

ADB, CGIAR and Gates Foundation partner to transform rice sector in Asia

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The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and CGIAR, with support from the Gates Foundation, launched a new initiative to boost investments in sustainable and low-carbon rice production to improve the lives of millions of vulnerable smallholder farmers across Asia and the Pacific.

Rice is the lifeblood of the region. It feeds more than half the population daily and is the cornerstone of livelihoods for millions of rural poor. Yet rice farming faces mounting pressure, from declining productivity and shrinking water supplies to its significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Left unaddressed, these challenges threaten food security and the well-being of the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

"Rice is essential to food security in Asia, supplying over a quarter of the region's calorie intake, and half in Southeast Asia. For hundreds of millions of smallholder farmers, rice is not just food, it is their livelihood. Today, that livelihood is increasingly threatened by extreme weather and environmental degradation," said ADB Vice-President for Sectors and Themes Fatima Yasmin.

Through the newly established ADB-CGIAR Clearinghouse Facility, cofinanced with the Gates Foundation, the initiative will drive the adoption of resilient, high-yield, and low-emission farming practices; sustainable water use; inclusive value chains; and improved nutrition for the region's poorest.

ADB plans to invest up to \$1.5 billion through this program from 2025-2030 to improve productivity sustainably, adapt to harsher climate conditions, and reduce water and carbon footprints. This is part of ADB's broader \$40 billion commitment to food systems transformation by 2030, announced in May.

"This joint initiative will reinforce CGIAR's strategic collaboration with ADB and scale up CGIAR's innovations in rice systems and beyond," said Director General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) Yvonne Pinto. IRRI is a member of the CGIAR network of research centres. "Alongside partners such as ADB and Gates Foundation, we can drive sustainable and resilient transformation of the rice sector in Asia and transform the lives of millions of smallholder farmers now

and in the future.â••â••