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Indonesia launches national strategy for digitizing agriculture

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The Center of Agricultural Data and System Information (CADIS) of the Agriculture Ministry, in collaboration with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has launched an agriculture digitalization strategy called the â??e-Agriculture National Strategy.â?• Aims to harness data and information resources in agriculture for the benefit of smallholders.

According to the FAO, Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world and a major producer of agricultural products. With 45 percent of the population living in rural areas, more than 90 percent of people working in the agriculture sector are smallholder farmers.

Agricultural farms take up 32 percent of the total land area of the country and farm production accounts for 14 percent of the national gross domestic product (GDP). Yet agricultural production faces several major challenges. The cost of agricultural production is quite high, while agriculture remains a highly labor-intensive sector. Smallholder farmers always work the hardest, but acquire the least benefit in the food systems activities. To address those challenges and take advantage of emerging digital opportunities, the MoA, in cooperation with the FAO, has launched the â??e-Agriculture National Strategy.â?

"It is very important to note that the Ministry of Agricultureâ??s (MoAâ??s) cooperation with FAO has accelerated agricultural development in the country. The â??e-Agriculture National Strategyâ?? can provide instrument facilitation that is urgently needed by the MoA to accelerate our agriculture development in the upstream, on farm, post-harvest, for the farmers to strengthen their position agricultural industry," said secretary general of the ministry, Kasdi Soebagyono,

Data on land area under cultivation, productivity, marketing channels, commodity prices, diversification of consumption, and food safety are some examples of data related to agriculture production that are needed by policy makers, he informed. Early Warning System (EWS) data that can reduce the impact of specific disasters is also urgently needed.

Among other things, the â??e-Agriculture National Strategyâ?• states that by 2027, Indonesia will have an integrated database on farmlands and farmers, provide digital early warning for disasters that threaten agriculture production, and run systems for agriculture data collection, extraction, and analysis.