

Alhamdulillah,

Good morning honorable chairs and negotiators from sixteen (16) RCEP countries, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all thank you for the space and time given.

My name is Atiek Oktoberiantiningsih, I'm from East Java, member of Indonesia Farmers Alliance (API). API is organisation of peasant at national level. Our members are sixty four (64) of peasant union organisations, in forty nine (49) districts from fourteen (14) provinces. Our total individual member are more than hundred thousand farmers in Indonesia.

As part of civil society network in RCEP member countries; we are here today to share the situation that farmers in Indonesia are experiencing and express our concerns with the increase importance of RCEP.

I work with API members in East Java especially Tuban, Malang, Bojonegoro, Mojokerto, Sidoarjo, Blitar, and Kediri

Our members in the area grow rice, corn, soybeans and some vegetables. We are also active in social forestry programme

They grow these plants in a small area, around zero poin six (0.6) hectare.

Our members are farmers from generation to generation. Our grandmothers are farmers who have inherited the biodiversity in agricultural crops. That doesn't need to be doubted. Before the green revolution, our grandparents were seed selector and breeders. After the green revolution, farmers are only users, and buyers of seeds for monoculture crop from the government and companies.

As a result, the local seeds are extinct, farmers' knowledge in seed selection and breeding disappeared. Farmers also become an only government and company seed growers, which in some cases are not suitable for local conditions, absorb a lot of chemical fertilizers and are susceptible to pest attacks. The soil becomes hard and infertile.

Therefore, we made an initiative to revive the knowledge and expertise that had been lost due to the green revolution. This is not romanticism. This is about our efforts to sustain our livelihood. Especially in situations of climate change, where drought and rainy seasons become erratic.

We started collecting local seeds, and planting them to increase local biodiversity. Besides that it also functions to reduce climate resistance and pests. We save seeds from the harvest and

then replant them. We also exchanged our seeds with other farmers. We also begin to learn from the older generation of farmers who still keep the knowledge of local seeds and have the ability to select and seed breeding. We want to be like our grand parent to be seed breeder to produce our own seed that suitable to local situation, and being more independent.

This is also our efforts to restore the richness of local food diversity and to cut our dependency to corporation who sell us hybrid seeds. In East Java now we manage to save and grow varieties of local rice, corn and soybean.

We notice that local seeds are more adaptive and having diverse seeds also help us to face pest attack. When we grow corn hybrid seeds, it is easier to be destroyed by pest. And also the taste of local white corn is better, that is why for our consumption we prefer to eat local white corn and give the hybrid corn for our cattle.

Farmers in East Java that grow soybean are also struggling, because the prices of local soybean are higher than import soybean. That makes the market and 'tempe' industries prefer to buy and use imported soybean that are cheaper. This gives less incentive for farmers to grow soybean because we cannot get any income from it with the low price.

We are worry that RCEP negotiation will give away our freedom to use our own seeds and to have price protection on our products. Farmers in Indonesia majority are small farmers, and there's already burden with many problems. High price of input often put us indebted and we sometimes have to rely on borrowing seeds from other farmers to continue producing.

If RCEP prohibit us to do so, what will happen to us? Many farmers will be force to leave agriculture, and this will create food insecurity. We need to keep out from this harmful agreement. Thank you for your attention.