



ADA Newsletter- February – March 2018

Dear ADA members and Friends,

Here we come up with our February-March edition of ADA newsletter having the latest news and updates related to Sustainable Development Goals. The month of March was even exciting for the Asia and Pacific CSOs and other stakeholders because of 5th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development organised by UN ESCAP and the CSO forum as the preparatory event.

With this, the activities around High Level Political Forum (9-18 July, 2018) are more intensified with 5 VNR countries Sri Lanka and Bhutan (South Asia) and Singapore, Lao PDR and Vietnam from East and South East Asia readying themselves to present the reports. It's also the time to reflect our activities around SDG's review, monitoring and implementation as continued action with more partnerships and networking with various stakeholders hence readying ourselves not only for 2018 but for 2019 which might change the whole framework of the reporting process.

So, let's stay tuned and march towards building solidarity to realise the vision of 'leaving no one behind'! Please feel free to add/substantiate news/information for our next edition.

In solidarity,

ADA Secretariat

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ADA and Members Activities

National Activities

1st Anniversary event of Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs (SDGs Japan)

The civil society groups in Japan organized the 1st Anniversary event of Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs (SDGs Japan).



Mr. [Masaki Inaba](#), Executive Director of SDGs Japan (from Africa-Japan Forum), explained briefly what SDGs Japan has done in 2017. Later Mr. [Katsuji Imata](#), Managing Director of SDGs Japan (from Japan NPO Center), highlighted key global events related to SDGs in 2018 and 2019, including the High Level Political Forum under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, and G20 Summit in Osaka, and called for the Japanese CSOs to start preparing for the event.

Ms. [Kaori Kuroda](#), President of SDGs Japan (from CSO Network Japan), questioned whether the civil society in the country is united or divided, in terms of collaboration among sectors and issues, although we sometimes criticize the government is 'too segmented' or 'too bureaucratic'. The Panelists from NGOs, local NPOs and private sectors

including the participants discussed on ways to achieve SDGs by using own resources and get connected with each other.

Report National Policy to Action Forum for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals , March 30, 2018, Islamabad, Pakistan

The Pakistan Development Alliance (PDA) led by AwazCDS-Pakistan, is an alliance of 83 national level NGOs/Networks working together on developmental and rights based approaches to address issues in governance and accountability across the country. After the completion of more than two years since the announcement and adoption of agenda 2030 for transformation and sustainable development by 193 countries under the aegis of United Nation's General Assembly on September 25, 2015. PDA was teamed up in January 2018 to assess the accomplishments, opportunities, gaps and challenges in implementation of SDGs across Pakistan with the support of VSO and UK Aid. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed to get first hand information from elected representatives, members of Parliamentary Task Forces on SDGs at provincial and national level, SDG Units at Planning Commission at national level and Planning & Development Departments at all the four provinces. The questionnaire was also filled by representatives from media, academics, private sector organizations, local governments, chamber of commerce and industries, legal fraternity and civil society organizations. Based upon the information received through questionnaire analysis was done and then various in depth interviews were also conducted to validate the information and analysis. Later on, policy to action forums were conducted to highlight the accomplishments, opportunities, gaps and challenges at all the four provincial headquarters during the first three weeks of March 2018. Finally, a national level policy to action forum was organized at Islamabad by inviting representatives of Parliamentarians, government departments, academics, media, private sector, INGOs and CSOs.

[Full Report here](#)

Sub Regional Activities

Exchange program JANIC (Japan) and CCC (Cambodia)

Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), the largest NGO network in Japan on international cooperation and a member/co-convener of ADA, is conducting a research project on civic space and enabling environment for CSO and how we can improve this by promoting dialogues and collaboration with different sectors. The research is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, and JANIC has so far studied current civic space situations in 7 different countries, including Cambodia.



From 19th to 21st February 2018, JANIC invited Mr. Soeung Saroeun,, Executive Director of Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), to Japan, in order to discuss this issue and establish an action plan for better enabling environment in Cambodia. Mr. Saroeun visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to talk with the Director of First Southeast Asia Division, Southeast and

Southwest Asian Affairs Department, and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) to discuss JICA's legal assistance to Cambodia, such as training for young lawyers. He also had a chance to meet Mr. Yasushi Akashi, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) during 1992-1993.

Mr. Saroeun joined a strategy meeting with People's Forum on Cambodia, Japan (PEFOC,J), a network NGO comprised of 18 NGOs, researchers, and individuals, who are all involved with Cambodia, and made a keynote speech on Cambodia's civic space at a public seminar held on 21st February. Some of the outcomes of his visit is establishing a relationship with both governmental and non-governmental people in Japan, and concrete ideas on an action plan, for example, promoting dialogues between Cambodian NGOs and the Embassy of Japan and JICA office in Cambodia, keeping the sector informed and inviting actions together, advocating to civil society organizations in various countries, advocating to foreign governments and UN agencies, and engaging with private sectors. JANIC will continue activities on defending civic space, with a field research in one of South Asian countries in 2018.

