

## South Korea takes the lead in food security cooperation in the ASEAN region

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South Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) Minister Chung Hwang-keun, announced that the Ministry plans to provide 2,000 tons of rice to three countries (750 tons to the Philippines, 750 tons to Myanmar, and 500 tons to Laos) through this year's ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve Agreement (APTERR).

APTERR, which stands for ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve Agreement, is a public stockholding mechanism among ASEAN member countries and three other nations (Korea, China, and Japan). It aims to ensure food security and provide emergency assistance during times of food scarcity or disasters. Member countries agree to pre-commit and stockpile rice reserves, which can be sold, loaned, or donated in case of emergencies.

This expansion of annual rice contributions from 1,000 tons to 2,000 tons is in line with the "Enhancing Global Food Security" initiative announced at the recent G7 Summit (May 20) and the ASEAN+3 Summit (September 6).

Additionally, in response to Myanmar's request for emergency food aid due to the damage caused by a typhoon in May, South Korea has decided to provide the entire requested quantity of 2,500 tons through APTERR. This amount is sufficient to sustain approximately 1.2 million people for about 4.2 days.

South Korea has been actively participating in APTERR since 2017, starting with the contribution of 750 tons of rice for prepositioning. As of now, South Korea has provided a total of 19,000 tons of rice to APTERR member countries, making it the largest donor country, covering 60% of the total APTERR rice reserves (32,000 tons).

Deputy Minister Park Su-jin of Food Grain Policy at MAFRA stated, "Through our active participation in APTERR, which has been established as a joint response model to address food crises, we aim to fulfill our role as a member country and take the lead in implementing intra-regional food security cooperation with ASEAN countries."