

THE ROLE OF APCC IN ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MARKETING OF INDONESIAN COCONUT PRODUCTS

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The Asian and the Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) is an international/intergovernmental organization of coconut producing countries established in 1969 under the aegis of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP). Currently it has 16 full members i.e. Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Vietnam, and 2 associate members, they are Kenya, and Jamaica. The objectives of APCC are to promote, coordinate and harmonize all activities of the coconut industry including capacity building (training) which sustains the lives of millions of small farmers as well as those engaged in production, processing and marketing of coconut products. As APCC secretariat is located in Jakarta, it is also active in enhancing international cooperation and marketing of Indonesian coconut products. These initiatives are translated into various projects and activities such as organic certification of coconut farms, integrated pest management, farmer field school (FFS) for coconut farmers, and coconut oil extraction projects, as well as information access/direct consultation for marketing information support. APCC is also active in collecting, selecting, and disseminating information related to coconut sector development in Indonesia.

As we are all aware that Indonesia has the largest area under coconuts which is 3.8 million Ha producing 16,256 million nuts per year or 3,251 million Ton copra equivalent. About 7 million households in Indonesia are dependent on coconut farm. The main coconut growing areas are in Sumatera island with 31.8% of total plantation area, followed by Java (22.7%) and Sulawesi (20.8%). As 13% of coconut population is senile, the Ministry of Agriculture has started the replanting and new planting program. The Ministry also provided small scale entrepreneurs with processing unit in 17 provinces to produce cooking oil, virgin coconut oil, coconut sugar, coir products, *nata de coco* and charcoal. This initiative aims to provide incentive to smallholder farmers and enhance their income. Coconut products are both consumed domestically and exported to the International market.

At least there are 9 coconut products exported from Indonesia, they are: copra, coconut oil, copra meal, desiccated coconut, charcoal, activated carbon, raw coir fiber, coconut water, and value added coir fiber. In 2012 the export volume of Indonesian coconut products was 1,367,543 MT with the total value of US\$ 1,176,769,000. This export earning can be increased by value addition and product diversification, and strategic partnership with other coconut producing countries can also be used as the instrument to widen niche market of coconut products. APCC can play a role in enhancing strategic partnership with other coconut producing countries.

APCC ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

1. APCC Session/ Ministerial Meeting

APCC meets at least once in each calendar year and the member states are represented by plenipotentiary representatives. The Session is the policy making body of the Community. As it is the highest policy and decision making body of the Community, many ministers of APCC member countries usually attend the meeting. The Community may invite any non-member states or interested international organizations and/or non-governmental organizations of any matter of particular concern to coconut industry development. This forum provides good opportunities for APCC member countries including Indonesia to strengthen cooperation in developing coconut sector. A number of coconut related development projects, resolutions and recommendations have been approved through APCC Sessions/Ministerial Meetings which have significant effects to the coconut sector development in each APCC member country. For example, PNG Declaration to Accelerate the Replanting Programme in APCC Member Countries approved by the 50th APCC Session/Ministerial Meeting on 11-14 February 2006 in Madang, Papua New Guinea has prompted APCC member countries to speed up the replanting program in each APCC member countries.

APCC Session/Ministerial Meeting is organized in APCC member countries by turn according to the alphabetical order of the country name. The country that holds the chairmanship of the Community will host the APCC Session/Ministerial Meeting. With this system every member country will have opportunity to see and learn of the coconut sector development in other member countries. Through this forum member countries with less advanced development in coconut industry can learn from other member countries that are more advanced in the coconut sector development. In 2016 Indonesia will host 52nd APCC Session/Ministerial Meeting.

2. Cocotech Meeting and Coconut Festival

Cocotech which stands for Coconut Technology Permanent Panel is the technical arm of the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community. This panel, initially funded by UNDP, has been in operation since July 1972. So far 45 Cocotech Meetings have been conducted and the 46th Cocotech Meeting will be held in Colombo on 7-11 July 2014. Cocotech Meeting used to be regularly organized annually, but since 2004 it has been conducted once in two years. Through Cocotech Meetings APCC sets guidelines for the Community's work programs.

