

2022

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DECLARATION OF THE SDG 16+ FORUM ASIA

REPORT



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Organized by the Asia Development Alliance (ADA) jointly with the Asia Civil society Partnership for Sustainable Development (APSD), Forus, TAP Network, GCAP, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC). In cooperation with ARGO, Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM), CECEOEDCON & PAIRVI and MGOS Coordination Mechanism for the HLPF.





Introduction

We, comprising over 100 participants of the 2022 SDG 16 + Asia Forum (see participants list [here](#)) adopt the following Declaration which addresses civil society's analysis and response to current global challenges linked to SDG 16+, to changing geo-political and geo-economic contexts in Asia, and in light of UN mechanisms such as the HLPF and the UN Decade of Action to Deliver the 2030 Agenda (2021-2030), UN Our Common Agenda (OCA), the G20 Summit, etc.



SDG 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

Preamble

The lack of commitment and concerted action from governments across the world pose a grave threat to people and planet which are impacted by multidimensional crises, and compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia. **The UNESCAP SDG Progress Report 2022 indicates that the SDGs will not be achieved in Asia and the Pacific region until 2065 given the current pace of progress with implementation.**

- **The region is a complex one, with diverse cultural identities, and considerable economic disparities/inequalities.** On the one hand, some countries such as Japan, South Korea, China are making their mark in relation to developed countries categories whereas most of south and south eastern Asian countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Cambodia etc) are still struggling to achieve satisfactory levels of economic development. Technological change, globalization, and market-oriented reform— the main drivers of Asia's rapid economic growth—are also the basic drivers of rising inequality in Asia.
- **Worrying trends related to SDG 16 + in the region over recent years** include the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021, a political takeover by the Taliban in Afghanistan in August 2021, the Sri Lanka debt crisis earlier this year , political turmoil in Pakistan which was further exacerbated by deadly floods, causing millions of people, cattle etc to become displaced.
- **Apart from the immense destruction caused by climate change** there is also a feudal element where big landlords have deliberately inundated the agricultural land of small farmers in order to get rid of water from their own land. The governments in all these countries have been performing poorly, and have made negligible interventions in response to these crises.

- **These humanitarian crises are also happening as big businesses and rich capitalist nations are failing to commit to reducing their CO2 emissions** or to propose any genuine solution to the climate emergency. On the other hand, promising actions to protect and build the resilience of communities and vulnerable communities are not receiving sufficient support.
- **Serious political attention and accompanying accountability measures are required** which will focus on durable solutions at community level, especially prioritizing the most vulnerable and marginalized. Humanitarian aid must be complemented by effective humanitarian advocacy and political efforts for early and durable solutions aimed at mitigating current crises.
- **People from the Asia- Pacific region struggle as they find themselves being left behind on the path towards a just and equitable recovery while experiencing a climate emergency, increasing sovereign debt crises, and unjust trade and investment rules which limit policy and fiscal space.** The region is also experiencing clear vaccine inequities while corporate wealth and power is growing (with a new billionaire being created every 26 hours since the pandemic started). Many countries in the region are confronted with widening debt traps, shrinking ODA and corporate capture, while struggling to recover from the devastating impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.



Main Proposals of the Forum 2022



SDG 16+ Approach

- 1** Governments need **to recognize the importance of SDG 16 +** and to mainstream SDG 16+ in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national, sub-national, regional and international levels as a tool to enable, accelerate and promote justice, peace and inclusion.
- 2** **A human rights-based approach** needs to be promoted and applied in the implementation and monitoring of SDG 16 + and the overall 2030 Agenda, and should be part of 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches.
- 3** **Basic freedoms of speech, assembly and association** as well as civic space for CSO activities need to be guaranteed and promoted for the effective deliver of the SDGs.
- 4** Governments need **to tackle corruption issues** more effectively as part of the implementation of SDG 16+ to improve transparency and accountability at the national and sub-national levels.
- 5** There must be efforts to build from below in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030. **Government should also address the Data Gap in reviewing the implementation of the SDGs.**



UN and International levels



- 6** **SDG 16 needs to be addressed as priority goal each year** alongside the review of the SDG 17 at the UN HLPF and the APFSD, and as emphasized in the 2022 Rome CSO Declaration on SDG 16+.
- 7** **The annual report of SDGs by the UN Secretary General and UN ESCAP needs to provide more data and in-depth assessment and analysis about SDG 16 +** implementation in order to identify related challenges and solutions.
- 8** The second **Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)** in 2023 needs to highlight the importance of SDG 16 + in addressing the current global challenges related to the implementation of 2030 Agenda during the second-half of the 2030 Agenda roadmap (2023-2030).
- 9** The elements of the UN's Our Common Agenda related to peace, justice and inclusion need to be integrated into the SDG 16+ implementation processes at national and international levels, and should feature prominently as part of the discussions of the **UN Summit of the Future (2024) and Social Summit (2025)**.
- 10** Civil Society shadow or spotlight reports, including a particular focus on SDG 16+, should be given more prominence in the discussions of the UN HLPF and APFSD, and as part of sub-regional multi-stakeholder forums in Asia.
- 11** CSO spotlight reports linked to VNR processes should be made available on the UN VNR website as part of the contributions of the Major Groups & Other Stakeholders (MGoS).
- 12** **Ongoing programs for CSO capacity development need to be provided** to develop the abilities of civil society to prepare high quality and well-researched CSO shadow/parallel reports on the VNR and thematic issues related to SDG 16 in the HLPF.
- 13** **A global and/or regional "SDG16+ Fund"** needs to be established to support the activities of the civil society and other stakeholders in Asia, and to increase their effective engagement with the implementation of SDG 16+.
- 14** **Governments participating in international processes** such as G20 and G7 Summits need to play a leadership role in advancing global agendas such as 2030 Agenda, Paris Climate Agreement and Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) , with a particular emphasis on SDG 16+ issues and challenges.
- 15** **Countries in South Asia need solidarity at the trans-regional level** especially stronger and more inclusive multilateralism that will provide political leadership to achieve Sustainable Development Goals efficiently.
- 16** **Regional organizations such as ASEAN and SAARC** need to make greater efforts to align their agendas with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

National Level

17 Governments need to develop national SDG action plans including national goals, targets and indicators, particularly related to SDG 16 + , and to civic space.

