

For : Agenda Item 2: Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

CSO Collective Statement

Thank you for this opportunity. We are representing more than 600 civil society organisations, grassroots and peoples' movements from across the region. We are here to demand the recognition of the systemic barriers to the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

We are halfway towards the deadline of achieving the 2030 Agenda, but it is more and more apparent that we are not only years but decades behind in achieving these goals.¹ The region is projected to achieve the SDGs only by 2065, notwithstanding the regressions, at the current rate of progress.

Besides, the projection is based on 53% of the available data, and the scale of unpredictability is humongous with the unknown 47%, that could push it well into the 22nd century if concrete corrective measures are not applied in time.

We were off track prior to COVID-19, but the last three years have been particularly disastrous in their impacts due to exacerbating effects of the pandemic, the worsening triple planetary and energy crisis, the increasing militarism and conflict, imperialist wars, as well as the rise of patriarchal authoritarian governance throughout the region. Besides lack of progress on the SDGs, Asia and the Pacific have also seen a decline in human rights protection, and a consistent rise in human rights violations in all facets.

There is no sustainability without equity, justice and peace. Unless the conceptualization of societal transformation addresses these systemic failures, upholds Development Justice and ensures Right to Development for all, achieving the SDGs will remain a pipe dream.

To ensure a sustainable and equitable recovery, it is crucial that these systemic barriers are addressed starting with strengthening public accountability and channeling of resources in areas such as health, education, social protection, and sustainable infrastructure, while also promoting inclusive and participatory decision-making processes.

Delivering development justice means empowering vulnerable groups, including strengthening public institutions and services that provide access to health care, education, access to clean water and sanitation, equitable and people-centered renewable energy, and services that will address the multiple burdens of women and other marginalized sectors.

Furthermore, we need to address the challenges of the climate crisis and biodiversity loss, which are interconnected with public health and socio-economic development. This requires collective action and strengthens regional and global multilateralism, including the exchange of knowledge and best practices, capacity building, and ensuring meaningful civil society engagement across processes.

¹ https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/ESCAP-2022-FG_SDG-Progress-Report.pdf

Thank you, Chair.

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