

At Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) 2013, held in November 2013, we were introduced to the diverse new attempts and achievements of social innovation being made in cities and towns worldwide in the face of a global recession, such as social enterprises, cooperatives, and community enterprises.

The global problems we face today, such as economic crises, environmental degradation, and the collapse of local communities, are not problems that can be solved single-handedly by a single city or nation. We have affirmed, in the Seoul Declaration, that these problems require cities and governments worldwide to actively share their experiences and resources.

I expect that the GSEF, inaugurated this year, will play a vital role in supporting inter-city and international partnership and solidarity on these global problems.

Seoul continues to foster innovation and change based on increasing partnership and solidarity among citizens, corporations, and nongovernmental organizations. Under the slogan, "Citizens are the Mayor," we have introduced new opportunities for civic participation in policymaking, such as the Policy Debates and the Policy Expositions. We have shared the results of these discussions with policymakers as well as businesses and researchers in an effort to enrich the daily lives of our citizens.

The power of the social economy and its ability to induce positive change are on display throughout Seoul. Cooperation and solidarity are helping to create new jobs for the marginalized and improve the livelihood of countless more.

The GSEF will help to compile and celebrate the accounts of these experiences of the social economy. Various local government organizations and institutions will find new opportunities, via the GSEF, to introduce and foster the values of the social economy in the civil society, as well as to reach a new level of cooperation and partnership with one another.