



## Joint Press Release

### **AIPA – FAO – IISD Joint Event: Kick-Off Workshop on the Implementation of ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Sector (RAI)**

Vientiane, April 25, 2024 – The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) is set to host a kick-off workshop on the Implementation of ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food Agriculture and Forestry Sector. The two-day workshop, held from 24-25 April 2024, in Vientiane, marks a significant step towards promoting sustainable development and responsible investment in the agriculture sector across the ASEAN region.

The event is made possible through the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD), with technical support from the National Assembly of Lao PDR, holding the AIPA Presidency 2023-2024.

Southeast Asia's agriculture sector plays a pivotal role in the region's economy, contributing 12% to the regional GDP and employing over 100 million people. With increasing urbanization and rising incomes, the demand for food, fisheries, and forestry products is on the rise. To ensure food security, safety, and nutrition for future generations amid rapid industrialization and population growth, sustainable investment in these sectors is paramount.

In 2018, ASEAN Member States adopted the [ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry \(ASEAN RAI\)](#), highlighting the region's commitment to responsible and sustainable investments. Recognizing the significance of parliamentary support, the 44th AIPA General Assembly in 2023 adopted a Resolution encouraging AIPA Member Parliaments to implement the ASEAN RAI. Given this context, the workshop aims to deepen the understanding of parliamentarians and stakeholders and facilitate the implementation of the ASEAN RAI through the development of a Parliamentary Implementation Framework.

The workshop brings together 34 parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from ASEAN Member States, as well as representatives from Timor-Leste, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao PDR as the host country. During the workshop, participants discuss key actions to implement the ASEAN RAI, including addressing regulatory gaps, legislative reforms, budgetary measures, regulatory compliance oversight, and communicating the importance of responsible investment. Practical measures for implementing the ASEAN RAI at national and regional levels is also explored.

“To assess the outcomes and delineate future actions regarding the implementation of the ASEAN RAI, parliamentarians should prioritize the interests of the people while fulfilling their legislative duties. Endowed with the duty of overseeing and making decisions on pivotal national issues, parliamentarians should conduct thorough monitoring of the ASEAN RAI implementation. Engaging in research, discussions, and refining of the guidelines to tailor them to the unique circumstances of our region is paramount to guarantee practical efficiency and effectiveness,” said H.E. Mr. Sommad Pholsena, Vice President of the National Assembly of the Lao PDR.





“The Resolution on Encouraging the Application of the ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Sectors adopted at the 44th AIPA General Assembly last year, not only reaffirms AIPA's dedication to the sustainability of our region's food, agriculture, and forestry sectors but also underscores our collective resolve to foster economic growth, enhance regional integration, and advance the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. As we convene for this joint event, it is crucial to emphasize parliamentarians' pivotal role in complementing the ASEAN RAI through targeted actions. Through these events, we aim to empower parliamentarians, foster expertise exchange, and enhance oversight,” said H.E. Ar. Siti Rozaimeriyanty Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, Secretary General of AIPA.

During the workshop, Ms Kyung-mee Kim, FAO Representative Lao People's Democratic Republic, stated that “parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to support and promote the needed legal enabling environment to foster more and better investment in agriculture, including transforming the ASEAN RAI into domestic frameworks”. She also reiterated FAO's commitment to keep supporting parliamentarians in this important task through capacity development, advocacy initiatives and practical tools such as the Handbook for parliamentarians, [“Promoting the application of the ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry”](#), which was developed by FAO and IISD with technical support from AIPA.

The workshop is the first of a series of joint events organized by AIPA, FAO, and IISD, with a second activity planned for the second half of 2024. The outcomes of the workshop will be documented in a consolidated report, circulated to all AIPA Members and published on the AIPA Secretariat website. The draft of the RAI Implementation Framework will be shared with AIPA Member Parliaments for consultation, and a draft resolution for the adoption of the framework will be included in the agenda of the 45th AIPA General Assembly.

