economic crisis.

ASEM members must share their experiences, discuss possible solutions and improve co-operation to deal with the issue, he said.

Bong told the participants that Vietnam is one of the five countries in the world that will be hardest hit by rising sea levels. To prepare for this, the country has worked out an agricultural development strategy and changed its food security policy to bring it in line with its socio-economic development and industrialisation, in order to reduce poverty and ensure that rice growers are protected.

At the forum, the delegates will evaluate the impacts of the global financial crisis on food security as well as the challenges posed by the increasing cost of agricultural products, epidemics, the decrease in farming land and the lack of water.

They will discuss how to ensure food security and measures to enhance co-operation amongst ASEM member nations by speeding up the transfer of technologies in agricultural production; fostering public-private partnership and co-ordinating national and regional policies more effectively will also be topics of discussion.

On July 6 the delegates are scheduled to make a field-trip to a high yield rice area that applies good agriculture practices (GAP) and a rice processing plant in the Mekong Delta province of Tien Giang.(VNA)

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