

3rd SEAL Conference Declaration

We are more than 150 social entrepreneurs, leaders and representatives of social enterprise resource institutions, civil society, business, government and multilateral agencies who have virtually gathered together at the Third Social Enterprise Advocacy and Leveraging (SEAL) Asia Conference from September 16 to 17, 2020.

We have, for the past two days, discussed perspectives, experiences and initiatives on transforming our world focusing on the theme “Social Entrepreneurship and Cross Sectoral Collaboration: Ensuring the Recovery of Social Enterprises towards Leaving No One Behind in Building Back Better and Achieving Sustainable Development.”

We note that even before the COVID19 pandemic, the Asia Pacific region was already experiencing a development crisis characterized by very dim prospects of achieving any of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We have also noted that social entrepreneurs and social innovators in the region were already recognized and poised to serve as accelerators for the achievement of the SDGs. But COVID19 has drastically changed the situation as social enterprises have not been spared of the pandemic’s devastating impacts.

We are inspired by the heartwarming stories of various social enterprises and social enterprise resource institutions in their recovery efforts to arrest the adverse impacts of the pandemic on their respective organizations and the poor they serve. Against all odds, we are likewise inspired by the initiatives of social enterprises to undertake various forms of innovation in terms of products, processes and models in pursuit of their social mission.

We are hopeful that in creatively optimizing ICT and social media, social enterprises are showing the way towards a community-oriented digital economy. Through mobilizing stakeholders and community assets, and investing in education and strengthening people’s capacities, social enterprises are exemplifying what it means to bridge digital and social divides. And through social enterprises that have empowered women and men small producers, we witness food secure, resilient and child-friendly communities amidst the pandemic.

We believe that social entrepreneurship and the pursuit of social innovation in engaging governments, the business sector and multilateral agencies is a pathway that we could deliberately pursue with civil society to ensure the recovery of social enterprises and the marginalized sectors in Asia-Pacific.

We applaud the launch of the Women’s Empowerment, Livelihood and Food in Agricultural Value Chains (WE LIVE FOOD) platform and commit to put women and men farmers, fishers and small scale producers at the center of initiatives towards food security, nutrition and agricultural development that is gender-transformative, equitable and sustainable.

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We commit ourselves in the pursuit of the platforms towards Health for All; Decent Work for All in Sustainable Value Chains, including Education for Decent Work; Rural Revitalization, Youth and Social Entrepreneurship; and Technological Innovations towards Sustainable Development.

We commit to develop these initiatives as platforms for the social enterprise sector in Asia-Pacific to undertake learning exchange and building communities of practice in undertaking evidence-based and bottom-up development innovations; measuring and projecting collective impact; advocating changes in government policies and programs; as well as promoting cross sectoral collaboration towards leaving no one behind, restoring the environment and building back fairer.

We shall strive to leverage the resources that the sector has and develop innovative and restorative financing for evolving a Social Enterprise Recovery Program and Fund that would be large and responsive enough to make a dent on the recovery process of the sector and the poor and marginalized communities we serve.

We shall strive to contribute towards inclusive recovery and building back fairer in our respective contexts and countries even as we also commit to engage the coming Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2021 and the High Level Political Forum 2021.

We welcome and shall actively work in concretizing UNESCAP's commitment to assist and build the capability of governments in the region to create enabling policies and programs for the social enterprise sector to recover, prosper and effectively fulfill its role as transformational partner of the poor and marginalized.

We shall work towards meaningfully advancing and expanding the SDGs linked to pandemic recovery to include no poverty and zero hunger; good health, nutrition and well-being; access to education and re-skilling, women's empowerment and reduced inequality; decent work and inclusive growth; inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation; responsible consumption and production; sustainable communities and climate action; peace, justice and strong institutions and partnerships for the goals.

We look forward to partnerships with governments, multilateral agencies, businesses and social investors in these multi-stakeholder collaborative platforms and initiatives as investments towards putting back on track the social enterprise sector's role in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs. We commit to effectively engage the youth to build a successor generation of social entrepreneurs and social innovators. In this way, we shall truly leave no one behind in building back fairer and come closer to achieving sustainable development.

September 23, 2020

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