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The 9th Conference of the ERAHS in Jeju Island: the ROK, the PRC, and Japan Share Insights into the New Value of Agricultural and Fisheries Heritage Systems of East Asia

Sejong, 17 September 2025 — On 17 September, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) of the Republic of Korea has announced that it will hold the 9th Conference of the East Asia Research Association for Agricultural Heritage Systems (ERAHS) in Jeju Island from 17 to 20 September 2025.

The international conference is an academic event on Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (IAHS) of East Asia—led by the Republic of Korea (ROK),

the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Japan—which has been held since 2014. The year 2025 marks the conference's return to the Republic of Korea in six years after it was held in Hadong-gun (the county of Hadong), Gyeongsanam-do (the province of South Gyeongsang), in 2019. Experts, government and municipal officials, researchers, and representatives of local communities from across the region will attend the conference.

Jeju Island has two Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). One is the island's unique farm border stone walls, called “batdam,” built of basalt stones to mark the boundaries of farm fields and protect them from strong wind and soil erosion, which was designated as a GIAHS by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN FAO) in 2014. The other is the fishing practices of Jeju Haenyeo (female divers), which was designated as a GIAHS in 2023.

With these global heritage systems, Jeju bestows a greater symbolic meaning upon the conference. Furthermore, this year's conference is expected to be an important opportunity in conserving agricultural heritage and spreading the value.

Under the theme of “Sustainable Conservation of IAHS (Important Agricultural Heritage Systems) and Restoration of Community,” the conference will shed a new light on agricultural heritage as a solution to the climate crisis and have discussions about the ways for its sustainable utilisation.

The main programme includes the following: (a) an event for networking among participating countries and GIAHS sites on 17 September; (b) keynote speeches, presentations, and six thematic sessions on 18-19 September; and (c)

participation in the Jeju Haenyeo Cultural Event on 20 September.

The sessions will cover a variety of topics as in the following: (a) ecosystem services and conservation at IAHS sites; (b) certification, branding, and promotion of IAHS products; (c) comparative analysis of IAHS policies among the three countries; (d) sustainable agricultural heritage tourism and IAHS cases; (e) the young generation and multi-stakeholder participation; and (f) conservation and management of important fisheries heritage systems (IFHS).

Exhibition and promotional events will also be held, in addition to academic events. They will feature approximately 80 posters on agricultural and fisheries heritage systems from inside and outside the Republic of Korea, and showcase products and local specialties containing the characteristics of IAHS. They will also offer hands-on experience of some local specialties so that participants in the ERAHS conference and visitors can feel the value of agricultural and fisheries heritage more closely.

Importantly, on 19 September, in conjunction with the 9th ERAHS Conference, a trilateral working-level meeting among the governments of the ROK, the PRC, and Japan will take place as a follow-up to the 4th Trilateral Agricultural Ministers' Meeting held in August. The working-level meeting will discuss the ways to promote the exchanges among local governments and private organizations, including designated GIAHS sites, from the three countries, as well as the ways to revitalize local economies having GIAHS sites.

H.E. Song Miryung, Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea said: "This ERAHS Conference will be a significant opportunity for the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of

China, and Japan to share their insights into a new value of agricultural and fisheries heritage systems in responding to the climate crisis and developing rural communities. I hope that this conference will serve as a meaningful opportunity for the three nations to share their policies and experiences, as well as to strengthen joint efforts at the level of East Asia.”