

2016 ASEAN Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF)  
Novotel Hotel, Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines  
29-30 November 2016

6<sup>th</sup> ACBF Declaration

We, the representatives of the ASEAN Member States, and with the participation of other countries, cooperatives, farmers and fishers organizations, development organizations, and, civil society organizations, gathered during the 2016 ASEAN Cooperative Business Forum in Novotel Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines;

Recognizing that there is remarkable economic growth in the Asean region yet we still witness massive hunger and poverty as indicated by 560 million Asians who are struggling in the vicious cycle of poverty, especially in natural-resource-rich rural areas where majority of the Asean people live;

Alarmed by the growth-centered policies prioritizing profits and commodifying products have led to these increasing gross inequalities in the region as reflected by the global phenomenon where the wealth of only 88 families equal the combined assets of 3.5 billion or half of the world's population;

Concerned that this gross inequality is intensified by the increasing degradation of the environment due to impact of climate change, and, over exploitation of natural resources such as heavy deforestation, degradation of land, groundwater depletion, massive use of toxic materials such as chemical inputs in agricultural production—which all made it difficult to sustain agricultural growth and tradeoffs in sustainability;

Understanding that the situation is alarming as the earth warms without let-up and the oceans are rising, while, at the same time, the Asean population is steadily increasing;

Recognizing the urgency and gravity of the situation, and the important role of cooperativism in addressing aforementioned challenges, we now come together in advancing the welfare of at least 300 thousand agriculture cooperatives and farmers organizations in

Southeast Asia to rise to the aforementioned policy gaps, failing developmental models, and environmental-related issues;

Recognizing that the objective of ACEDAC is to increase the access of agri coops in Asean market and promote the exchange of info and technical expertise of the cooperatives in ASEAN countries.

With a firm conviction, we commit to:

- A. Champion the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger especially among small farmers, indigenous communities and fisher folks who ironically produce the food needs of the Asean people and of the world;
- B. Promote and advance social solidarity economy through cooperativism where people and the environment are the priorities more than profit towards attaining inclusive development;
- C. Strongly advocate sustainable agricultural technologies and promote local industries towards sustainable livelihoods and conservation of natural resources;

In moving forward, we will unite in building an informed constituency in the Asean region to:

- A. Be the voice and institution of the poor and the excluded in resisting growth-centered development aggressions, and, instead, promote people-centered development with emphasis on benefiting the small holders;
- B. Consolidate our efforts and promote the inter-country collaboration, such as learning exchanges, coop-to-coop trade, capacity building, information sharing, etc. in fostering sustainable development of agri-cooperatives; and,
- C. Advocate for legal framework and/or enabling policies and appropriate
- D. funding support for development of agri-cooperatives among the Member States;
- E. Promote continuing social dialogue and ensure institutionalized and meaningful participation of farmers' organization (FOs) and civil society organization (CSOs) in various ASEAN processes concerning agri-cooperatives such as AMAF, ACEDAC, and, ASWGAC, among others;
- F. Facilitate and promote linkage with other platforms (e.g. NEDAC, ICA, etc.) and private sector;

G. Promote gender equality and women empowerment to have increased participation in the agri-cooperative sector.

Signed on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of November 2016 in Quezon City, PHILIPPINES.

Signatories:

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