

The journey to the realization of farmers' rights

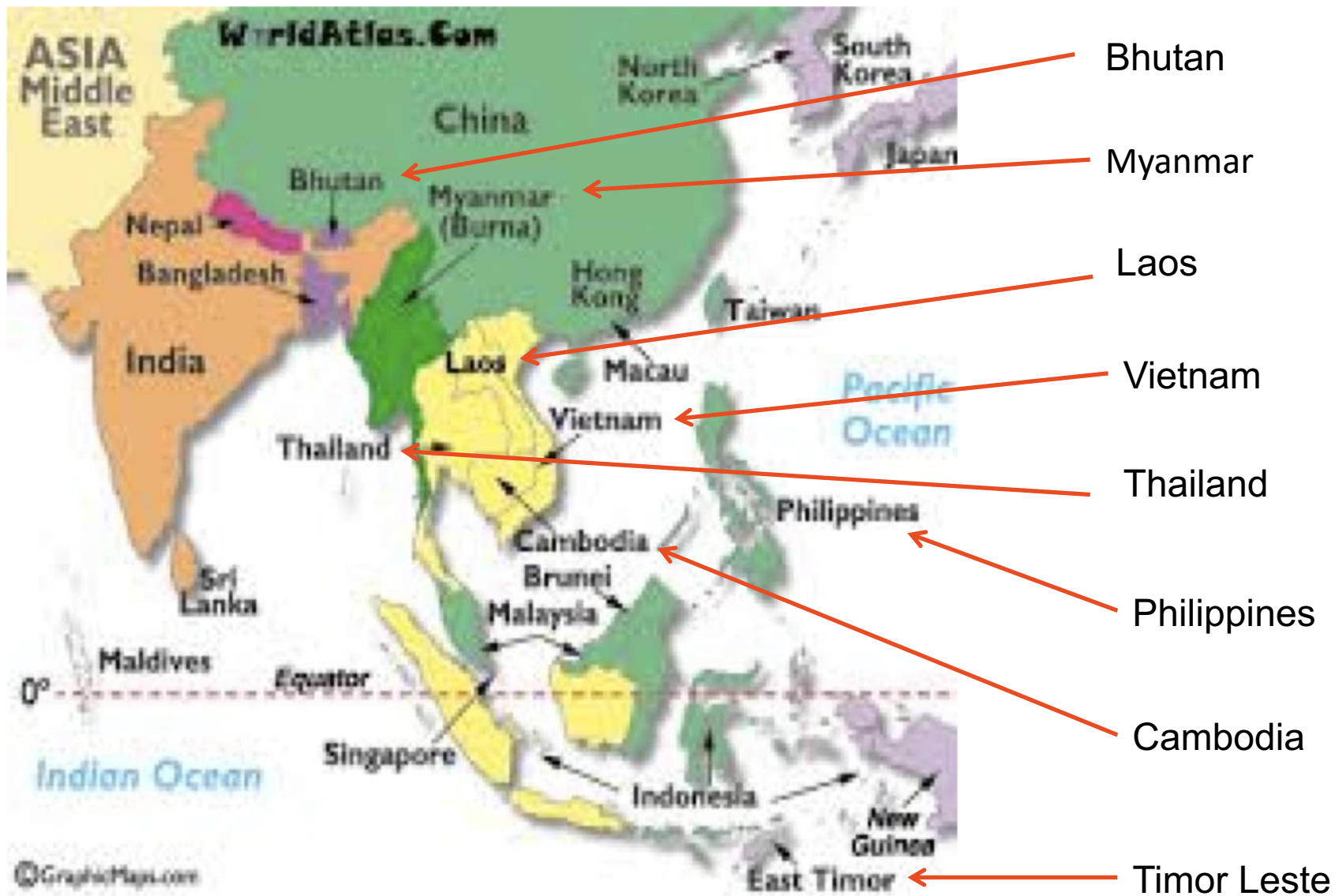
Experiences from Southeast Asia

Strengthening Seed Systems Through Realizing Farmers' Rights

CGRFA-19 Side Event

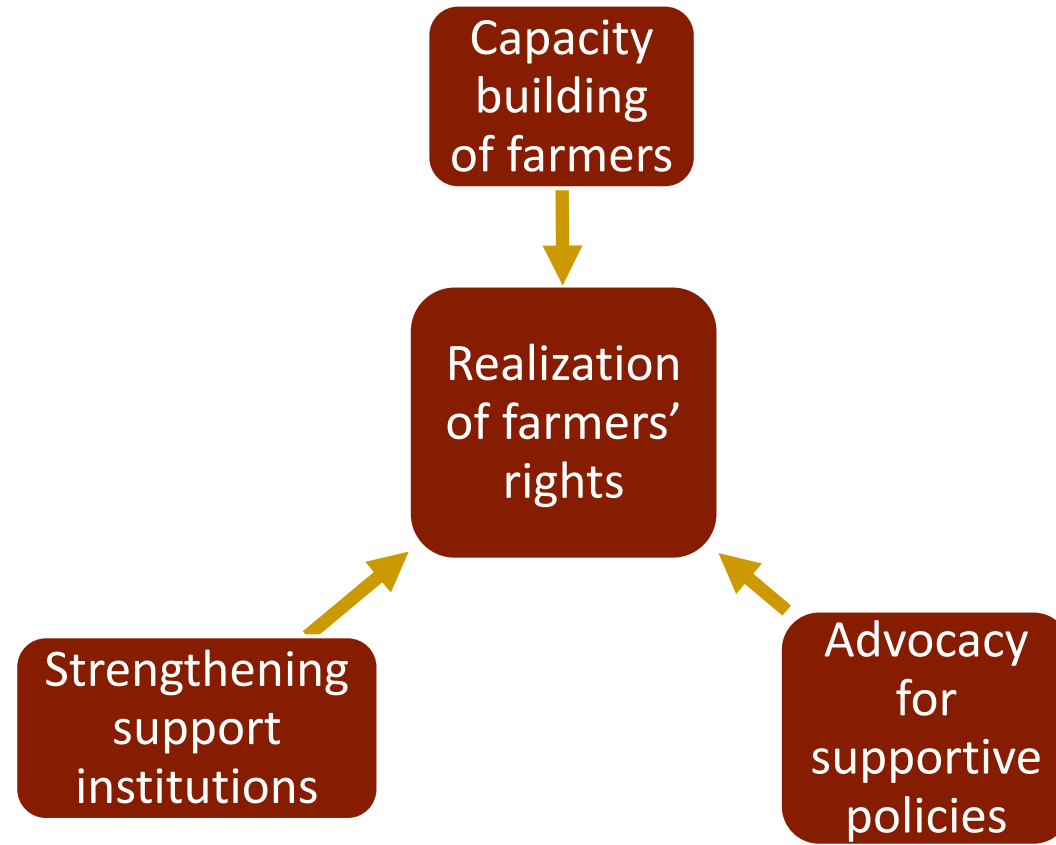


Geographical Scope of the Experience



- Bhutan
- Myanmar
- Laos
- Vietnam
- Thailand
- Philippines
- Cambodia
- Timor Leste

Three-pronged approach



Capacity building of farmers

PROTOCOL (Code of Conduct)

- Agriculture is about PEOPLE, more specifically, it is about FARMERS and their relationships with the agroecosystems
- While agriculture is often associated with food production, it is also and even more so about farmers
- Hence the focus of any agricultural development should be the farmers
- Increase in food production then becomes a product of farmers' capacity development
- The way we do capacity building is therefore not focus only on skills development but should lead to EMPOWERMENT
- Guided by this Protocol, we use Farmer Field School as a learning and empowering tool



Measures to protect and promote farmers' rights

Protection of traditional knowledge relevant to PGRFA (Art. 9.2a)



Build on what they have

Start with what the farmers know



The right to equitably participate in sharing benefits arising from the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (Art. 9.2b)

• **Participatory Plant Breeding:**



Participation is the means

EMPOWERMENT is the end



Measures to protect and promote farmers' rights

- The right to participate in making decisions, [at the national level], on matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (Art. 9.2c)
- Rights to save, use, exchange, & sell farm-saved seed/ propagating material



Realizing farmers' rights

- Recognize the important role of farmer seed systems
- To enable farmers to continue their role of conserving agricultural biodiversity, they should have unrestricted access to agricultural resources especially seeds
- Public research, plant breeding institutions and gene banks should not forget their mandate to do research, breeding and genetic conservation for public good.



- Funding for public research and crop breeding should be sustained
- Democratize agricultural research
- Implement genuine participatory plant breeding

- Farmers are an indispensable part of the innovation system that sustains formal breeders, including those from the private sector
- All of formal breeders' breeding materials are derived, to some extent, from a farmer's variety
- These breeding materials are usually obtained from farmers with little or no restriction



- Policy making must be grounded on realities and recognition of the two distinct seed systems
 - Policy makers must keep in mind that the design of any seed related policies demand a balancing act, which in the end should not sacrifice agricultural biodiversity and marginalize smallholder farmers
- Need to develop new approach to spur innovation & protect farmers' seeds from misappropriation

SALAMAT PO!



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