Revisiting Food Fortification Agenda in an Evolving Micronutrient Landscape of ASEAN

Biography

Dr. Regina Moench-Pfanner is Founder and CEO of ibn360, Singapore, a consulting firm specializing in food, nutrition and health. She has 30 years’ experience leading development and nutrition programs in emerging markets. She began her career with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, leading major relief operations in Africa and Eastern Europe before moving into development to improve nutrition through public-private-civic initiatives focusing on large scale food fortification while working at the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). Dr. Moench-Pfanner has published and co-authored over 60 peer-reviewed papers and has dedicated her career to bringing nutritious foods to those in need, specifically to the lower-income consumers who have to survive on small budgets. She is a widely recognized thought leader in the complex field of nutrition and the linkages between agriculture and nutrition. She also delivers key presentations and moderates at international conferences. Dr. Moench-Pfanner is a Fulbright Scholar who holds an M.Sc. in International Nutrition, Michigan State University, USA and a Doctorate from the University of Bonn, Germany.

Abstract

Despite significant economic growth and reduction in poverty, ASEAN countries still face the issue of the double burden of malnutrition, which is the co-existence of under- and overweight coupled with micronutrient deficiencies. For example, Indonesia, the most populated country in ASEAN, has the same number of underweight children as overweight children coupled with high levels of iron deficiency, zinc and other micronutrients. Other ASEAN countries have similar sub-optimal health and nutrition statistics, in particular, high levels of stunting is a reflection of long-term inadequate dietary intake. Food fortification has been accepted as an efficient complementary strategy to bring nutrient-dense food to those in need; among others, staple food fortification has been taken up by governments to complement their efforts to provide micronutrients when the local diet is inadequate or a diversified nutrient-dense diet is not affordable. Dr. Moench-Pfanner will talk about the nutrition landscape in ASEAN and its pressing challenges and provide insight into how food fortification has been employed to help to reduce micronutrient deficiency.