

Signing Ceremony between
WE-Empower and Singapore University of Social Sciences
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Reimagining an Inclusive Future: A WE-Empowered World

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FSM Tharman Shanmugaratnam
Distinguished Guests
Partners, Friends, Colleagues
NOC Alums and Students of SUSS

I spent many years conducting research in the field of fracture mechanics, and so the opportunity and challenge of leading NUS appealed to me, and I moved from the world of mechanical things to the world of human systems. Singapore in the 90s wanted to move into the Knowledge Economy. One of the best things we did was to unleash the energy of entrepreneurship among the young at NUS. But we knew that only a small minority of them would have the gumption and enthusiasm to make a go at it. We simply had to experiment. So, we looked for such students, and sent them to experience life at Silicon Valley start-ups, hoping it would spark them return to do something different.

This is what I call “I-oriented” entrepreneurship, which is unleashing the energy of the mavericks, so that as individuals they can make a difference and be rewarded for their efforts. These small number of “I-oriented” entrepreneurs created unicorns, start-up companies with valuations over US\$1 billion, and have made a big impact for a select group of shareholders.

But the unicorns’ impact on the “we” — whether lower-level employees, local communities, or the environment — is limited and may even be negative. This winner-take-all paradigm can create great wealth, but that wealth is very unevenly shared as evidence the homeless tent cities sprouting under the highways in the Bay Area and beyond. The Silicon Valley Success Story, which so inspired many, has its limitations, and its unintended consequences.

新加坡前国务资政尚达曼先生
尊敬的嘉宾，
合作伙伴、朋友、同事
NOC 校友和 SUSS 学生

我原本是一位多年致力在断裂力学领域的研究学者，由于新加坡国立大学的领导力机遇和挑战吸引了我，这把我从机械相关的世界转向了人体系统的世界。上世纪九十年代，新加坡转型进入知识经济，那时做的最好的事情之一就是释放新加坡国立大学年轻人的创业能量。虽然只有一小部分人有勇气和热情去尝试，不过，我们已经实践了。因此，我们需要寻找这样的学生，并送他们去硅谷初创企业体验生活，希望激发他们回来做一些不同的事情。

这就是我所说的“以我为中心”的创业精神，释放特立独行者的能量，让他们作为个人能够有所作为，并因自己的努力而得到回报。这些少数“以我为中心”的企业家创建了独角兽，即估值超过 10 亿美元的初创公司，并对特定的股东群体产生了巨大影响。

不过，独角兽对“我们”——无论是基层员工、当地社区还是环境——的影响是有限的，甚至可能是负面的。这种赢家通吃的模式可以创造巨大的财富，财富分配却是不均，无家可归的帐篷城市在湾区及其他地区的高速公路下萌芽就是证据。硅谷的成功故事激励了很多人，但也有其局限性，也有意想不到的后果。

Today, our problem is not a lack of ambitious individuals wanting to push ahead and win. We have them and we are glad to have them. Our problem is that I-oriented entrepreneurship, even as it enables economic growth, does not enable well-being. If economic growth and wealth creation does not address collective well-being, it is not good enough in our time.

Our problems are increasingly that of the collective. Just think about climate change, pandemics, resource scarcity, social polarisation ... these are all crises of the collective. Yes, science and technology can make a difference, and a few ambitious individuals can scale those technologies. But what we really need is for the vast majority of people to come together and work with, and for, one another.

The “W” “E” in WE-empower stands for We-oriented Entrepreneurship. We-orientation is about individuals whose entrepreneurial energies intentionally benefit the larger community. We are not talking about forced equality, nor about doing away with I-orientation. We are re-imagining an inclusive future, not a world of the winner takes all, but where the winners also contribute to alleviating environmental degradation and social ills. In a we-empowered world, entrepreneurship deliberately and systematically regenerate both the biological and human ecosystems that support our life.

The last few years should have shown us how we are indeed one world. Covid 19 showed us we breathe the same air. The floods and wildfires raging across many continents tell us we share the same Earth. Yet, the world cannot seem to unite. Since leaving university administration, I have spent time internationally working on climate issues, especially renewable energy. Over that time, I have spoken of setting aside differences to work on common problems with solutions we already have. But it has been an uphill climb because the rise in suspicion, especially with geopolitical rivalries, has made cooperation harder even among scientists.

