



High-level Political Level 2019

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

What are regions telling us about implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs?

Sarah Zaman, Women's Action Forum, Pakistan.

Thank you, Madam Moderator, Respected Chairs.

The Asia and Pacific region, like many regions in the world, continues to be marred by:

- widening inequalities between the rich and the poor,
- worsening impacts of climate change,
- corporate capture, anti-people trade agreements,
- worsening poverty, exacerbated by regressive tax systems, rising debt, and illicit financial flows,
- land and resource grabbing, leading to displacement,
- pervasive patriarchy and fundamentalisms, and
- militarism and conflict, and attacks on human rights defenders.

The UNESCAP progress report on the SDGs also shows that two-thirds of the SDGs are off track and not likely to be met in the region.

From the panel presentations, **I agree that there is space in the regional forum to identify regional priority issues, and specific solutions that are more difficult to achieve at the global level.**

For example:

- **Illicit financial flows, trade mispricing, and tax avoidance** can be addressed by forming a regional tax body to reform the taxation architecture;
- **For fair trade rules**, we can establish compulsory ex-ante, and periodic human rights and SDG compatibility impact assessments of tax, trade and investment policies and agreements in the region.

Excellencies: We need to change the nature of discussions at the HLPF. The APFSD, for example, allows space to discuss systemic barriers to sustainable development, and have specific action-oriented recommendations in the outcome document, which are nowhere reflected in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration.

We propose that Regional Forums present interim VNRs before submitting them to the HLPF, in order to strengthen linkages between national, regional, and global levels.

Lastly, the participation of stakeholders in regional follow-up mechanisms should be strengthened, with earmarked financial resources. All regional Forums should pre-convene with civil societies - prioritising grassroots organisations and peoples' movements - with outcomes that officially feed into the Forum.

I thank you for your audience.