



**THE CRAWFORD FUND**  
*For a Food Secure World*

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS A STEP-CHANGE IN ASIAN AGRICULTURE**

Leading companies, national governments, civil society and farmers are working together in new innovative partnerships to enable sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in South East Asia.

Ms Alison Eskesen, Director of Knowledge and Accountability at the Grow Asia partnership will discuss the impact of this new partnership in her address to the Crawford Fund's annual conference titled *The Business of Food Security: Profitability, Sustainability and Risk* being held in Parliament House, Canberra 10-12 August. The event will focus on the importance of collaboration and partnership among the public, private and not-for-profit sectors for improved food security.

"By 2050, a global population of 9 billion will demand 70% more food than is consumed today. This will require substantial improvements to the global food system—one that provides livelihoods for farmers as well as nutritious products for consumers," said Ms Eskesen.

She noted that to achieve on-the-ground improvements, the World Economic Forum and the ASEAN Secretariat launched the Grow Asia partnership in April 2015, with the Australian and Canadian Governments providing anchor funding to support innovative market-based solutions that improve the lives of smallholder farmers while bolstering environmental sustainability.

"Smallholder farmers who dominate the ASEAN agricultural landscape face many problems that Australian farmers face, but with additional stresses. Farming on less than two hectares of land, they have low productivity and declining annual growth rates. They face changing weather patterns and volatile commodity prices, with low access to technology, information and markets," Ms Eskesen said.

"Raising more people out of poverty, reducing hunger and securing nutritious food for all, while ensuring the natural environment is protected, requires a step change in smallholder agriculture. It necessitates joint efforts and a new commitment from companies, governments, NGOs, researchers and farmers across the food value chain. Grow Asia is a partnership to facilitate this needed and ongoing collaboration at the scale necessary to address food security," she said.

Ms Eskesen noted that public and private investments are needed to ensure smallholder farmers have better access to inputs, knowledge, services, technologies and markets. Ms. Eskesen also called for increased innovation and adoption of new approaches to bolster smallholder productivity and profitability while strengthening environmental sustainability.

Other speakers will include:

- Mr Anthony Pratt, Executive Chairman, Visy Industries
- HE Gerda Verburg, Chair of the UN Committee on World Food Security & of the World Economic Forum Council on Food Security and Nutrition
- Dr Martin Kropff, Director General, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre
- Dr Cary Fowler, biodiversity conservation advocate

The Crawford Fund wishes to thank the supporters of this event including:

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