



Asia-Europe Meeting

ASEM CONFERENCE

PROMOTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN ASIA AND EUROPE

Proposed by Australia, China, Denmark, EU, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Lao PDR, New Zealand, Romania, Singapore, Viet Nam

CONCEPT PAPER

BACKGROUND

Despite unprecedented economic and social progress around the world with nearly 1.1 billion people risen from extreme poverty since 1990, many still suffer greater degrees of social exclusion and limited access to opportunities. As the dark side of globalisation, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the adverse impacts of integration take its toll on society and the labour market with profound impacts, inequality has inevitably come back to the center of the development agenda.

The historic global consensus reached with the adoption of the universal and ambitious 2030 Agenda has called for urgent global efforts towards fair and sustainable development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals underline the necessity of leaving no one behind, with special focus on reaching the poorest and most vulnerable, especially the young and elderly, ethnic and other minorities.

In Asia and Europe, the call for effective economic and social inclusion has become all the more relevant and urgent in view of the realities of persistent inequality and unemployment, enduring multi-dimensional poverty regarding education and living standards, impacts of technological trends, among others. Fast economic growth coupled up with social inclusion is one of the world's most pressing global issues that require a concerted effort between governments, businesses and society. For our two regions to be engines of global growth, all segments of society will need to be brought on board. Growth is not sustainable if it is not economically and socially inclusive. Inclusion and development are the most important solutions we can count on to achieve a sustainable future for all.

At the last ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar, ASEM Leaders stressed the importance of “promoting socio-economic growth, sustainable, innovative and inclusive development, job creation and in tackling global challenges” to achieve sustainable development. They also acknowledged “increasing inequalities, social exclusion and aging populations call for strengthening policies to achieve sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and to promote adequate social protection and decent work for all, including women and youth”.

Against this background, the ASEM Conference on “**Promoting Economic and Social Inclusion in Asia and Europe**” responds directly to the commitment of our Leaders. In particular, this event is designed to provide a platform for ASEM members to exchange policy and best practices to achieve inclusive outcomes and effectively implement the 2030 Agenda at global, regional and local levels. Furthermore, the Conference would also highlight the connectivity between Asia and Europe in tackling global issues related to economic and social inclusion and enhance ASEM's effectiveness, relevance and in-depthness in the third decade of development.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote global partnership, regional and inter-regional cooperation on sharing best practices and experiences among ASEM members and relevant institutions on identifying the policies needed and set priorities of actions to maximise progress towards greater economic growth and welfare improvements while leaving no one behind.

- To facilitate multi-stakeholders' deliberations and diverse insights on how best to work together to achieve economic and social inclusion in the two regions.
- To foster ASEM cooperation in promoting economic and social inclusion as a contribution of Asia - Europe partnership to achieve UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including achieving good health and well-being (SDG 3), promoting gender equality (SDG 5), enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work (SDG 8), building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (SDG 9), reducing income inequality within and among countries (SDG 10).
- To build collective understanding, increase awareness, and enhance collaborations among multistakeholders in Asia and Europe to engage in and support the process of improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of individuals, especially the disadvantaged, to take part in society and the economy.
- To support the establishment and implementation of actionable agendas for public-private collaboration to advance economic growth, social inclusion, achieve development priorities and translate multilateral norms and decisions into practice.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- The outcome of the event will be a compiled and comprehensive list of best practices, ideas and recommendations of Asia and Europe on promoting economic and social inclusion and will be presented at the 14th Foreign Ministers Meeting in Spain in 2019 and the 13th ASEM Summit in 2020.
- Visions and concrete measures and recommendations to promote economic and social inclusion in Asia and Europe, especially in the areas of gender equality, human capital development, aging population, structural reform, employment and labor mobility, etc.
- A network of multi-stakeholders to be established to share experience and best practices in addressing social engagement and participation in the labour market.

DATE AND VENUE

The Conference will be organized in the city of Nha Trang, 16 – 17 May 2019.

PARTICIPATION

The Conference is expected to attract approximately 200 participants, including government officials, senior policy-makers, researchers, practitioners, universities, businesses, related regional and international organizations and other stake holders.

CO-SPONSORS

ASEM members are invited to co-sponsor the initiative. Co-sponsors will be responsible for sending chairs/speakers to the Conference, giving comments on the concept paper, provisional agenda and the tentative program as well as coordinating with the host in inviting the guest speakers. Any contributions either in cash or in-kind, on a voluntary basis, are mostly welcomed.

COSTS

Viet Nam, as the host, will cover organising costs. Participants are kindly requested to cover their own travelling and accommodation expenses.

CONTACT DETAILS

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