Last year, EU top diplomat Joseph Borell said, “Europe is a garden. We have built a garden ... The rest of the world ... is not exactly a garden. Most of the rest of the world is a jungle.” Borell’s words have been perceived by some to be racist and reveals a belief that “The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.” (to quote Thucydides)

今天，我们的问题不在于缺乏雄心勃勃、志在前进并取得胜利的个人。我们拥有他们，时代也高兴拥有这些成功者。问题是，以“我”为导向的创业精神即使能够促进经济增长，也无法带来福祉。如果经济增长和财富创造不能解决集体福祉，那么在这个时代，我们还不能称其为好。

我们的问题越来越成为集体的问题。思考一下，气候变化、流行病、资源稀缺、社会两极分化.....这些都是集体的危机。是的，科学和技术可以带来改变，一些雄心勃勃的人可以推广这些技术，但我们真正需要的是绝大多数人走到一起，相互合作、相互帮助。

WE-empower中的“W” “E”代表以我们为导向的创业精神。以“我们”为导向，是指那些具有企业家精神并有意造福更大社区的个人。我们不是在谈论强制平等，也不是在谈论废除“我本位”。我们希望重新构想一个包容性的未来，不是一个赢家通吃的世界，而是赢家也为缓解环境退化和社会弊病做出贡献的世界。在一个我们赋能的世界中，企业家精神能够有意识地、系统地重建支持我们生命的生物和人类生态系统。

过去几年，我们已经学会，人类身处一个共同的世界。疫情更加说明，我们呼吸着同样的空气。席卷各大洲的洪水和野火告诉我们，我们共享同一个地球。然而，世界似乎无法团结起来。自从离开大学行政部门后，我花了很多时间在国际上研究气候问题，尤其是可再生能源。在那段时间里，我谈到要抛开分歧，用我们已有的解决方案来解决常见问题。但这是一场艰难的前进，因为怀疑的增加，尤其是地缘政治竞争，甚至使科学家之间的合作变得更加困难。

去年，欧盟高级外交官约瑟夫·博雷尔表示，“欧洲是一个花园。我们建造了一个花园.....世界其他地方.....并不完全是一个花园，其他大部分地方都是丛林。”博雷尔的言论被一些人认为是种族主义，并揭示一种信念，即“强者做他们能做的事，弱者遭受他们必须承受的痛苦”。（引用修昔底德的话）

My response to that is: Humanity is lucky that the rest of the world, including Southeast Asia, has jungles. The biodiversity of flora and fauna in our jungles is precisely what is keeping the planet alive. And we, who live outside the garden, are not weak. We do not need to suffer what others think we must. On the contrary, we can thrive if we organize ourselves. ASEAN is the most diverse region on Earth. We are 660 million people, half of whom are under 30. We have many religions, languages, ethnicities, and political systems. We know how to live together as a diverse We. So how do we organise in ASEAN? At WE-Empower, our immediate focus is to grow the potential of grassroots enterprises by enlisting the support of Business Families.

Thousands of enterprises working at the grassroots level across ASEAN form the economic lifeblood of many communities. They provide any number of goods and services to millions of ordinary people. Yet many struggle. This is even though some of them are regenerative. Like the bamboo restoration forest-to-factory initiative in Indonesia we are exploring with SUSS.

Key to grassroots enterprises achieving their potential is the role that Business Families can play. They themselves were once grassroots, and today, they have the means to provide the philanthropic capital to help others thrive. Business Families also have know-how, and this collaboration between WE-Empower and SUSS now enables them to collaborate in developing human capital via internships, and applied entrepreneurship courses that can be co-created with the grassroots enterprises.

Finally, what is unique to WE-Empower, is that we can meet the most important need that Business Families have. That need is the development of the human, social and emotional capital of their Next Generation. Family legacies that endure are the ones where the Next Gen can regenerate itself.

WE-Empower believes that the Next Gen can develop themselves into grounded leaders, even surpassing their elders, if they go back to the grassroots. There, they leave their bubbles, come face to face with complex social issues, and take up the internship of life. In addition to developing a better sense of self, they stand to gain wisdom from the practical people at the grassroots.

