



4th Social Enterprise Advocacy and Leveraging (SEAL) Asia Conference Declaration

We are more than 150 social entrepreneurs, leaders and representatives of social enterprise resource institutions, civil society groups, business sector, government and multilateral agencies who have gathered together at the Fourth Social Enterprise Advocacy and Leveraging (SEAL) Asia Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, from March 22 to 23, 2023.

We have, for the past two days, endeavored to harness lessons and learnings from perspectives, experiences and initiatives on fairer and equitable ways to move forward after the pandemic, focusing on the theme, "Social Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Partnerships: Towards Inclusive Recovery and Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals".

We are saddened to note that 97 million people globally were driven to extreme poverty by the COVID 19 pandemic, worsening the multidimensional poverty, reaching 1.3 billion, across 107 developing countries, representing about 22% of the world's population.

We are, however, more inspired by stories of how social enterprises responded in ways that promoted the values of social equity, solidarity and sustainability, therefore leaving no one behind. Indeed, these are concrete steps toward ensuring the recovery of the social enterprise sector and the poor that they serve and fulfilling their role as accelerators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

We commend the co-conveners of the Social Entrepreneurship Platforms for sustaining our important work for inclusive recovery and building back fairer towards the SDG:

- For nurturing transformational partnerships and women's economic empowerment in agricultural value chains anchored on the growing adoption and mainstreaming of the Benchmarks and Guidelines for Transformational Partnerships, we thank the Women's Empowerment, Livelihoods and Food in Agricultural Value Chains (WE LIVE FOOD) Platform;
- For encouraging the youth to go back and help their roots by featuring young social entrepreneurs and enabling programs for youth, rendering rural revitalization and sustainable development a viable, we are grateful to the Rural Revitalization, Youth and Social Entrepreneurship Platform;
- For the constant reminder that unpaid work is work and care work must be shared work within a continuing learning and sharing platform for fair trade and gender-just skills education, we are thankful to the Decent Work for All in Sustainable Value Chains Platform; and,
- For building a regional platform for community-centered, pro-poor universal health care, we thank the Health for All Platform .

We especially commend the stakeholders of the social enterprise sector in the region, our valued partners in the Social Entrepreneurship Platforms, for stepping up to the challenge of ensuring that the gains of the sector are sustained and that safeguard mechanisms are in place to ensure resiliency of social enterprises in the post-COVID 19 world.

We laud the launching of the Technological Innovations for Sustainable Development Platform co-convened by the Association for Progressive Communications, Angels of Impact and the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) and commit to contribute to achieving its objective of connecting the unconnected and marginalized by building community networks and complementary community connectivity initiatives to bridge the digital divide.

We renew our commitment to collectively sustain these collaborative platforms for learning and exchange of experiences and best practices among SE stakeholders, developing and projecting collective impact in the recovery of SE and the poverty sectors they serve, and advocating for changes in government policies and programs, for inclusive recovery, building back fairer and accelerating the SDGs.

We commit to harnessing a multi-stakeholder collaboration in order to assist the recovery and repositioning of the social enterprise sector as a major player in inclusive recovery towards building back fairer and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs through the initiative called, Catalyzing the Recovery of Social and Community Enterprises for Transformation (CRESCENT) in Asia-Pacific.

We further commit to share the evolving CRESCENT initiative co-developed by SE stakeholders in Asia Pacific and explore the opportunities and potentials for partnership with key stakeholders in the region towards the establishment of a virtual hub for exchange and the Social Enterprise Recovery and Innovation Program and Fund.

We also commit to engage the 10th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2023, by sharing our initiatives that can concretize their theme of "Accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels".

We shall strive to highlight the important contribution of the social enterprise sector in the 3 SDGs identified by the APFSD 2023 as focus of their review namely, SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

We thank our co-organizers, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and Catalyst 2030 for the success of our 4th SEAL Asia Conference.

We welcome the UNESCAP's continued 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 fulfil its role as transformational partner of the poor and marginalized.

We likewise express our appreciation to our sponsors and partners- our colleagues from the Social Enterprise (SE) Thailand for co-organizing the session on Social Enterprise Initiatives and Enabling Mechanisms towards Inclusive Recovery, Building Back Fairer and Accelerating the Achievement of the SDGs in Thailand and hosting the SE Learning Tour; our colleagues from APRCEM-Social and Community Enterprise Constituency, Association of Progressive Communications, Oxfam in Asia and the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok for their support to our 4th SEAL Asia Conference as an enabling environment for exchange of ideas and experiences.



We stand together, always striving to initiate, innovate, collaborate, educate and collectively address the multiple crises on poverty, inequity and environmental insecurity. This is our firm resolve. All of us, all of us, all of us.

March 23, 2023