Cocotech Meeting also assumes new dimension in becoming an open forum for researchers, coconut farmers, processors, traders, and policy makers to meet and exchange information related to the coconut industry development. Many coconut stake holders from Indonesia have made use of this forum to broaden their insights on coconut cutting edge technology. They can learn from various papers and presentation covering research and development on coconut production, farm productivity, processing, product diversification, product value addition, health benefits of coconut products, and by-product utilization. This Cocotech forum is also a good place for business networking, market promotion, and business ventures as trade and marketing issues were also discussed by national and international experts.

3. Market Promotion

APCC is also active in promoting coconut products, including coconut products from Indonesia to the world market by participating in various trade fairs/ exhibitions. Since the last decade APCC always participated in the annual coconut festival and trade fair in Manila, the Philippines. Coconut product exhibitions in some importing countries such as Canada, France, and United Arab Emirate were also conducted. During the Cocotech Meeting, a coconut exhibition was also conducted to showcase the latest product developments of APCC member countries and coconut processing machineries. Indonesian coconut product processing companies can send samples of their products for these exhibitions.

When both local and international buyers/ investors contact APCC Secretariat, APCC tries to connect these buyers/ investors to relevant exporters/ processors or business partners in Indonesia and other APCC member countries. This is part of APCC function to bridge between buyers and sellers in coconut trade and investment.

4. Training/Seminar/Workshop

With the spirit of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), APCC has conducted various trainings to improve human resource skills of APCC member countries including Indonesia. A few of the recent trainings were:

- a) **APCC International Workshop on Quality Standards of Coconut Products at IBIS Tamarin Hotel, Jakarta.** The purpose of the workshop was to harmonize the quality standards of coconut products within among member countries. The experts from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam participated in the workshop which succeeded in harmonizing 15 quality standards of coconut products. These standard was set to be used as the guidelines by member countries that may find the said standards relevant.
- b) **The International Training – Workshop on the Processing of Value-added Coconut Products** at the Philippine Coconut Authority’s Coconut Extension Training Center located at Bago-Oshiro, Davao City, the Philippines. A total of 23 participants from 10 member-countries of APCC namely Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Indonesia, Kiribati, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam who attended the training course.
- c) **The APCC-DOA, Thailand International Training on the Processing of Value-added Coconut Products.** The training was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand. There were 28 participants from 11 APCC member countries namely Fiji, Indonesia, Kenya, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam who attended the training course.
- d) **The FAO-RAP-APCC Expert Consultation on Coconut Sector Development in Asia and the Pacific Region**, 30 October – 01 November 2013, at the Novotel Hotel Siam in Bangkok, Thailand. In this occasion coconut experts from 14 countries including Indonesia deliberated various issues related to coconut sector development in Asia and the Pacific. This conference

resulted in number of recommendations and regional strategies were stated for follow up and implementation by respective governments of coconut growing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

5. Publications

APCC has been publishing regular, serial publications to disseminate information related to coconut trade, marketing, research and development. Two APCC regular publications which have worldwide circulation namely COCOINFO INTERNATIONAL and the COCOMMUNITY monthly newsletter provide the latest updates of coconut product development and market information. Through these two publications APCC promotes coconut products from APCC member countries including Indonesia and disseminate useful information to Indonesian subscribers. In every issue of the COCOMMUNITY Newsletter, a business column is provided for free. Buyers or traders/exporters can use this column to announce what they need and what they can sell. In COCOINFO, some Indonesian companies were invited to place advertorial article for free. These two publications are dedicated to the coconut product promotion and marketing.

APCC also maintains website that provides information on APCC activities and publications. This website has mutual linkages with the websites of other coconut development agencies including the website of Indonesian Coconut Board. Through this website APCC also promotes international cooperation among coconut stakeholders around the globe.