

First Stakeholder Consultation for the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference

Addressing Human Rights, Intersecting Forms of Discrimination and Exclusion: Leaving No One Behind in Sustainable Development

Wednesday, 21 June 2023 (11:00-14:45 UTC+7) Online (Zoom)

CONCEPT NOTE (14 June 2023)

1. Introduction

Pursuant to ESCAP resolution 74 (XXIII) of 17 April 1967 and Commission on Population and Development decision 2022/101, ESCAP, in collaboration with UNFPA, will organize the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference from 15 to 17 November 2023 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The Population Conference is a statutory organ of ESCAP and convenes every ten years.

The intergovernmental meeting and its preparatory process will coincide with other important events and developments: the 60-year commemoration of the first Asian Population Conference, held in December 1963 in New Delhi, India and the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development. It will also mark the half-way point toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. It will also be held one year prior to the assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development during the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development in 2024.

Paragraph 24 of the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration (APMD) on Population and Development adopted at the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference noted “... *challenges from multiple and overlapping forms of inequality, disempowerment and discrimination still need to be addressed, through **commitment to equality before the law and non-discrimination for all persons, without distinction of any kind, in the exercise of their social, cultural, economic, civil and political rights**, including the right to gainful employment, residence and access to services, as well as the need to promulgate or enforce laws that punish any kind of discrimination, violence or hate crimes, and to take active steps to protect people in the region from discrimination, stigma, and violence*”. Further to this, Paragraph 35 of the APMD highlighted increased inequalities in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region which have resulted in lack of access for many to healthy nutrition, quality education, safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, productive employment, decent shelter and acceptable standards of health and living, and that addressing inequalities

will continue to be a challenge in the region, including lack of access for couples and individuals to safe, acceptable, affordable, effective and voluntary forms of modern contraception[and universal access to SRHR services].

Evidence points to the fact that the Asia-Pacific region is characterised by high levels of income inequality. While there is greater equality in Central Asia and the Pacific, the most unequal sub-regions are South Asia and East Asia. These inequalities have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Reducing all forms of inequality within and among countries is crucial for leaving no one behind in the sustainable population and development discourse.¹

The APMD further recognised that discrimination based on gender is inextricably linked to other factors “*such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, disability, age, class, caste, or all other status, and that these multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination can compound women’s and girls’ experience of injustice, social marginalization and inequality*” (Paragraph 43). The Ministerial Declaration called for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and accord high priority to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including the right to make decisions concerning reproduction free from discrimination, coercion and violence and the right to decide freely and responsibly on matters of sexuality,

Taking the above context and focus on addressing persistent inequalities, the first CSO consultation will focus on addressing human rights, and intersecting forms of discrimination, and exclusion. The consultation will take stock of the progress made towards the **2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development (APMD) and the Programme of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Asia and the Pacific**, and assess progress, gaps challenges in reducing inequalities, upholding human rights with focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights of people in the region and discuss the way forward.

Main findings and recommendations of the consultations will be summarized in an information paper to be submitted to the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference Intergovernmental meeting . The objective of these consultations is to bring a bottom-up participatory approach to the review and appraisal of the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development (APMD) priority action areas and modalities of implementation at the regional level. Moreover, the consultations aim at identifying challenges, gaps and opportunities across all 11 priority areas in the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development (APMD), from CSO perspectives. The first consultation will discuss the APMD priority actions in a cross-cutting manner from the lens of inequalities, exclusion and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

2. Objectives of consultation

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation is to facilitate and expand collaboration and participation in the regional review and appraisal process, and in particular to elicit stakeholder experiences and views around the review objectives, namely:

- Take stock of the overall progress of implementation of the priority issues of the APMD and the ICPD PoA in Asia and the Pacific to date
- Identify key challenges, opportunities, gaps, and prevalent and emerging issues
- Identify established and emerging good practices and lessons learnt

¹ Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-02/UNDP-RBAP-Inequality-and-Social-Security-in-Asia-Pacific-2022.pdf>

- Identify resource requirements and capacity building needs
- Formulate recommendations

3. Consultation sub-themes focus

The first stakeholder consultation is on Addressing Human Rights, Intersecting Forms of Discrimination and Exclusion: Leaving No One Behind in Sustainable Development. Three sub-themes have been identified within the main consultation, by the CSO Steering Committee.

