

**ADA Monthly Newsletter**

**February-March. 2017**

Dear ADA members and friends, 

We are happy to share news about ADA activities both nationally and internationally Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the months of February – March, 2017  
  
As seen below, we had an annual regional workshop among ADA members, and Asia meeting This time, we would like to ask you to get connected to ADA as CSOs working on sustainable development in Asia and get connected with the voluntary review process (VNR) especially from the nine reporting countries.

Hope it is useful for your reflection… Please see below for details how to get involved and share your activities for greater impact!  
  
In solidarity,

ADA Secretariat

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# **ADA and Members Activities**

# **International Activities**

## **ADA-APSD Workshop on HLPF VNR (Bangkok, 24-25 Feb. 2017)**

ADA along with Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development (APSD) organized the regional workshop on Voluntary National Review (VNR) of UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in Bangkok on 24-25 February, 2017. The workshop aimed at discussing the role of CSOs in upcoming HLPF at New York in July, 2017. The main takeaways of the meeting were: opportunities to be engaged with the respective government, even though it’s a voluntary process, the outcome of the meetings can be used for advocacy at the national level, HLPF may not be very rigorous, but it still provides great value, holding governments accountable. It was also discussed that government pick easy targets to implement; But few goals like SDG 16 are difficult issues. It was also discussed to universalize SDG 16 by Integrating human rights approaching. Full excerpts of the country presentations on UN HLPF VNR can be found [here](https://www.dropbox.com/s/x8wd3p751qobgzk/SDG-VNR-%20Excerpts-2017.pdf?dl=0)

## **ADA Steering Committee (25 Feb. 2017)**

ADA’s Steering Committee was held on the afternoon of 25 February, which was attended by the Steering Committee members and few observers from Nepal, Bangladesh and Singapore. The meeting discussed the legal registration and secretariat of ADA apart from governance and membership structure of ADA. The IFP-EU funding to ADA was also discussed elaborately with action plan and budget for 2017-20.

## **APSD Steering Committee (25 Feb. 2017)**

APSD’s Steering Committee was also held on 25 February to finalize the Terms of Reference (ToR) and action plans this year. Tasks were shared among the Steering Committee members, . The meeting came up with some crucial outputs like importance of knowledge sharing on happenings across the region. The role of APSD to bring CSOs together on goal 10 and 16 was also discussed during the meeting. The need of mapping of the CSOs who are working on goal 10 and 16 initially but eventually on all the goals was also discussed during the meeting. Apart from this, the importance of registering APSD in order to receive potential funding was also discussed during the consultation.

## **Regional consultation on shrinking civic space - Cambodia, Pakistan, Philippines and India (26 Feb. 2017)**

Shrinking democratic and civil society spaces in most of the countries is a matter of grave concerns and most of the countries in Asia are already facing the brunt. Taking these issues forward, the workshop was designed to discuss the issues in these four countries of south and east Asia. In Cambodia, there are serious apprehensions on the new Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (also called LANGO) curtailing the ability of civil society. Its been described as containing “deeply worrisome provisions with regard to the imposition of mandatory registration, as well as onerous registration requirements, reporting obligations, and broad and vague grounds for denial of registration and deregistration. In Pakistan, NGOs are fighting for the space to express their views, as governments introduce restrictions on peaceful assembly and of association, on foreign funding, barriers to registration, intervention in CSOs’ internal affairs, and other forms of harassment have multiplied. Especially for those working on the issues of human rights and same is the case with India. In Philippine, the threat to impose martial law and for the first time since ****last Martial law, the the PH Development Plan Committees did not include CSOs as members.

