

Advancing a Peoples' Agenda for Development Justice

Civil society groups from Asia and the Pacific met in Bangkok from May 15-17, 2014 to develop regional recommendations on just and sustainable development for action at the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. We reaffirm prior regional civil society statements and declarations including the Kathmandu Declaration of the Asia-Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Regional Consultation Meeting (22-23 November 2012); Asia-Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Regional Consultation Meeting, Phnom Penh (17-18 September 2013); Bangkok Civil Society Declaration: From Inclusive to Just Development (24 August 2013); and Civil Society Perspectives for a Commonwealth Post-2015 Development Agenda (10-14 November 2013) and civil society recommendations in the UN-NGLS Post-2015 Civil Society Consultation Asia-Pacific Regional Report (22 September 2013)

The Asia Pacific region has seen rapid growth and significant improvements in the lives of millions of people over the last decades but grave challenges remain. The region still has the largest concentration of people without adequate food, income and employment. Inequalities in the distribution of wealth, power and resources between and within countries, and among rich and poor, men and women, and social groups, are growing and undermining wellbeing for the majority of the population. Environmental conditions are deteriorating rapidly especially in ecologically sensitive areas such as oceans, forests and mountain regions. Climate change is endangering the lives and futures of entire populations, particularly in the Pacific islands. All of these challenges are threatening the livelihoods of many, including small farmers and fishers, and driving migration on an unprecedented scale.

Women, migrants and young people in particular are trapped in vulnerable situations and face serious barriers to fully and freely participate in the different arenas of society. Health remains a critical challenge, with limited progress addressing sexual, reproductive, and child health, and infectious diseases, including HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. We are faced with a growing burden of non-communicable diseases and the spread of toxins in the environment, which have major implications for health and wellbeing. Human rights violations and environmentally destructive practices are often committed with impunity by large corporations, elites and other power holders with the support or complicity of state forces.

Addressing these challenges requires the political will for radical transformation that goes beyond superficial reforms. A new post-2015 development agenda should reorient development towards a sustainable and holistic approach to achieve peoples' wellbeing and the realization of human rights and dignity for all.

The new development framework must reaffirm and build upon the Rio principles and other international agreements in the area of development and human rights, including the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, among others. It must be based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capacity and the right to development. It must embrace a holistic rights-based approach, be grounded on international human rights obligations, and ensure that the human rights principles of equality, equity, non-discrimination, inclusive participation and decision making, non-retrogression and progressive realization of economic and social rights, underpin its policies and practices. Such an approach ensures that the most marginalized will benefit from development and become active agents of change.

On the issues on the agenda for the APFSD, civil society offers the following recommendations.

1. On integration and transformation for sustainable development:

To have a truly transformative impact, we must achieve development justice, which is based on five transformative shifts toward redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice, ecological justice and accountability to the people.

To achieve redistributive justice, governments must reduce inequalities between and within countries, among women and men, and among different social groups by implementing policies that redistribute resources, wealth, power and opportunities. Governments must:

- Guarantee the rights of small farmholders, small fishing-folk, indigenous peoples, and women to have access to, control over and ownership of fisheries, property, productive resources, information, and appropriate and environmentally sound technology.
- Reduce the number of women and the number of men who lack secure rights to land, property and productive resources and ensure that women realize secure these rights on an equal basis with men.
- Reform tax policies to achieve progressive taxation to ensure the wealthy pay their fair share.
- Implement a new internationally-agreed standard measuring multi-dimensional progress based on the principles of sustainable development, that beyond indicators focused on GDP and economic growth.

To achieve Economic justice governments must develop economies that enable dignified lives, accommodate for needs and facilitate capabilities, employment and livelihoods available to all. Economies must not be based on exploitation of people or natural resources or environmental destruction, but should instead work for people, rather than compel people to work for economies. We must reverse the destructive tide of privatization and concentration of wealth and resources to private corporations.

In particular, governments must:

- Ensure that economic growth is inclusive, pro-poor and sustainable through the reduction of income inequalities between the top and bottom quintiles
- Enact and implement policies to guarantee decent work and living wages for all, including informal sector workers, migrant workers, women garment workers and domestic workers.
- Establish universal social protection floors and guarantee them through public budgets.
- Provide universal access to quality public services, including health, education, food, water, sanitation and hygiene, roads and justice, for all people of all ages.
- Guarantee universal access to affordable essential medicines and reform intellectual property rights regimes that undermine this.
- Provide universal access to learning, opportunity and skills training for all, especially youth.
- Eliminate exploitation and abuse of workers, especially child labor and labor trafficking.
- Guarantee the human rights of migrant workers and their families, including to social protection and access to services.
- Address the gendered division of labor by redistributing paid and unpaid work, expanding the availability of public care services, ensuring that women receive equal pay for work of equal value.
- Support the development of consumer protection systems with a specific focus on access to sustainable products and services, as well as the information and facilities that need to support sustainable use, reuse, recycling and disposal.

