

Welcome Address

Mr. Francis Estrada
President, AIM

Managers of the best social enterprises, representatives of resource organizations and CSO networks interested in social entrepreneurship, distinguished members of the academe, Dean Frankie Roman, Prof. Dacanay and other members of our faculty, and friends of AIM

The Asian Institute of Management (AIM) is pleased to collaborate with the Conference of Asian Foundations and Organizations (CAFO), the China-Europe International Business School (CEIBS), the Copenhagen Business School, and the Instituto de Empresa y Esade (IESE) Business School in the organization of this International Workshop on Social Entrepreneurship in Asia.

The Asian growth miracle may be viewed in the following context in terms of time: 1) the post-war rise of war-torn Japan into the largest economy in the world, 2) the export-led growth we have come to know as the Asian tiger economy miracle that involved basically Taiwan, Hongkong and Singapore., 3) the very dramatic growth of Malaysia and Thailand, 4) the spectacular emergence of China as the fastest growing economy of the world and a very important global manufacturing center, and 5) now we have from South Asia, India's entry into the international stage as the global's center for business process outsourcing and an increasingly important center for information and communication technology.

Indeed, Asia has become most vibrant economic region in the world.

Not surprisingly, a number of Asians have joined the roster of the world's wealthiest individuals. Within that context, it is ironic that amidst such dramatic growth Asia is home to 2/3 of the world's poor- 1.9 billion Asians live at or below the poverty line. This daunting reality was highlighted by ADB President Haruhiko Kuroda (September 2005) in his address to the United Nations when he said that, "The region has more people with inadequate nutrition living in slum conditions and without access to water and sanitation than any other developing region of the world." This is simply indefensible morally, socially, and economically.

The coexistence of abject poverty amidst enormous prosperity is the defining context for social entrepreneurship in Asia. The imperative is to bring the majority of the population into the economic and social mainstream. The world looks into innovative teachers and practitioners to demonstrate how social entrepreneurship can be a powerful instrument to address such an imperative.

A related important question is to whether what is now called social entrepreneurship is scalable to the point where it can make a palpable difference on a macro basis.

Having recently assumed the presidency of AIM, I must admit to be in the process of determining the role that an institute like the AIM can play in advancing the knowledge of and the disposition towards social entrepreneurship.

AIM does have a social and development entrepreneurship program under its Asian Center for Entrepreneurship. The Center offers a Masters in Entrepreneurship for Social and Development Entrepreneurs. The institute has also begun to offer a microfinance track for its Masters in Entrepreneurship program last year. I am pleased to note that in this connection, the research and outreach work of the faculty has been recognized locally and internationally.

I am also pleased to learn that this dialogue that you are holding will explore the role of research/educational institutions, small and medium enterprises and the corporate sector in general in advancing social entrepreneurship in Asia. Your findings and insights should provide input that will be valuable to AIM as well as to the other institutions represented in this workshop.

I offer a warm welcome to you and my best wishes for a productive and insightful workshop. I also take this opportunity to welcome all non-Filipino participants especially the first time visitors in the Philippines.

Thank you and good day.