



THE ASIAN FORUM FOR SOLIDARITY ECONOMY 2009 JAPAN

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

(This is a working document in-progress currently being distributed to participants of the 2nd Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy for purposes of encouraging dialogues on solidarity economy at the local, regional and global levels. All views and comments on this document shall be compiled for consideration by stakeholders of the next biennial meeting, the 3rd Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2011).

I. INTRODUCTION

While it has brought about technological breakthroughs and conveniences never experienced before, the multiple global crisis – with coming together of its financial, environmental, energy, food, cultural and social components – is threatening societies and the environment to extinction. It is restructuring the economic and political systems through marketization, economic liberalization and the replacement of welfare state by the ‘small’ government which is representing the interests of giant multinational corporations.

Increasing social and ecological disintegration caused by rapacious exploitation of natural resources has given rise to climate change that unleashes monstrous natural disasters. Globalization has sharpened the effects of market failure and wide-spread speculation, leading to marginalization of local economies and the rise of income disparity. It has multiplied the number of the poor, violated human rights, and destroyed indigenous cultures with the onset of consumerist lifestyle. This disequilibrium in and precariousness of economic growth-oriented societies has resulted in the social exclusion and imposed even greater burden on the socially weak, triggering the explosion of wars and conflicts. The world we live now is far from a place where peace is established.

II. OUR SHARED VISION OF SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

We, the stakeholders of the Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy, stand in unity with civil society throughout Asia and the world in advancing Solidarity Economy as an alternative to the failed market economy. A term that was widely used in Latin America and the European Union by the RIPESS (Reseau Intercontinental de Promotion de l' Economie Social Solidaire) and the annual World Social Forums (2001 to 2009), Solidarity Economy is robustly gaining currency in today's international scene for valid reasons.

As globalization wrecks havoc on societies, people are resisting their exclusion and marginalization by forging solidarity at the local, regional, and global levels. The civil society is rising up to the occasion through organized protests, activist movements, dialogues, and concrete alternative development initiatives and approaches. In this context, the Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy is a bold measure initiated by solidarity movements in Asia and their partners in other continents trumpeting the call for solidarity among the peoples of Asia to build a responsible, plural and solidarity-based economy.

Solidarity Economy restores the diversity and vibrancy of local and territorial economies, and revives indigenous means of generating employment for the people. It encourages the democratic participation of civil society in the political and socio-economic governance of nations and strengthens the society's capacity for justice, gender equity, and sustainable economy. It advances the human rights of all the people, including migrants and overseas residents whose number is growing in the age of globalization, as well as those who are characterized as 'weak', 'marginalized', and 'excluded'. Solidarity economy is an economy with compassion and sympathy; it gives priority to the welfare of the people and not to increasing profits for self-gain.

The 2nd Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy is a convergence of visions of Solidarity Economy from both the global and Asian perspectives. Highlighting alternative development approaches of solidarity economy in various parts of Asia and other continents - including fair trade, socially responsible investment, ethical/social/solidarity finance, microfinance, social performance standards, solidarity-based production, solidarity-based markets, social enterprises, women's collectives and gender equity, alternative health care solutions,

international solidarity tax, sustainable organic agriculture, youth participation—the Asian Forum unveiled the wealth of experience that could ground solidarity economy in local communities and larger territories.

III. MOVING ON FORWARD

Realizing the importance of moving forward in purpose-driven unity, we the stakeholders of the Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy, resolve to take the following concrete steps in the coming years:

- 1) Establish the Asian Alliance for Solidarity Economy as the Asian hub for policy-advocacy, theoretical and organizational development work, and solidarity economic initiatives.
- 2) Engage in capacity building of the youth.
- 3) Forge alliances, networking, and collaboration with local and global partners.
- 4) Mobilization for the 3rd Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy to be held in 2011 in Malaysia.