18 Annual multi-stakeholder SDG forums need to be established as institutionalized mechanisms at the national and sub-national levels to review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda , and should encourage public, public-private and civil society partnerships (SDG Target 17.17) from 2023, the half-way mark of the SDG 15 year roadmap (2016-2030).

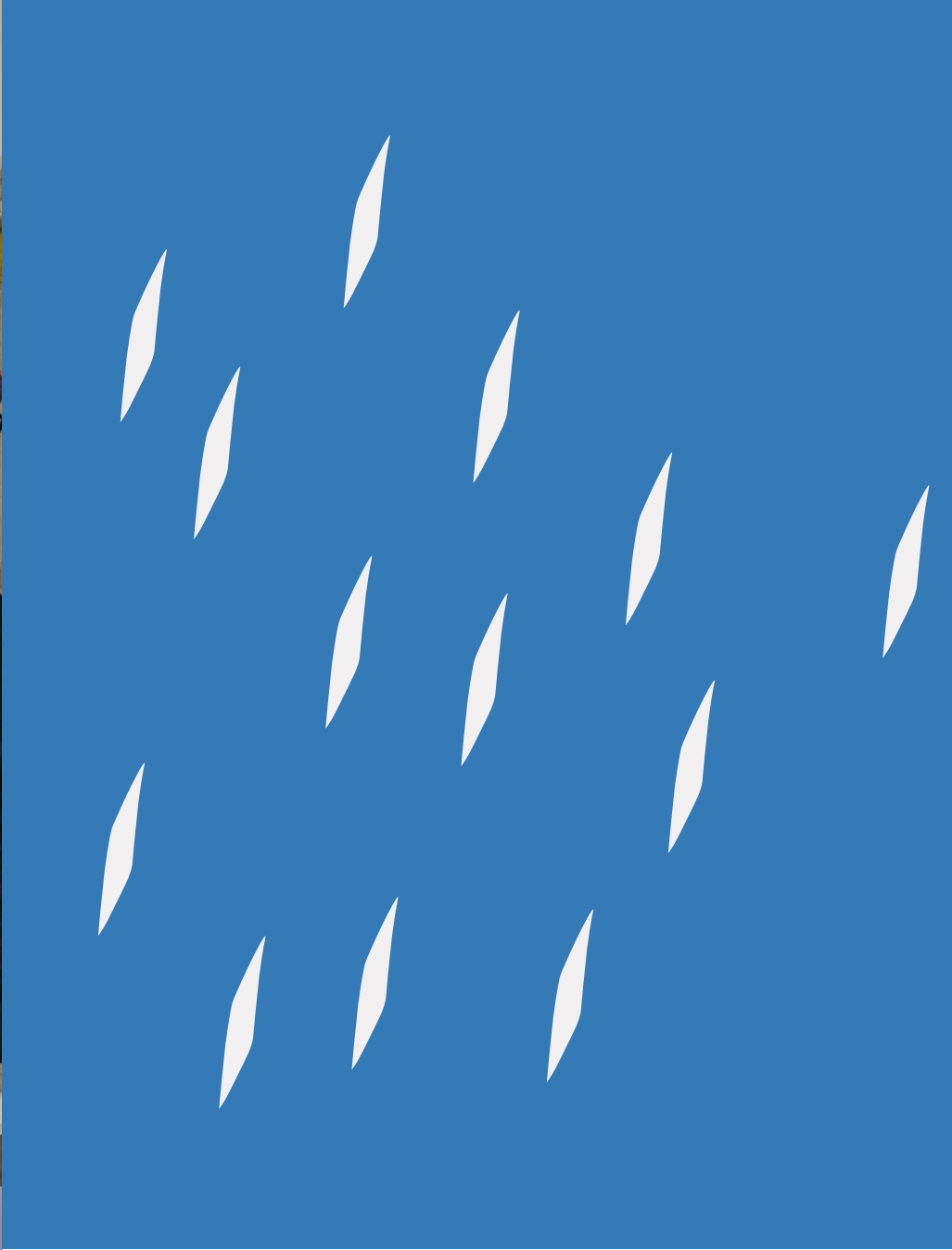
Civil Society Commitment

19 CSOs are encouraged to produce a national Civil Society SDG 16+ Spotlight Report annually from 2023, based on objective data and research including the use of tools such as the People’s Scorecard (PSC) and others.

20 CSOs are encouraged to organize a national SDG 16+ Forum annually to monitor and review the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly where DG 16+, is concerned, and to address the challenges related to SDG 16 +.

21 CSOs are encouraged to mainstream SDG 16+ in the process of localizing SDGs at the national and sub-national levels, specially Voluntary Local Review (VLR) at the sub-national levels. We continue to commit ourselves to building a community of peace and justice in Asia through SDG 16+ and human rights-based approach





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