

The Asia-Pacific People’s Forum on Sustainable Development, Bangkok, Thailand, 24-26 March 2019

[#PeoplesForum2019](#) | Two hundred participants from 27 countries in 5 sub-regions in Asia have attended the Asia Pacific People’s Forum on Sustainable Development in Bangkok, Thailand. With the theme, “Strengthening People’s Power for Development Justice in an Unequal and Divided World”, it opened with participants representing different constituencies such as NGOs, Women, Youth, Social and Community Enterprise, Farmers, Trade Union/Workers, Science and Technology, Indigenous Peoples, Urban Poor, Migrants, Persons With Disability, People living and affected by HIV and AIDS, LGBTI, Older People, People affected with conflicts and disasters, Fisherfolks and Local Authorities.



Common themes in the proceedings of the first day stressed the importance of solidarity and inclusiveness that empowers people’s resistance. Major issues in the region include the growing economic influence of China, the threat of selling out Asia’s vast natural resources, the corporate capture of development, and the shrinking democratic spaces of civil society. The People’s Forum 2019 is organized by the [Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism](#) (APRCM), a civil society platform that aims to enable stronger cross-constituency coordination and to ensure that voices from the Asia Pacific are heard at the

regional and global level. The APRCEM is initiated and driven by civil society and seeks to engage with UN agencies and the Member States across the region on the issue of sustainable development.

“**VNR 2019 and HLPF 2019 Reforms**”, Bangkok, March 25, 2019- Asia Development Alliance and Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability organized the side event during the people’s forum. The workshop deliberated the key following recommendations:

- Provide a tool to help bring national groups together – at a horizontal level, focusing on principles.
- Be a platform for improved member states peer review on CSO engagement, eg. a concrete idea would be that Member States report at Regional Forum on their approach to CSO engagement
- Capacity development for CSOs
- Strengthen solidarities and work on issues together, particularly important to strengthen interlinkages and break down siloed way of working
- CSO engagement in VNR should include transparent process at national, regional and global levels.

Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development – Bangkok, 27-29 March 2019

The sixth Forum, as in [previous years](#), served as a preparatory event for the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) and engaged member States, United Nations bodies and other institutions, [major groups and other stakeholders](#) in highlighting regional and subregional perspectives on the 2019 theme of the HLPF, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.

This year’s session, addressed the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” and on the cluster of SDGs to be reviewed at the HLPF - in accordance with General Assembly resolution



70/299:

- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
 - Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
 - Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
 - Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
 - Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
 - Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
- The APFSD agenda addressed:

1. Regional perspectives on the implementation, follow-up, and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including an in-depth review of the theme and cluster of goals; and
2. Strengthening implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific, including the assessment of the progress of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific.



ADA organised three side events during APFSD-2019. One during the People’s Forum and two during the official APFSD

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Inclusive Participation as Key Driver and Accelerator of SDG 16 and SDG 10 CSO Best Practices and Lessons in Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – ADA-APRCCEM-UNDP, KOICA-Side Event

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok Regional Hub; Government of Mongolia; Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA); Asia Development Alliance (ADA); Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM) – March 28th, UNCC, Bangkok

The side event deliberated the key challenges to the effective implementation of SDGs 10 and 16 are well identified across Asia-Pacific. Civic space is shrinking and democratic values are under attack in a majority of countries of the region, except in Timor-Leste and New Zealand. Both social and economic inequalities are rising, disproportionately affecting the poor and marginalized communities. Importantly, there are structural barriers and worrying imbalances between public and private interests (e.g. corruption, land grabbing, patriarchy and other ways in which people and communities are “systematically and intentionally” left behind) that hamper the fair and equal distribution of development dividends. However, despite the strong emphasis in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports on being inclusive and participatory, there are mixed feelings and uneven practices among countries in the region. It was emphasized that citizen-led monitoring of the VNR process, in particular, can help ensure governments do not only selectively report on development progress. The establishment of the coordination and integration mechanisms has helped to avoid creating silos during the implementation phase but is not consistently open to civil society’s meaningful participation.



[Full Report here](#)

ADA Side Event – Peace and Disarmament, UNCC, Bangkok, March 29



ADA organized its second side event on Peace and disarmament as the follow-up and key take away from PyeongChang Peace Forum, organized earlier in February 2019. The workshop deliberated the issues of linking peace and SDG 16 and how the issue of peace has been gaining prominence citing jeopardizing the peace issues between north and south Korea, in the northeast region, India and Pakistan in the south Asia region causing much awkwardness in these regions.