To achieve social and gender justice governments must eliminate all forms of discrimination, marginalization, exclusion and violence that pervade our communities and guarantee the human rights of all peoples, particularly women, widows, dalits, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, children, youth, older persons, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV and other illnesses, people who use drugs, transgender people, sex workers,

domestic workers and workers in the informal sector, survivors of trafficking, people who are in closed institutions including prisons, and those excluded by caste, class, income, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, or social status.

- Eliminate all discriminatory laws and policies, particularly on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression;
- Eliminate all forms of gender-based violence, guarantee access to comprehensive services for survivors of violence, and end impunity;
- Achieve parity between women and men in decision-making at all levels, including in local and national governments;
- Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through comprehensive prevention and treatment programs and services;
- End the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases and emerging infectious diseases by guaranteeing equitable, universal, and affordable access to prevention, treatment, care and support for all people.
- Control malaria through cost-effective, ecologically sound and ecosystem-based integrated vector management interventions.
- Ensure universal access to comprehensive, integrated, quality and non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health services, information and care;
- Guarantee sexual and reproductive justice and rights for all free from coercion, discrimination and violence;
- Address fundamentalisms;
- End harmful practices, particularly child, early and forced marriage.

To achieve ecological justice governments must recognize the people as sovereigns of our local and global commons and ensure that policies and practices we implement now do not jeopardize the rights of future generations to an environment in which they can grow and prosper.

Governments must:

- Ensure integrated ecosystem management and sustainable use of resources in forests, terrestrial, coastal and marine areas with the implementation of proper conservation, impact assessment and safeguarding measures and respect for the right of the local communities
- Curtail corporate control of industrial food production systems.

- Promote ecological agriculture to guarantee food sovereignty and prevent hunger and its consequences.
- Commit to carbon emission reductions and provide new, adequate, predictable, and appropriate climate finance on the basis of historical responsibility for climate change.
- Allocate sufficient resources towards and promote scientific and traditional knowledge.
- Develop a new international protocol for relocation and support of climate induced migrants.
- Eliminate dependency on harmful chemical inputs particularly pesticides.
- Eliminate GM seed use to protect farmers' seed system, biodiversity, environment and human health.
- Ensure sustainable management of solid waste from mountains to the ocean.
- Build resilience to climate change for rural, urban, coastal, and mountains areas, with a focus on more ecologically sensitive areas and people, particularly indigenous people and women.

Accountability to peoples demand democratic and just governments, transparency, and governance that enables people to make informed decisions over their own lives, communities and futures. Governments must:

- Guarantee the right of all people, but particularly women, youth and the most marginalised, to be part of free, prior and informed decision making in all stages of development processes at the local, national, regional and international levels
- Guarantee the right to freedom of information.
- Regulate and hold transnational corporations accountable, through mechanisms that would bind corporations to respect human rights and other international laws (not just on a voluntary basis), including in their cross-border activities;
- Eliminate tax havens and illicit capital transfers.

2. On shared prosperity within planetary boundaries:

We must shift from the fixation on economic growth and instead guarantee that people and the planet are at the heart of sustainable development. In this regard, we urge governments to:

- Guarantee universal access to quality public social services for all people without discrimination and regardless of migration status.
- Establish a production system that takes into account the real environmental costs of products and services and increase demand for greener products and services.
- Address environmental, economic and social challenges related to rapid urbanisation
- Reorient production, consumption and distribution systems and natural resource management and extraction towards peoples' needs.
- Achieve low-carbon development through the expansion of energy efficient and renewable energy systems and the reduction of energy use and eliminate fossil fuel subsidies.
- Be ambitious in addressing climate change and keep global temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees.
- Harness the benefits from 'peace dividends' and increase public spending on universalizing social services instead of increasing military spending;
- Establish regional institutions and juries to ensure accountability for environmental treaties, geographical (Mountain to Coastal) and trans-boundary issues; and
- Transform how poverty elimination and development is measured from economic metrics to more sustainable metrics on overall wellbeing.
- Recognise that resources are limited and shared amongst the people and countries and should be at the heart of defining growth within planetary boundaries.

Our vision of shared prosperity means 'leaving no one behind' AND 'letting no one get away.'

3. On governance, peace, and rule of law:

The success of the next development framework and the creation of just societies depend on good governance and accountability, the rule of law, and commitments to peace and security. We stress the fundamental importance of an active and informed citizenry for holding governments accountable and urge the participation and leadership of civil society, social movements, and other stakeholders in decision and policy making processes at all levels. We also emphasize that youth and children must be recognized and engaged as equal stakeholders in the future of the planet.