## **ADN Steering Committee (26-27 Feb. 2017)**

Asia Democratic Network also organized its 6th steering committee meeting on 26-27 February in Bangkok. During the meeting the role of AND was reaffirmed as a member of International Steering Committee of Community of Democracy (ISC-CD) as an inter-face between CD and CSOs engaged in democracy promotion in Asia. The meeting also included the evaluation of ADN for the last three years (2014-2016) with Dinky from the Philippines

# **Regional Activities**

## **The Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development and The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (26-31 March, 2017, Bangkok)**

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2017 in Bangkok on 29 to 31 March, 2017 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and as a preparatory event for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be held in July 2017 in New York. Representatives from the diverse civil society organizations from the Asia-Pacific regions were invited to participate in the following two events:

**The Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development: 26-28 March 2017** in Bangkok. The Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development organized by civil society (the secretariat represented by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development as a coordinator of the [Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)](http://asiapacificrcem.org/)), in collaboration with the ESCAP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) as a preparatory meeting for the APFSD. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, ES of ESCAP and co-chairs of the APRCEM, opened the Asia Pacific CSO Forum for Sustainable Development 2017. The APCSF called on the broader CSOs to encourage new and relevant organisations to engage with regional civil society efforts on sustainable development, as well as to engage with the UN mechanisms and institutions.

Over 150 civil society organizations with equitable geographical, thematic, sectoral and gender coverages from all across Asia and Pacific attended the three days’ deliberations. Geographical representatives include (1) Pacific, (2) East/North East Asia, (3) North/Central Asia, (4) South/SouthWest Asia, (5) Southeast Asia. Participation will include grassroots and local organizations as well as national and regional organizations from the following groups: (1) NGOs, (2) Women, (3) Youth, (4) Social and Community Enterprise, (5) Farmers, (6) Trade Union/Workers, (7) Science and Technology, (8) Indigenous Peoples, (9) Urban Poor, (10) Migrants, (11) Persons With Disability, (12) People living and affected by HIV and AIDS, (13) LGBTI, (14) Older People, (15) People affected with conflicts and disasters, and (16) Fisherfolks and 17) Local Authorities. The sessions were held around the issues of identifying systematic barrier, development justice, engagement with SDGs implementations at national, regional and global levels apart from parallet discussions on gender, poverty, climate justice, sustainable agriculture etc. ADA facilitated the session on 9 VNR Reporting countries during on day one. Later, the VNR summary report was refined using ADA’s regional consultation report on SDG and VNR , held earlier in Bangkok. The summary [report](https://www.dropbox.com/s/x8wd3p751qobgzk/SDG-VNR-%20Excerpts-2017.pdf?dl=0) on the VNR was later circulated with APCSF participants and submitted to UN ESCAP during APFSD.

**The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD 2017): 29–31 March 2017 in Bangkok.** ESCAP convened the fourth session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD 2017) from 29 to 31 March 2017, at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. APFSD 2017 is the principle regional forum on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. This year, ESCAP engaged senior leaders from national and local governments, civil society, business and the international community on the theme ‘Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Asia-Pacific. Complete information can be found [here](http://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd4)

# **For Your Action**

**Asian Youth Leadership Forum for Democracy 2017**

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) is organizing the AYLD 2017 in cooperation with, local host, the May 18th Memorial Foundation in Gwangju (15-20 May 2017) and ADN’s local members and partners in South Korea. It is a great pleasure to invite you to the first Asian Youth Leadership Forum for Democracy (AYLD) to be held in Seoul and Gwangju from 13 to 20 May 2017.Under the theme “Renewing Asian Youth Power for Democracy”, participants are expected to share their experiences of social and political engagement and to discuss common challenges to democracy in Asia to come up with a strategic action plan for advocacy and strengthening a youth network for democracy in Asia. Approximately 30 youth leaders (aged 18-30) from South, Southeast, and Northeast Asia will be invited to participate in the AYLD 2017. To know about more, read [here](http://eepurl.com/cFx6Vn)

**CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION in the G20 agenda - Germany, 2017**

The German government is hosting the next G20 meeting in Hamburg in July of this year. In this context a [letter](https://icscentre.org/downloads/17_02_10_Letter_to_Angela_Merkel.pdf) was to Chancellor Merkel asking her to put civic participation prominently on the G20 agenda. The letter was signed by 16 ICSOs expressing their concern about the state of civic participation world-wide. There is need to urgently set a strong signal globally that civil society is concerned about increasing oppression and that we are working together in order to defend our rights to participate in shaping the future of our societies.

