



**27th Asia-Pacific Regional
Scout Conference**
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*Adapting to a
Changing World*

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NEW APR CHAIRMAN'S CHALLENGE

New Chairman's Challenge

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New Chairman, Regional Scout Committee

Good morning, Good afternoon, Good Evening Conference!

It is an honor and privilege to address this Conference as Regional Scout Committee Chairman for the term 2022-2025. I thank my colleagues in the Regional Scout Committee for the trust given to me to steer this Committee for the next three years from the leadership ably handled by Ambassador Rusdi. It is both a challenge and an opportunity to lead the great Asia-Pacific Region especially at this extraordinary time. As a public servant in my province for over three decades, I had been attending to the needs of my constituents with my constant presence and attention. But what honed me in public service was my life skills of becoming a Scout, a council staff and educator, a council and regional board member and then as the key official of a National Scout Organization which is the Boy Scouts of the Philippines.

This time around, the landscape of Scouting in the Asia-Pacific Region is so large, so vast and diverse. My presence in member countries may be limited at this point because of the current health situation, so the cooperation of all members of the Regional Scout Committee is necessary and vital in achieving our goals to support our NSOs in the different corners of the Region.

At this conference, our theme is Adapting to a Changing World. This virtual gathering is in itself a form of adapting. Although it is so different from the traditional gathering that we are used to, we achieved our goals of meeting, sharing practices, and envisioning together. What we carry back to our NSOs after this conference is the vast learning that we gained from listening to the stories and experiences of young people on how they adapted and stooped up to the challenges of the current situation.

At this conference, we also heard a number of times the word **Resiliency**. This is what is demanded from us in times of uncertainty. To be resilient. We cannot remain stuck to old time traditions and practices. We need to embrace change, whether we are comfortable with it or not. With the stronger presence of young people in our upcoming subcommittees, I am sure that our capacity for inter-generational dialogue will be tested. There is more diversity in our sub-committees now, thanks to the work of our selection panel who worked tirelessly to ensure balance in age and gender in our regional structures. With our new sub-committee members, we hope to merge the wisdom and experience of our seasoned leaders with the energy, talents and aspiration of our younger members. With this synergy, I believe that we will meet and achieve our strategic goals for the next triennium.

This period 2022-2025, I believe it would still be a time for transition. Hopefully, we are getting out from the grip of the coronavirus pandemic that restricted our movement and our love for the outdoors. But we also learned that our temporary confinement stretched our capacity to innovate and optimize the use of our limited resources.

One big challenge for us is to maintain the **sustainability** of our valuable assets and best practices as many NSOs have shared at this conference. We learned from the NSO success stories and action time presentations that Scouts are doing remarkable interventions in

environmental sustainability, in addressing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, in actively engaging in pandemic response, and in promoting peace. Our challenge is not only to sustain our projects but to make them better, more useful, and more relevant, and that could greatly be enhanced by engaging our partners.

Before the conference, during the Chief Scout Executives Meet, we discussed largely on the **Growth** of the Movement. The coronavirus phenomenon is an unprecedented event that even the best growth development strategy could not foresee. Still, we need to reach out to young people to offer our educational programme – and this should be the constant motivator to guide our work towards growth.

In Scouting, the word **Impact** is becoming an important word. It is also becoming common that I hope it will not be taken for granted. That is why we now have a strategic priority on Social Impact. Over the decades, our Scouting programme has taught us to be action oriented. We act fast when asked by our schools, institutions, and communities. We try to always help others at all times. But the result of action must have some impact. Do our actions serve the needs of our young people – for their overall development? Or does it simply serve the needs of the community? That's a question that we need to revisit.

I believe that the purpose of the Chairman's challenge is not to give answers but to ask questions. So I begin my term as Chairman by asking these questions:

- Is our organization strong and resilient enough to survive the most difficult challenges?
- How do we make best use of this transition to a post pandemic world?
- How can we make our Scouting programme sustainable? How do we sustain the interest of young people in Scouting? How do we sustain the strength of our volunteer membership? How can we be financially sustainable? Sustainability is probably the biggest question we are facing today.
- Is growth a real measure of our success as a Movement? Is there a need to redefine our definition of growth and to review our growth strategy?
- Lastly, we need to question the impact of Scouting on our members, and the impact of Scouting in the community, and the impact of Scouting in the world.

These are big questions that are confronting us. With your cooperation, we hope to find the right answers in the next three years – which is relatively a short period of time – and solely dependent on the strength of our Scouting programme and initiatives – to provide solutions by relying on the strength of our Scouting programme and its initiatives. I believe that our educational programme is the best that Scouting can offer to young people and to the world.

We have challenges now and we will have challenges tomorrow. Let us work together to be resilient, adaptable, sustainable, and impactful.

Thank you, Conference. I humbly accept this responsibility and look forward to working with you in the next three years!