

Asia-Europe talks on social enterprises and the global economy

By Shada Islam

Asian and European experts meet in Berlin mid-July to discuss the role of social enterprises in promoting sustainable development.

The meeting, organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the British Council, will look at ways in which social enterprises – companies which combine a focus on the common good while using normal business methods and disciplines – are having an impact on the economies of Asia and Europe.

Held as part of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process launched in 1996 to encourage stronger links between the two regions, the discussions will include a public event on July 15 with keynote speakers including Muhammad A. (Rume) Ali, Managing Director, Enterprises & Investments at BRAC (Bangladesh) and Ms Penny Newman, Chief Executive Officer, Funktional Group/Plant for Peace.

On July 16, about 39 Asian and European representatives from 26 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) countries will participate in a closed-door policy dialogue on the same topic.

“At ASEF we believe that effective policy support can help social enterprises to contribute in developing a sustainable global economy,” said Karsten Warnecke, ASEF’s Deputy Executive Director.

“Both Asia and Europe have a great deal to learn from each other by sharing best practices to provide better business environments for social enterprises,” he added.

ASEF was established in February 1997 by ASEM partners to promote greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

It allows civil society concerns to be included as a vital component of deliberations of the ASEM.

The European Union is one of the major donors of ASEF.

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