* It is advisable to mobilise the national networks to send a similar letter to the respective head of government asking them to put civic participation on the G20 agenda.
* The [Civic Charter](https://civiccharter.org/) serves all of us as the agreed global basis for our fight. In case you haven’t signed the Charter yet it’s appreciate if you could do so, both personally and on behalf of your network [via the website](http://www.civiccharter.org/).

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with **Dr. Burkhard Gnärig**, Executive Director , **International Civil Society Centre** [bgnaerig@icscentre.org](mailto:bgnaerig@icscentre.org) or  Miriam Niehaus [mniehaus@icscentre.org](mailto:mniehaus@icscentre.org)

The readers are requested to use the [letter](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#sent/15a78ec05c09dba9?projector=1) or this format to write to your head of state

**2017 HLPF Side Event: Deadline 8th May for booking spaces**

DSD is now inviting proposals for side events to be organized during the 2017 HLPF by Member States, UN system and MGoS. For further details please see the HLPF website at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>. Please note that the deadline for submitting proposals is10 May 2017.

**HLPF Survey by UN Foundation**

As many of you plan to attend HLPF 2017 to be held in New York this July (10-19), you are also invited to to complete the following survey by United Nations Foundation on the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), developed in consultation with DESA: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HLPFstakeholders](http://ada2015.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=556d63d191823f973939676ad&id=8d4d97ef4c&e=64adaa2a70).

# **Useful Documents**

**USAID's 2015 CSO Sustainability Index – Asia**

It reports on the strength and viability of the CSO sectors in seven countries in Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. While overall sustainability levels for all of the assessed countries fall within the Sustainability Evolving category, this fact masks the great variations across the countries in overall sustainability and within the different dimensions of Legal Environment, Organizational Capacity, Financial Viability, Advocacy, Service Provision, Infrastructure and Public Image. Please follow the link [https://www.usaid.gov/asia-civil-society](http://ada2015.us13.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=556d63d191823f973939676ad&id=3cf2b5b586&e=64adaa2a70) to read the full report.

**Towards a more Equal Indonesia**

How the government can take action to close the gap between the richest and the rest . In the past two decades, the gap between the richest and the rest in Indonesia has grown faster than in any other country in South-East Asia. The four richest men in Indonesia now have more wealth than the poorest 100 million people. Inequality is slowing down poverty reduction, dampening economic growth and threatening social cohesion. President Jokowi has made fighting inequality his administration’s top priority for 2017. He can achieve this by enforcing a living wage for all workers, increasing spending on public services, and making big corporations and rich individuals pay their fair share of tax. Please read the full report [here](https://www.dropbox.com/s/raotfnlf3nn357t/INDONESIA%20INEQUALITY%20REPORT%20INFID%20OXFAM%202017%20FEB.pdf?dl=0)

**Hidden Universe of Non-Profit Organisations in India**

A well researched and thought provoking article, written by Dr. Rajesh Tandon. This article is being printed in EPW, January 21, 2017, Volume LII No.3. In this article, Dr. Tandon has not only tried to answer many myths and preconceived notions about the Voluntary sector in India but also suggest some remedies for making the sector more vibrant.

