



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Ref. No.: 21-CL-13-GE-CON-B-PN2100049-001

Date of Issue	05 July 2021
Project Code	21-CL-13-GE-CON-B
Title	Conference on Social Empowerment in Agriculture
Timing and Duration	2 September 2021 (one day)
Hosting Country(ies)	APO Secretariat
Modality	Digital Multicountry
Implementing Organization(s)	APO Secretariat
Participating Country(ies)	All Member Countries
Overseas Participants	130
Local Participants	Not Applicable
Qualifications of Participants	Policymakers, agricultural professionals, and CEOs and managers of agribusinesses; and researchers working on social enterprises, inclusiveness, and empowerment issues in agriculture
Nomination of Participants	All nominations must be submitted through National Productivity Organizations of member countries
Closing Date for Nominations	5 August 2021

1. Objectives

- a. Introduce the concept and indicators of social empowerment for improving community development in the agriculture sector.
- b. Share successful models of and policies on social empowerment and their contributions to socioeconomic development.

2. Background

Social empowerment is the process of developing a sense of independence and self-confidence while acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that exclude the poor and keep them in poverty. It is a broad area of practice drawing upon social work and community development principles at individual, family, community, and social levels to promote equity and inclusion of all, such as persons with different abilities (PWDs) and other vulnerable groups.

Social empowerment can be achieved through inclusive education and socioeconomic integration. It is recognized as a major enabler in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1 (eliminating poverty), Goal 3 (good health and well-being), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 7 (affordable clean energy), and Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth).

Within this, women constitute an important component of social empowerment. The ability of women and girls to act individually and collectively to change social relationships that might otherwise exclude them and keep them in poverty is key to effective social empowerment. As such, it is imperative to expand and intensify social empowerment initiatives for women through education as well as economic opportunities. A report by the UN FAO (2013) stated that women received only 7% of total agricultural investment for human capital development and education. This level of investment should be raised considering that women serve as an important part of the workforce in the agriculture sector, accounting for 43% in developing countries, 57% in South Asia, and 22% in East Asia and the Pacific. A 2018 report by the UN ESCAP stated that about 61.3 million ASEAN women entrepreneurs owned and operated businesses, which is 9.8% of the total ASEAN population, while in South Asia women entrepreneurs led 20% of social enterprises.

Social entrepreneurship can foster innovation and improve agricultural programs by engaging groups such as PWDs and women, enabling them to support the livelihoods of their families and improve the general social fabric. There have been successful, innovative social enterprise models in recent decades in APO member countries such as Grameen Bank and BRAC of Bangladesh, Hansalim Agricultural Cooperative of the ROK, East Bali Cashews of Indonesia, Agrostar and Kisan Raja of India, and Virtualahan School in the Philippines. These models engage different social groups such as women, youth, PWDs, and marginal farmers in social empowerment efforts.

This conference will discuss the concept of social empowerment for improving community development in the agriculture sector and share successful models of how they can contribute to socioeconomic development.

3. Scope, Methodology, and Certificate of Attendance

The duration of the sessions will be around four hours. The indicative topics of the presentations are:

- Concepts and indicators of social empowerment and inclusion
- Government initiatives and policies on social empowerment in agriculture
- Inclusion of vulnerable groups including PWDs, women, and youth in social agribusiness
- Successful social empowerment and agribusiness models

The detailed program and list of speakers will be provided two weeks prior to the sessions with announcement of the names of the selected participants.

The participants are required to attend all sessions. This full participation is a prerequisite for receiving the APO certificate of attendance.

4. Financial Arrangements

The APO will meet the assignment costs for overseas and local resource persons, and for a virtual site visit(s), either broadcast live or recorded as applicable.

5. Implementation Procedures

Please refer to the implementation procedures for APO digital multicountry projects circulated with this document.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. AKP Mochtan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Dr. AKP Mochtan
Secretary-General