# Outcome Statement of the 2nd Southeast Asia Regional School Meals Coalition Summit

"Advancing school meals as a driver of human capital development, nutrition, education and resilient food systems"

The Government of the Philippines, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), hosted the 2nd Southeast Asia Regional School Meals Coalition Summit in Manila from 23 to 25 November 2026. Representatives from 12 governments and more than 50 partners, international organizations, and the five Initiatives of the School Meals Coalition, came together to strengthen regional cooperation and investment in school meals.

Launched in 2021, the School Meals Coalition seeks to ensure that every child has access to a healthy, nutritious school meal. It now brings together 113 governments, six regional bodies and over 160 partners around a shared vision: school meals as a strategic investment in children and national development. Their benefits extend from learning, health and nutrition to opportunities for girls and young women, stronger local economies and sustainable markets for farmers, processors and small businesses.

The 2nd regional Summit builds on the inaugural Southeast Asia Regional School Meals Coalition Summit held in Cambodia in November 2024, where delegates affirmed school meals as a strategic priority for addressing all forms of malnutrition and promoting sustainable food systems across the region. The 2nd Summit in Manila focused on turning shared ambitions into stronger policies and programmes across Southeast Asia. Through policy exchanges and Solutions Labs, participants shared evidence and practical approaches to inclusive, resilient school meals. Discussions centred on using data to improve delivery, linking schools with smallholder farmers, securing sustainable financing and partnerships under government leadership and strengthening institutional capacity to deliver at scale.

The Summit was guided by the four priorities endorsed one month earlier at the 3rd Ministerial Task Force Meeting of the School Meals Coalition: Country Action and Regional Cooperation; Local Governance; Sustainable Financing and Partnerships; and Deepening Global Advocacy. Participants also welcomed Finland's invitation to the 3rd Ministerial Global Summit of the School Meals Coalition, to be held in Helsinki in October 2027.

Countries called for coordinated, evidence-based advocacy to sustain political commitment and predictable domestic financing, with vulnerable and hard-to-reach children at the centre of efforts to expand access. They highlighted ASEAN and other local, regional and global platforms as opportunities to share country experience, demonstrate impact and mobilize wider support.

Host's Country Progress. The Summit welcomed the Philippines' leadership as host and ASEAN Chair in 2026. Since joining the School Meals Coalition in 2021, the Philippines has advanced school meals as an investment in children's health, nutrition and education, increasing annual funding for school nutrition more than sevenfold between 2022 and 2026. Alongside this expansion, the government is strengthening nutrition standards, meal preparation infrastructure and nutrition-sensitive programs including water, sanitation and hygiene in schools. Its emphasis on local ownership, through greater engagement of local government units and other sectors, reflects a commitment to a whole-of-society approach. Together, these efforts aim to improve programme quality and sustainability while supporting local livelihoods and resilient food systems. The Philippines' experience offered practical lessons for regional exchange and cooperation.

**The Summit's outcomes included:**

**1- Final declaration from the participating Southeast Asian countries:**

- The Summit reaffirmed a shared regional aspiration to advance holistic school meals as a strategic investment in children's health, nutrition, education and overall well-being. In alignment with the recently adopted ASEAN Declaration on Foundational Learning, school meals are recognized as an enabling intervention to address gaps in foundational learning by improving children's health, school participation and readiness to learn, while contributing to equitable human capital development.
- Building on ASEAN's progress in developing regional minimum standards for school nutrition and meals, the Summit underscored the importance of advancing the development of an ASEAN Roadmap on School Meals as a regional strategic priority. Informed by a landscape analysis of national school meals programmes in the region, the Roadmap would articulate medium-term priorities, guide coordinated investments and strengthen multisectoral collaboration, including the role of local governments in delivering inclusive, sustainable and climate-resilient nutrition specific and sensitive programmes that support local food systems and agricultural livelihoods.
- The Summit articulated the importance of ASEAN's engagement with the School Meals Coalition, including potential regional membership, to accelerate the Roadmap's development and implementation, mobilize technical expertise and innovative financing, strengthen knowledge exchange and amplify ASEAN's global voice. Ultimately, ASEAN aspires to ensure every child is well nourished, healthy and ready to learn.

**2- Countries and partners made the following announcements and commitments to advance this regional vision and the priorities of the Coalition:**

- Cambodia updated its School Meals Coalition national commitment toward evidence-based action and policy implementation, emphasizing stronger government ownership, as well as

programme expansion through a clear targeting mechanism. It also prioritizes system strengthening, sustainability and regional leadership through knowledge sharing.

- Indonesia reaffirmed its aim to achieve universal coverage for its target beneficiaries by 2029, while continuously strengthening quality, governance, food safety and sustainable local food systems; developing a robust integrated monitoring, evaluation and impact measurement system; stimulating the local economy by creating jobs; expanding market access for smallholder farmers and bolstering agricultural supply chains.
- Lao PDR reaffirmed its commitment to a nationally owned, sustainably financed school meals programme linking schools with local farmers towards 2030 and beyond. It aims to ensure every child receives a healthy, nutritious daily meal in school, improving education, nutrition and local economic outcomes.
- The Philippines reaffirmed its commitment to progressively expand and strengthen school meals and develop a four-year national roadmap for sustainable financing, local government delivery and stronger links with local farmers and food systems.
- Timor-Leste announced its School Meals Coalition national commitment, committing to increase the use of locally sourced food in school meals, strengthen programme financing and operationalize a nationwide digital monitoring system by 2028.
- CSO Network of the School Meals Coalition: Building on the commitments made at the Summit, the Network will develop a regional action agenda outlining priority actions for collaboration to support governments and advance school meals across Southeast Asia.
- The School Meals Coalition Secretariat, hosted by the World Food Programme, welcomes the shared regional aspiration to advance holistic school meals and commits to support efforts in the region towards the preparations of the Third Global Summit in Finland in 2027.