

APWLD  
Ms. Wardarina  
Session 1

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES FOR ASIA-PACIFIC: CIVIL SOCIETY CONCERNS

Your excellences, honorable delegates, UN agencies, civil society colleagues and friends;

I'm speaking on behalf of major groups

Civil society reiterates our call for the need for an ambitious, inclusive, transformative Roadmap that seeks to dismantle the considerable barriers to sustainable development. The draft roadmap is not yet ambitious nor clear enough. Let us work together over the next 12 months to make this a roadmap that is truly fit for purpose in this challenging global environment. Led by the chair we envisage a roadmap that incorporates the input of member states, UN agencies and civil society that makes the APFSD the global standard for regional sustainable development fora.

Over the past 3 years UN ESCAP, civil society, UN Agencies and member states have invested a lot in creating this forum. It must continue to grow and enhance its accountability and strategic role.

Now let me speak about our message from the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development 2016 on behalf of 135 Civil Society Organisations. We request you to annex our full written statement and more detailed recommendations to the Outcome document.

We as civil society want to highlight some overarching trends that will make the SDGs impossible to realize and advance development justice.

The dominant **macroeconomic policy regime** in the Asia Pacific region has resulted in increasing privatization, liberalization and deregulation. **Anti-poor and inequitable macro policies** have led to increasing suppression of interests of the people at large, **denial of social protection and human rights**. Our **food security and sovereignty is challenged** by the expansion of corporate led agriculture that has made food costly, unhealthy, destroyed natural ecosystems and biodiversity, triggering widespread hunger and malnutrition in the region. **Trade and investment agreements** including the WTO and FTAs, have created major challenges for the developing and least developed countries in accessing land and resources, and challenged development policy space in general. Current production practices, both in agriculture and industry, have adverse impacts on the ecosystem, and the health and lives of the people

We have seen less **public provision of essential and quality social services such as health care and education**, as well as access to clean and safe water, housing, energy and land. Access to progressive sexual health and education services, in particular SRHR has seen severe opposition. Universal access to health care and education has been far from realized in the region.

**Displacements and evictions** due to land grab, climate disasters, loss of livelihood, and debt are common phenomenon across communities including farming and indigenous communities. Our region has been particularly plagued by **environmental degradation and climate change**. The operation of the extractive industries have destroyed natural ecosystems, displaced communities, undermined human rights, and contributed to health hazards.

We reiterate that **discrimination and marginalisation** must be eliminated if the SDGs are to be realized. Underlying structures of inequality and marginalization (i.e. caste, patriarchy, sexual orientation, ageism, racism, sexism, among others) remain deeply embedded in **historical processes of discrimination and inequitable development** in the region.

In spite of its limitations, the comprehensive nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers us the opportunity to reorient ourselves. **Civil society in the Asia-Pacific advocates** for development justice tat **complete reorientation of economic, social and environmental policies** and a **bottom-up approach with participation of grass-root**

**communities and civil society**, with shared ownership by the people. **Pro-poor and equitable economic and social policies** must; provide jobs, incomes and social provisioning, not based on exploitation but rather protection of all; At the same time, **trade and investments agreement** negotiations must be transparent, participatory and subjected to independent human rights impact assessments before they are signed. **The traditional or significant roles of communities and regions** (such as the Pacific) in conservation, nurturing, management of natural resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and in preventing and reducing disaster risk must be recognized and harnessed, while their special needs are also addressed.

However none of the above will be possible without **accountable, transparent, participatory and just institutions**, especially in the state domain. **Private sector** as development partners and economic players must also be subject to stringent norms of scrutiny, as we would ourselves be. **Stakeholder participation** must be underpinned by human rights principles including **universality, non-discrimination, social and gender equality, participation, empowerment and accountability**. Finally civil society participation in sustainable development processes and mechanisms must be institutionalized based on **principles of non-regression, democracy and equality**, as guided by the HLPF and the Agenda itself.