

**TEXT OF SPEECH BY DENISON JAYASOORIA¹
ON BEHALF OF ASEC A MEMBER OF RIPESS FOR ASIA**

*At the Anniversary Webinar for the United Nations General Assembly Resolution:
“Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development”
held on April 18, 2024*

Good afternoon, friends in this global SSE community.

I bring you Salam and peace greetings from RIPESS (Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy) and specifically from the Asian partners - [ASEC](#) (Asian Solidarity Economy Council) which has active partners in 14 Asian countries².

I am delighted to join this webinar to share some reflections from the Asian perspective. Being part of the SSE global movement of grassroots organisations – activists, practitioners, and public intellectuals, we recognise that the UN resolution on SSE is one of the major breakthroughs in global advocacy. We in Asia also acknowledge the major role played by the [UNTFSSSE](#) and partners like RIPESS in this process.

We as Asians note sadly that a year ago only 3 member states namely Indonesia, Japan and Mongolia were among the 43 endorsing countries. However, I am told that China, India, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Thailand participated actively during the negotiations. This is significant and we can work towards enlisting state support for SSE

Furthermore, a ground reality check will show that SSE models are striving in Asia at two levels.

SSE as grassroots movements

First, there is a very dynamic movement at the grassroots all around Asia. This is evident in the work of ASEC and our partners through the many grassroots initiatives which illustrates the dynamism of an alternative model of doing business and development which is a transformative paradigm shift impacting economic, social, environmental and governance towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and just development. This is well illustrated by a few partners:-

- The HomeNet movements in Pakistan, Thailand and Philippines is a clear example of how CSO have brought together the informal network and home-based women workers into a collective for better bargaining and marketing, for protection from abuse and exploitation, for better health care especially for street vendors. This has resulted in increased income and better working conditions addressing exploitation. In Thailand the informal sector organised through the Homenet Thailand also plays an

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² South Asia (5 countries): Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
Southeast Asia (6 countries): Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand
East Asia (3 countries): Japan, China/Hong Kong, South Korea

advocacy role in ensuring Bangkok city officials take the views of the street vendors in local city plans. Both ILO through the [“Resolution concerning decent work and the SSE” \(2022\)](#) and RIPESS have played an active role in this global process

- The ASSEFA movement of self-help groups of women in South Indian thousands of villages in Tamil Nadu, organising themselves into cooperatives have spearheaded community transformation projects impacting the local economy through dairy and agricultural products as well as educational and training institutions. These self-help groups of well organised and empowered women are also being elected into village committees and this is impacting overall village development.
- The OA Organics of Malaysia has over the years empowered indigenous forest-based communities into organic vegetable farming which has transformed their lifestyle from ‘hunter and gathers’ into modern farmers whose organic products are sold in the supermarkets in the city. This provides stable income and enables the Orang Asli to conserve their forest.
- Likewise, the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network in China has brought new models of sustainable agriculture as well as enhancing food security. CSA models are directly related to food sovereignty, rights of peasants and agroecology. According to FAO, “community supported agriculture (CSA) is one of the best examples of a successful, alternative food distribution system, providing real income to producers and affordable healthy food for consumers”.

SSE State driven Policies

Second, there is also a policy level development and while this might be seen as a small policy shift and slow in movement nonetheless more UN member states in Asia have adopted a favourable policy towards social economy alternatives such as social enterprise.

However, at the global level many States and regions have framework legislation. There is also a need for developing strong SSE at community and territorial level as a systemic game changer and means of fighting climate crisis.

Some examples from Asia-

- South Korea has a specific legislation, countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore have public policies towards a favourable triple bottom line approach of balance between economic, social and environment. A new category of social entrepreneurs running social enterprises now flood the market.
- There are good state policies in the promotion of a people economy or community economy. Some good state driven examples are through renewed efforts in cooperative development in Indonesia with provisions for community rural banks such as Bina Swayada and active micro credit provisions in the Philippines provides the policy framework for the setting up of micro credit institutions which provide financial access.

- There is both legislation and a favourable policy for community land trusts for forest-based communities especially in Nepal where forest users' activities are very dynamic. Local communities become both forest users but also conservationists.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on SDGs is a bipartisan, multi stakeholder group working with 115 parliamentarians in localising SDGs in policy and micro solution projects. Many of the grassroots projects have very strong SSE features and SSE is recognised for the acceleration of SDGs to ensure no one or community is left behind. Very good potential as members of parliament to influence policies and legislation in the future.
- There is an emerging new initiative by faith-based organisations in countries with Muslim majorities like Malaysia and Indonesia based on Islamic models of financing credit for the poor. One example is the "Ar Rahnū" which is an alternative to the exploitative pond shops. In this model credit is provided through the deposit of an item of gold on fair rates not interest.

Consolidating SSE in Asia

ASEC has been working with ILO in the Asian region through the regional SSE mapping project on Strengthening of SSE in Asia, Phase 1 (6 country case studies) and Phase 2 (another 6 country studies) with active participation with ASEC resource persons. This ILO sponsored research is giving some viability to SSE especially among State actors who are beginning to recognise SSE especially in the acceleration of SDGs agenda in leaving no one behind.

In January 2024 ASEC members participated and presented SSE-SDG case studies at the Mysdg Academy International Conf in Malaysia. A total of 19 case studies is now being edited into a new publication entitled "Building Inclusive communities through SDGs and SSE Initiatives".

From the ASIAN partners we appreciate the role played the UNSSE Taskforce at the international level and ILO especially in Asia region.

- We call upon the UN SSE Taskforce to establish an Asia-Pacific level taskforce like the global one to lobby state actors linked to UNESCAP. A regional level process can be more target driven. ASEC and other regional networks can play an active role in impacting grassroots people movements towards a greater articulation of their work using the lenses of SSE and SDGs.
- ASEC appreciates the efforts in the production of an [SSE Encyclopaedia](#). This is a very good effort. However, the Asian partners feel that the Asian experiences were not adequately covered. SSE is a global movement and therefore ASEC calls upon the UN Taskforce to help facilitate regional documentation to also give visibility for state actors to take notice.
- ASEC likes to also propose a study and documentation of 43 in-depth case studies of SSE organizations in realizing SDG using ILO guidelines across at least 15 countries.

- ASEC in partnership with MySDG Academy will host the ASEAN SDG-SSE Summit in 2025 when Malaysia is chair of ASEAN. ASEC invited UNSSE Taskforce, ILO and other partners to support this event. Good to use this regional event for greater visibility of SSE in Asia

Thank you for giving ASEC this opportunity and we look forward for greater solidarity in accelerating the SDGs through SSE.