

Statement of the Social and Community Enterprise Constituency, APFSD 2021

Before the pandemic, social and community enterprises have played a critical role as transformational partners of the poor and marginalized in pursuit of development justice to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the pandemic, they are faced with the challenge of recovery even as they pursue transformational partnerships with the poor in building back fairer. In this context, it is critical that government recovery efforts in Asia and the Pacific recognize and enable social and community enterprises as critical partners, so that these recovery initiatives truly leave no one behind and pave the way towards accelerating the SDGs during this crucial Decade of Action.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we united as a sector to co-convene with UNESCAP in September 2020 the Social Enterprise Advocacy and Leveraging Asia Conference where we launched 5 multi-stakeholder platforms for inclusive recovery and building back fairer. Our most advanced platform is the Women's Empowerment, Livelihood and Food in Agricultural Value Chains or WE LIVE FOOD. WE LIVE FOOD promotes a set of Benchmarks for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains that have been translated into scorecards to assist not only social enterprises but also SMEs, agribusinesses and AVC program holders to contribute more to the achievement of 13 out of the 17 SDGs. Moving forward, we now have a set of proposed policies, programs and incentives that governments could consider to enable the practice of these Benchmarks. These are embodied in a set of Guidelines for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains and we submit these for the consideration of APFSD. The 5 elements of these Guidelines are:

1. Innovative agricultural value chain (AVC) development support programs that create food secure, resilient and empowered small producer communities;
2. Investments that expand and enable women's economic empowerment spanning all AVC functions and organizations engaged in AVC development, management and governance;
3. Investments in Sustainable Consumption and Production systems that enable women and men small producers as stakeholders in achieving a climate resilient and green economy;
4. Recognition and investment in support programs including hybrid financing for Social Enterprises and Inclusive Businesses as key enablers of women and men small producers in AVCs; and
5. Support for cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platforms that mainstream sustainable agriculture, transformational partnerships and women's economic empowerment in AVCs towards measurable social impact and accelerating the SDGs.

To learn more about these Guidelines, I would like to take this opportunity to invite everyone to a side event via Zoom on Thursday, March 25, 2021 from 4:00 to 5:30pm (Bangkok) featuring the WE LIVE FOOD in AVCs PLATFORM and the 4 other SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PLATFORMS FOR INCLUSIVE RECOVERY AND BUILDING BACK FAIRER. Thank you very much.

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