我对此的回应是：人类很幸运，世界其他地方，包括东南亚，都有丛林。丛林中动植物的生物多样性是维持地球生存的关键，而生活在花园之外的我们，也不弱。我们不需要承受别人认为我们必须承受的痛苦。相反，如果我们组织起来，我们就能蓬勃发展。东盟是地球上最多元化的地区，拥有6.6亿人口，其中一半年龄在30岁以下。我们有多元宗教、语言、种族和政治制度。我们知道如何作为一个多元化的我们共同生活。那么，我们如何在东盟组织起来呢？在WE-Empower，我们当前的重点是通过争取家族企业的支持来增强草根企业的潜力。

东盟各地数千家草根企业构成了许多社区的经济命脉。他们向数百万普通民众提供任意数量的商品和服务。然而，仍有许多人挣扎在生存线上，即使其中一些是可再生的。就像竹餐厅一样我们正在与SUSS探讨的印尼竹经济，从森林到工厂的配给计划。

发挥草根经济潜力的关键是家族企业所能发挥的作用。他们自己曾经是草根阶层，如今，他们有能力通过提供慈善资本来帮助他人蓬勃发展。家族企业也拥有专业知识，WE-Empower和SUSS之间的合作现在使他们能够通过实习和与草根企业共同创建的应用创业课程来合作开发人力资本。

最后，WE-Empower的独特之处在于我们可以满足家族企业最重要的需求。这种需求就是开发下一代的人才、社会和情感资本。永续的家族传承是下一代可以自我再生的遗产。

WE-Empower相信，如果下一代能有“接地气”的草根心态，他们就能发展成为脚踏实地的领导者，甚至超越他们的长辈。在那里，他们去掉泡沫，面对复杂的社会问题，开始人生的实践。除了培养更好的自我意识外，他们还可以从基层务实的人们那里获得智慧。

Family Offices coming to Singapore from outside can achieve their own enlightened self-interest by developing their own Next Gen, and establishing a positive reputation for themselves in their new homes through philanthropy.

Today, I want to thank Bapak Charles Menaro and the Menaro Family for being the inaugural donor and pledging S\$1m to our proposed bamboo initiative in Indonesia. By supporting this initiative, your family will be strengthening the ecosystem. You will do so by restoring the land and water, and by enabling knowledge exchange between students, family businesses and grassroots enterprises. Your pledge will enable SUSS to apply for a matching grant of another S\$1 million by the Singapore government. Your generosity is multiplied. We hope that other business families will also be inspired to contribute to their new home and community.

Let me end the way I started. Some metals fracture under pressure. Yet some other metals are strengthened by pressure and heat. There is a nonlinearity to this. When it comes to how some human beings thrive while others don't, the nonlinearity is found in how much they engage with each other using their heads and hands, as well as their hearts and spirit. So let us, with our hands, heads, hearts and spirit, build a world that is inclusive because we are one people, who share one earth, with one common future.

从国外来到新加坡的家族办公室可以通过发展下一代来实现开明的自身利益，并通过慈善事业为家族建立积极的声誉。

今天，我要感谢 Bapak Charles Menaro 和 Menaro 家族成为首届捐助者，为倡导印尼的竹经济认捐 100 万新元。这一善举，您的家人帮助加强了环境生态系统。其次，有助于恢复土地和水源，并促进学生、家族企业和草根企业之间的知识交流。您的承诺将使 SUSS 能够向新加坡政府申请另外 100 万新元的支持配套。您的慷慨解囊，将带动成倍效益。我们希望其他家族企业也能受到启发，为他们的家园和社区做出贡献。

让我以呼应开头语的方式结束演讲。有些金属在压力下破裂，然而有些金属也会通过压力和热量而强化，这存在非线性。当谈到有些人能茁壮成长而另一些人却不然时，非线性表现在他们使用头脑和双手以及心灵和精神相互交流的程度。让我们用自己的双手、头脑、心灵和精神，建设一个包容的世界，因为我们是一个民族，共享一个地球，拥有共同的未来。