[written by Aoi Horiuchi, advocacy officer, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)]

Regional Activities

Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development 2018, 25- 27 March 2018, BANGKOK, THAILAND: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies in Asia and the Pacific

The Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development was 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)), in collaboration with the ESCAP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) as a preparatory meeting for the APFSD.

The Peoples Forum on Sustainable Development 2018 was organised with the emphasis on “defending the environment and redefining resilience” in Bangkok from 25th to 27th March, 2018 with participation from more than 200 CSOs representing various groups, constituencies with the commitment to strengthen the inter-linkages among rights, development and sustainability and ensure prioritised attention for the most marginalised.

The Civil society organizations demanded special attention in all areas of SDG planning, implementation and monitoring, especially to the grassroots and marginalized constituencies including Indigenous Peoples, women, farmers, workers, fisher folk, urban poor, LGBTQI, people living with HIV/AIDS, young people, aging people, youth, migrants, disabled and Dalit populations.

The civil society though appreciated some progress on implementing the SDGs and affirmed the importance of the 2030 Agenda, it remained concerned by several factors jeopardising the implementation especially in relation to seeing the real impacts transforming how governments work and prioritise policies. The Civil society organizations also reflected upon the region’s continued rapid economic growth; and being increasingly challenged by widening inequalities within and between countries, between rich and poor and between men and women, impacts of climate change, disasters, resource conflicts, human rights violations, shrinking democratic spaces, and lack of access to food, water, clean air, health care and other essential public services , more people pushed near or below poverty thresholds by dispossession of land, productive resources and natural resources due to policies favoring big business and unaccountable corporations, more and more people continuing to lose their livelihoods due to conflicting policies, corporate onslaught and unequal trade agreements, more CSOs, women, human rights and environmental defenders face oppression, intimidation, threats and marginalization within and across the regions. Even as the spirit of the Agenda is leaving no one behind; seas of people in the region and across the world are being excluded and unheard. The CSOs also felt a growing gap between aspiration and reality apart from slow and uneven pace of progress, lack of reflections of peoples’ priorities in the SDGs’ implementation, shrinking space for civil society organizations in planning, implementation and review, lack of accountability towards the people, undue prominence provided to big business, poor monitoring and review frameworks, that may lead to lacking credibility and accountability of the many produced road maps, strategies and institutional mechanism that countries have produced for the implementation of Agenda 2030.

[Peoples’ Forum Statement for Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2018](#)

Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies, 28 TO 30 March 2018, UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE CENTRE, BANGKOK, THAILAND

The Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), was held in Bangkok from 28 to 30 March 2018. It was attended by more than 750 participants, including representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, international organizations, civil society organizations and other entities. The Forum was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Fiji; France; Georgia; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Uzbekistan;

Vanuatu; and Viet Nam. Representatives of Germany, Israel, Nigeria, Sweden and Switzerland attended as observers.

The Chair of the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Minister for Interior and Minister of Planning and Development, Pakistan, made a statement on behalf of the Bureau on the outcome of the Fourth Forum. A video message was delivered by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered a keynote address and provided an overview of the Fifth Forum. Statements were also delivered by Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, and Ms. Joan Carling on behalf of civil society.

A plenary discussion on progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 17 was held. The Forum was informed of key recommendations from five round tables, held during the Forum, which had conducted an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15, to be addressed at the forthcoming high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council.¹

Later, the Asia-Pacific countries participating in voluntary national reviews for the high-level political forums on sustainable development in 2016, 2017 and 2018 shared national perspectives on challenges, progress and achievements relating to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as lessons learned from the review.

The Forum concluded that the [present report](#), should be brought to the attention of the Commission, at its seventy-fourth session, and to the global dialogues on sustainable development, including in particular the upcoming high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018.

APFSD Side Event: ADA-APSD-A4SD: CSO Engagement in VNR Process and Follow up Mechanism, 30th March, UNCC, Bangkok

The Asia Development Alliance (ADA) along with its partners, the Asian CSO Partnership for Sustainable Development (APSD) and the Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD) organized the side event entitled CSOs engagement in the VNR process and the follow up mechanism on 30th March during the APFSD, 2018 to share the experiences of government-CSO engagement and the role of United Nations to encourage multi-stakeholder partnership and ensure that the transformative promise of the SDGs to “Leave No One Behind” is delivered.



The side event focussed on challenges and opportunities related to CSO-government engagement based on previous CSO lessons learned during VNR reporting and other follow-up mechanisms in 2016 and 2017.



The event also was an opportunity for CSOs from countries in Asia with upcoming VNRs in 2018 to learn from their experiences.

Key Questions:

What are the challenges and opportunities for an inclusive and meaningful CSO engagement in the VNR process and other SDG follow-up mechanisms in this region?

What can we learn from CSO alternative reports, and submissions on VNR reporting, for instance VNR

guidelines prepared by CSOs such as IFP, ADA and others?

Are the governments of 2018 VNR reporting countries prepared to fulfil the principles of the UNDESA [Handbook for Preparation of VNRs](#) regarding the role of civil society in this process?

