

Stop Rice Import, WTO Out of Agriculture, and Uphold Food Sovereignty

JOINT STATEMENT ON 17 NOVEMBER 2005 ACTION

In this one month period, there are two important momentums related to the fate of millions of peasants and farmhands in Indonesia. The first momentum is the organized of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit Conference in Busan, South Korea on 18-19 November 2005. The second momentum is the VI Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Hong Kong on 13-18 December 2005.

These two important agendas are conducted as the continuation effort to open the trade liberalization for countries in the world, including Indonesia. The APEC emphasizes its members to commit in the free trade of the Asia Pacific Region, and to support the success of the trade liberalization in the WTO. While the VI Ministerial Meeting of WTO in Hong Kong is the effort of the highest decision making for the world trade liberalization. This liberalization is established by the effort of market opening, reducing the subsidy and the country's role, opening investment, privatizing the state-owned corporation, and etc. The neoliberal policy based on the effort of trade liberalization has proved killing the peasants. The joint of Indonesia into the WTO has made the peasants' income decreased since the price and the domestic market protection are reduced. The market opening is the biggest negative impact of the trade liberalization by the multilateral forum such as APEC and particularly WTO in Indonesia.

In the following are the impacts of domestic market opening by the in effective agreement of the trade liberalization. Indonesia has become the rice net importer since the year of 1988 and is one of the biggest rice importers in the world. The fact is Indonesia imports almost 50 % of the world's rice stock. From the BPS's data, it is shown that after Indonesia ratified the rules of Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) of the WTO through the Law No. 7/1994, the rice import in average kept increasing from the period of 1995-1997, which only around 1,5 million tons per year became around 3,3 million tons per year in the period of 1998-2002. For sugar, the number imported was 1,5 million tons (the second biggest in the world) or about 40 % of the national consumption. Afterwards, Indonesia also imported soybean about 1,3 million tons (the biggest in the world) covered 45 % of the national soybean consumption. While the import volume for corn numbered less than 1 million ton. Indonesia keeps importing fruits such as apple, orange, and pear, vegetables such as potato and onion, and other food products.

Nowadays, the neoliberal policy is forced continually through the rice import planned to enter Indonesia. Now, the rice import from Vietnam has docked on the last 15 November in Indonesia, for about 44.150 tons. With the oppression to open market, so the rice import is pointed out as the agenda of WTO to keep liberalizing the market, including Indonesia. This point out is rational since the rice import is actually unneeded, the temporary rice stock is still enough according to the Agriculture Department, around 1,6 million tons. Nowadays, the peasants enjoy the normal retail price and the high rice selling price. The government has to concern about this situation because rice is the staple food for the majority of Indonesian people and it is also the

most food plant grown by the peasants.

Therefore, to establish the fair, prosperous, and wealthy agriculture, we demand the Indonesian government immediately:

1. To ban permanently the rice import in Indonesia, since Indonesia is able to fill the rice need. This step can also protect the price and domestic market in order to keep advantaging the peasants. The ban has also to be valid for other agricultural products, such as soy bean, corn, sugar, and fruits.
2. To stop the rice import from Vietnam which has been done for about 44.150 tons on 15 November 2005 ago permitted without the peasants's approval. This proves that the government policy does not side on the peasants. In fact, according to the Department of Agriculture, the rice stock is still surplus. The deficiency in other regions and the food aid can suppose be acquired from the national stock and the Indonesia rice barn area.
3. To implement the food sovereignty as the right of each nation and people to determine their agriculture policies and food to protect and to adjust the domestic agricultural production and trade to achieve the sustainable development goals, determine the price, and limit the local market from dumping products.
4. To implement the genuine agrarian reform based on the Basic Agrarian Law 1960 as the term of the upholding of food sovereignty.
5. To uphold the peasant rights, to stop violence toward the peasants, and to release the peasants in North Sumatra and East Nusa Tenggara. Drag the violence actors toward the peasants in Tanak Awu Lombok and other agrarian cases in Indonesia.
6. To increase the subsidy and the incentive for the peasants in order to build the Indonesian agriculture system which is independent and makes the peasants's live prosperous. The state subsidy in the International system is the right of each nation to do it, while in the relation between the state and the people, subsidy plays as an obligation to protect the people.
7. To expel the WTO from the agriculture sector since agriculture is not merely a trade commodity for the people. The implementation of WTO's AoA makes the original price of the rice decreasing continuously, the subsidy and the incentive from the state and the government is decreasing, the market and the price are not guaranteed due to the flooding of import and dumping products forcing the rice peasants out of this sector and turn to other advantaging sectors (becoming labors, migrant workers, and etc.)

Jakarta, 17 November 2005

1. Federation of Indonesian Peasant Union (FSPI)
2. Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA)
3. Indonesian Peasants-Fisherfolks Association (PPNSI)

4. Indonesian Youth Struggle Front (FPPI)
5. Jabotabek Labor Union (SBJ)
6. Bina Desa Secretariat
7. People Coalition for Food Sovereignty (KRKP)
8. Institute for Global Justice (IGJ)
9. Action Study Circle for Indonesian Democracy (LS-ADI)