

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations ESCAP and the Inclusive Business Action Network partner to strengthen the policy environment for inclusive businesses in South-East Asia

Bangkok/Bonn, 19 March 2019 – The Inclusive Business Action Network (iBAN) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) announced a joint initiative today to help governments to enhance the policy environment for inclusive business in South-East Asia.

iBAN is a global initiative implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), which supports the scaling and replication of inclusive business models to improve the lives of the poor. ESCAP - the regional intergovernmental platform for the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific - will leverage its expertise in promoting impact investment, sustainable business and inclusive innovation; to support policymakers to develop inclusive business policies, and provide a sub-regional platform for sharing knowledge and lessons learned across South-East Asia.

“ESCAP’s regional expertise and knowledge in promoting inclusive innovation policies makes it ideally placed to support a strong policy foundation to spur inclusive businesses in this fast-growing region,” said Christian Jahn, Executive Director of iBAN.

Inclusive businesses provide goods, services, and livelihoods to people living at the base of the economic pyramid; while also engaging the low-income population in the value chain of companies as suppliers, distributors, and retailers. Governments can encourage the growth of inclusive business by implementing policies that facilitate impact investments. They can also reward companies that have a social impact, and boost innovations that allow businesses to be inclusive while meeting profit margins.

The iBAN-ESCAP partnership will focus on three main areas: country-level analysis and advice, regional policy dialogues and knowledge exchange. The partners will conduct studies that identify existing and potential inclusive business companies in each country and analyze the overall context in which they operate. Based on this analysis, the studies will provide recommendations for policymakers and institutions to encourage inclusive businesses. The partners will provide policymakers with technical and advisory services to help them design inclusive business policies. ESCAP will also convene member States and promote policy dialogues and endorsements at the regional level.

“The United Nations recognize the importance of businesses in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the right policy environment needs to be in place to incentivize them to be more inclusive. Innovation is not just about technology but also innovative business models and changes in mindsets. One could argue that the most impactful innovation for the SDGs could be the shift from business as usual to inclusive business” said Mia Mikic, Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation at ESCAP.

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About ESCAP

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) serves as the United Nations' regional hub promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. The largest regional intergovernmental platform with 53 Member States and 9 associate members, ESCAP has emerged as a strong regional think-tank offering countries sound analytical products that shed insight into the evolving economic, social and environmental dynamics of the region. The Commission's strategic focus is to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is reinforced and deepened by promoting regional cooperation and integration to advance responses to shared vulnerabilities, connectivity, financial cooperation and market integration. ESCAP's research and analysis coupled with its policy advisory services, capacity building and technical assistance to governments aims to support countries' sustainable and inclusive development ambitions.

www.unescap.org

About iBAN

The Inclusive Business Action Network (iBAN) is a global initiative supporting the scaling and replication of inclusive business models. Through its strategic pillars iBAN blue and iBAN weave, iBAN manages an innovative online knowledge platform (www.inclusivebusiness.net) on inclusive business and offers a focused Capacity Development Programme for selected companies and policymakers in developing and emerging countries. iBAN creates a space where evidence-based knowledge transforms into learning and new partnerships. With its focus on promoting the upscale of inclusive business models and consequently improving the lives of the poor, iBAN is actively contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. iBAN is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union. It is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

About GIZ

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a federal enterprise with worldwide operations. It supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education. Through its work, GIZ helps people and societies shape their own future and improve their living conditions.

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