How can UN agencies support CSO engagement in SDG implementation at the country level? What tools and platforms can the UN create and promote to advance CSO engagement in this context?"

[Full Report here](#)

Useful Documents

[Handbook for Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews](#) – DESA and DSD

[ADA Guidelines on CSO's Engagement in the VNR Process](#)

Voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the HLPF can be found [here](#). They are an update to the annex of the 2015 Secretary-General's Report on *critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level*, [A/70/684](#).

Link: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17346Updated_Voluntary_Guidelines.pdf

More information on the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

NEPAL Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030: Read the full report [here](#)

The 2016 CSO Sustainability Index for Asia: Read the full report [here](#)

For your Action

Voluntary National Reviews and national tracking of the 2030 Agenda: participatory and inclusive?

Please join the third edition of the **Together 2030** perceptions survey on civil society and stakeholder engagement in Voluntary National Reviews and national tracking of the 2030 Agenda implementation, organized in partnership with the Politics Department of Newcastle University.

Reply by **April 20** here: <https://bit.ly/2DZLd0k> or [download the offline survey in Word](#) and return to sdg.survey@newcastle.ac.uk

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about civil society and stakeholder perceptions of national processes that follow up on the commitments established in the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Your participation is very important. The outcomes of this survey will be shared by Together 2030 with governments, civil society partners, the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders, as a key input for discussions on how to strengthen the engagement of stakeholders in the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Side Events Registration- HLPF- Deadline 30th April

Side Events sponsored by Member States, UN system and other intergovernmental organizations, Major Groups and other accredited stakeholders will be held in the margins of the 2018 Meeting of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development convened under the auspices of ECOSOC. The deadline for submission of requests for side events is **30 April 2018**.

Please click [here for GUIDELINES](#) for organizers of side events including the web based request platform.

High Level Political Forum 2018

The meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2018 convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council will be held from **Monday, 9 July, to Wednesday, 18 July 2018**; including the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from **Monday, 16 July, to Wednesday, 18 July 2018**.

The theme will be "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". The set of goals to be reviewed in depth will be the following, including Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, that will be considered each year:

- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Inputs to the HLPF

Please click [here to access our online platform](#) which contains voluntary **inputs** from countries participating in the Voluntary National Reviews of the HLPF. The platform also features other voluntary governmental inputs, as well as inputs from ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, inputs received from major groups and other stakeholders, as well contributions from multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments.

Voluntary National Review (VNR)

In 2018, 48 countries will be conducting voluntary national reviews at the HLPF. For more details, please [click here](#).

The following countries from Asia will be presenting their VNR in (10): Bahrain; Bhutan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Lebanon; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Sri Lanka; United Arab Emirates; Vietnam

Registration for the HLPF 2018

Governmental and non-governmental representatives planning to participate in the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) must be accredited to the United Nations in order to register for this meeting.

The following participants may attend or be represented: States Members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies, inter-governmental organizations, United Nations system, major groups and other stakeholders, and media.

Further information on registration will be forthcoming.

Regional Preparatory Meetings

ECE :1-2 March, Geneva

ESCAP: 28-30 March, Bangkok

ECLAC: 18-20 April, Santiago

ESCWA: 24-26 April, TBC

ECA: TBC

The Global SDG7 Conference

7 NOV 2017

A Global Preparatory Meeting in Support of the Review of SDG 7 at the 2018 High-level Political Forum

International Calendar

Dates	Venue	Events
Jan. 22-24	Busan, South Korea	Busan Democracy Forum (BuDF) on SDG 16+, Korea
Jan. 24	Busan, South Korea	ADA Annual Members' Meeting
Feb.		
March.	Bonn, Germany	Global Festival of Ideas (GFI) 2, many
March 25-27	Bangkok	Asia Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development
March 28-30	Bangkok	UNESCAP Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)
April	Singapore	ASEAN Summit-32
May -6	Manila	ADB Annual Meeting-51
July 9-18	New York,	HLPF-6 (SDG 6,7,11,12,15 and 17)
July 16-18	New York	HLPF Voluntary National Review (VNR)-3 Laos, Singapore, Vietnam, Bhutan, Sri Lanka
Aug.		GALA Training on Linking Human Rights with Development
Sept.	New York	UN General Assembly-7
Sept. 25		3 rd Anniversary of UN SDGs Adoption
Oct.		UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Knowledge Exchange (RKE)-2
Oct.–Nov.		UNESCAP Sub-regional Multi-stake Holders (MSH) Forum-2
		Northeast Asia
		Southeast Asia
		South and Southwest Asia
		Central Asia
		South Pacific
Nov.	Singapore	ASEAN, ASEAN+ and East Asia Summit
Dec. 3-14	Poland	UNFCCC COP-24
Nov. 30 – Dec.1	Buenos Aires, Argentina	G20 Summit
Dec.		International Civil Society Week (ICSW), CIVICUS



- 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/>