Read the full article [here](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/556d63d191823f973939676ad/files/b6593063-525f-4dd2-a64d-6679911969de/IN_LII_3_21012017_Rajesh_Tandon.pdf?utm_source=Asia+Development+Alliance&utm_campaign=a1afff9899-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_02_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term)

**Leave No One Behind: National Dialog, project report by Awaz foundation - Pakistan**

AWAZ Foundation Pakistan- Centre for Development Services and Pakistan Development Alliance conducted a Nationwide campaign from mid October 2016- mid January 2017 on Leave No One Behind by leading National survey, Provincial and National consultations on Leave No one Behind to know about groups that are most marginalized and disadvantaged, especially those living in impoverished communities and who are at high risk of violence and discrimination. However, in Pakistan the progress has been uneven from very start. Social and economic inequalities persist and, in many cases, have worsened. The focus of the survey was on inclusiveness underscores the need to identify who is being left behind and in what ways. Read the full report [here](https://www.dropbox.com/s/xonezm1xaj1chau/LNOB%20Project%20Report-AWAZ-PDA%20Pakistan%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0)

**SDGs and country process in Bangladesh**

**Statements**

The Missing Links and where Assistance is an Obligation of International Community especially in Climate Compensation and Stopping Illicit Flow. Read the full report [here](https://www.dropbox.com/s/xhx4fo0iz49y43g/SDG-and-Country-Process-in-Bangladesh_EquityBD-Campaign-Paper.pdf?dl=0)

APSD-ADA joint [Statement](https://www.dropbox.com/s/uk1zbv5glzjv288/APSD-ADA%20Statement%20on%20SDG%20Implementation%20in%20Asia%20%2825%20Feb.%202017%29%20.pdf?dl=0) from 24-25 February, 2017, Regional consultation on SDGs and VNR

Civil Society Joint [Statement](https://www.dropbox.com/s/788x4yts0jzq8x3/Joint%20Statement_Translation.pdf?dl=0) for High-Level Committees formed by the Government of Nepal for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

# **International Key Events related to SDGs**

2017

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| Dates | Place | Events |
| Feb 24-25 | Bangkok | ADA-APSD Regional Workshop on HLPF VNR on SDGs |
| Feb 25 | Bangkok | ADA Steering Committee Meeting |
| Feb. 26 | Bangkok | Regional Consultation on Civic Space in Asia – India, Pakistan, Cambodia and Philippines |
| Mar 1-3 | Bonn, Germany | Global Festival of Ideas (GFI) by UN SDGs Action Campaign and ODI |
| Mar 26-28 | Bangkok | Asia Pacific CSO Forum on SD |
| Mar 29-31 | Bangkok | UNESCAP Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) |
| April 5 | Paris | OECD Global Forum on Development |
| April 6 | Oslo, Norway | UNDP-OGP-CD Expert Workshop on SDG 16 Supplementary Indicators for National Government |
| April 20-22 | Dhaka, Bangladesh | ADA-APSD National Workshop on SDGs |
| May 4-7 | Yokohama | ADB Annual General Assembly |
| May 13-20 | Seoul and Gwangju, South Korea | Asia Youth Leadership Forum for Democracy (AYLD) by ADN |
| June 18-19 | Hamburg, Germany | Civil 20 for G20 Summit |
| July 10-19 | New York | UN HLPF on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development / SDGs |
| July 17-19 | New York | UN HLPF Voluntary National Review (VNR) |
| July 29-Aug 1 | Philippines | ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC)/ASEAN People’s Forum (APF) |
| Sept. | New York | UN General Assembly |
| Oct. | Cambodia | GALAA East Asia – SDG 10, 16 and 17 |
| Oct-Nov | TBC | People’s SAARC and SAARC Summit |
| Nov. | Pokhara, Nepal | GALAA South Asia – SDG 10, 16 and 17 |
| Dec. 4-8 | Fiji | International Civil Society Week (ICSW) by CIVICUS |

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* ADA's official website has been renewed. All the information related to the implementation of SDGs in Asia and actions conducted by Asian CSOs will be accumulated on this website. Please visit www.ada2030.org
* ADA's Facebook page has been activated! The page will channel useful information among civil society actors in Asia. Feel free to tag @Asia Development Alliance in future collaboration. The page is accessible with this web address: <https://www.facebook.com/ada2030/>