Governments must:

- Guarantee accountable and democratic systems of governance, with checks and balances, including political opposition, and strong judiciaries
- Guarantee access to justice for all without discrimination of any kind;
- Ensure the participation and leadership of civil society, people's organizations, social movements, youth, and other stakeholders in decision and policy making and accountability mechanisms at all levels;
- Ratify, domesticate and implement existing international conventions, human rights treaties, environmental treaties and other relevant agreements;
- Ensure the full realization of all human rights;
- Guarantee the right to freedom of information and ensure that all people, in particular poor and marginalized communities, can obtain timely, quality, accessible, reliable and disaggregated information at all levels;
- End corruption;
- Create a regional mechanism, that is also accessible to individuals and groups, for resolving intra-country differences, increasing accountability and transparency, and sharing good practices and initiatives on sustainable development;
- Develop cross-border and multisectoral collaborations and accountability between countries of origin and destination to promote migrants' rights; and
- Establish a binding regulatory framework to ensure corporate sector accountability for activities that threaten sustainable development and human rights.

4. On means of implementation:

Supportive Means of Implementation and an effective global partnership is essential for the implementation of the sustainable development agenda and must include development-oriented rules that address region specific concerns. Governments must:

- Establish a stand-alone goal as well cross cutting components on means of implementation for each goal based on the principal of common but differentiated responsibilities;

- Recognize that new sources of financing such as public-private partnerships and south-south cooperation are complementary and not a substitute for traditional means of implementation keeping the public sector at the center of sustainable development financing;
- Raise finances through increased development assistance, progressive taxation, financial transaction taxes and the redirection of military spending to development.
- Establish international cooperation to eliminate tax havens and illicit capital flows.
- Ensure international cooperation on fiscal policy, including taxation, to prevent a race to the bottom.
- Prioritise public sector financing over public-private partnerships and strengthen corporate accountability and regulation.
- Go beyond technology transfer to address all stages of technology development, research, evaluation and dissemination, support and build local capacity and innovation, and promote endogenous and traditional knowledge and technology;
- Ensure that science and technology are used in a manner that increases equality, serves the communities that require it and provide access to marginalized groups.
- Strengthen capacities for development data collection and analyses including quantitative, qualitative, disaggregated and participatory data, generated by income, gender, age, race, urban/rural setting;
- Discourage remittance-based financing of development as it distorts the reality that migration is mostly a measure of underdevelopment and inequalities in the global economic system, and encourages the export of precarious workers;
- Earmark national resources and proportions of official development assistance to address gender and other forms of inequality;
- Overcome IPR barriers, especially on access to medicine;
- Reform trade and investment rules under the WTO and FTAs to protect policy space of national governments and to promote local production and employment, especially of farmers, fishers and other small producers;
- Commit to monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including disaggregated data collection, as well as greater accountability and transparency in development financing.

5. On the way forward:

We need to transform the mindsets of the UN, international institutions, and

governments. If we want to achieve a truly transformative sustainable development agenda, we must not shy away from the so-called contentious issues, like international financial governance and trade structures, climate change, women's human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, among others.

In addition, we call upon the UN and the HLPF to effectively:

- Ensure policy coherence, not just across the UN and its agencies, but also with international financial and trade institutions.
- Initiate regional and sub-regional level peer review mechanisms to evaluate performance on sustainable development that involve all stakeholders;
- Establish special rapporteurs to assess progress, challenges and offer recommendations on how to address key sustainable development issues; and
- Develop accountability and reporting mechanisms for all stakeholders involved in financing sustainable development, including UN Agencies, international financial and trade institutions, transnational corporations and the private sector.

To facilitate and institutionalize civil society participation in development processes, we call upon the HLPF, Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) members, and governments to:

- Recognize civil society has the experience and technical expertise to contribute to constructive development debates based on our work from the grassroots to the global levels;
- Ensure that civil society engages not only as observers, but as partners with equal rights in policy development, implementation, monitoring and accountability in all regional and global mechanisms, including the APFSD and High Level Political Forum;
- Institutionalise civil society participation in all sustainable development processes through a regional civil society engagement mechanism designed and established by civil society themselves.

Finally, we as civil society commit to work together with people, governments and other institutions to promote just and sustainable development for all.

Civil society groups from Asia-Pacific participating at the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development have released a set of recommendations on just and sustainable development. Below is the full text of the document. You can also visit the post our website <http://peoplesgoals.org/summary-of-civil-society-recommendations-for-the-apfsd/>