Subtheme 1: Women and girls in all their diversity, including SOGIESC and gender diverse persons

This sub-theme will focus on inequalities, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion faced by women and girls, adolescents, older persons, migrant persons, LGBTQ+, intersex persons, persons with disabilities, non-neurotypical women, women and girls in poverty. Indigenous people, ethnic minorities, sex workers, and other marginalized groups, rural and urban poor, people living with TB and/or HIV.

Subtheme 2: Marginalized communities living in conflict and humanitarian settings, natural disasters and forced displacement, and marginalized based on location

This sub-theme will discuss the structural inequalities, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion faced by marginalized communities in conflict and humanitarian emergencies, natural disasters and forced displacement, including women and girls in all their diversity, SOGIESC, and gender diverse persons, migrants, refugees, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons displaced in the context of climate crises and other contexts, person living in urban, rural, maritime and remote communities, including those living in climate frontlines and small island states.

Subtheme 3: ensuring access to Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and fulfillment of universal access to SRHR information, education and services

This topic will focus on the issue of equity and access of marginalized groups to Universal Health Coverage including SRHR services, and the fulfillment of SRHR for all in Asia and the Pacific.

4. Content and format

The consultation will consist of an opening keynote address on the topic followed by two rounds of three simultaneous subtheme discussions. This will be followed by the closing plenary where the key highlights and recommendations will be shared by the respective sub-theme leads. A closing and next step will follow.

1. **Welcome and opening**
2. **Keynote address: Addressing Human Rights, Intersecting Forms of Discrimination and Exclusion: Leaving No One Behind in Sustainable Development**
3. **Working groups (parallel and two rounds)**
 - Subtheme 1: Women and girls in all their diversity, including SOGIESC and gender diverse persons
 - Subtheme 2: Marginalized communities living in conflict and humanitarian settings, natural disasters
 - Sub-theme 3: Ensuring access to Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and fulfillment of universal access to SRHR information, education and services for all
4. **Plenary: Highlights, challenges and recommendations**
5. **Closing and next steps**

All Working groups will address the following guiding questions, with a focus on the implementation of APMD priority actions

1. Who are excluded and how do we ensure INCLUSION and MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION of individuals fully in the economic, social, political and cultural realms, especially of individuals who are disadvantaged and marginalized on the basis of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination?
2. How do we enhance opportunities, access to resources, voice and agency of individuals, and respect for rights, and ensure their effective engagement in decisions concerning their sexual and reproductive health and rights? (participants might want to discuss this with a focus on the individual and community levels and policy and systems level)
3. What are the main achievements, good practices and lessons learned?
4. What are the remaining challenges?
5. How have COVID-19, climate change and ICTs impacted the achievement of the priority issues? Please differentiate between positive and negative effects.

The consultation is a closed meeting and will not be recorded. In order to have open and frank discussions, **Chatham House Rules will be followed**, which means that participants are free to use the information received but may not reveal the identity or the affiliation of the speaker(s), or of any other participant.

A summary note of the consultation will be drafted and made publicly available after the consultation. Registration will close on 19 June 2023 at 24:00 hrs (midnight) (*Bangkok time*).

5. Organizing team

This stakeholder consultation is co-designed and implemented by a team of stakeholders led by the 7th APPC CSO Steering Committee: Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA), Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Caram Asia, Dawn, HelpAge, International Community of Women Living with HIV Asia Pacific (ICWAP), IPPF ESEAOR, IPPF SARO, Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition, Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), Y-Peer Asia Pacific, YouthLEAD, and United Nations agencies, including UN ESCAP and UNFPA.

6. Participants

Participation in the stakeholder consultations should be balanced with regard to geography/region, gender and area of work/sector. Civil Society Organisations engaged in ICPD and APPC processes in Asia and the Pacific will be actively engaged. Further to this, CSOs working on APMD priority action areas also will be included in the process. In the interest of ensuring diverse representation at the consultation, we ask that only one or two per organization participates.

7. Expected outcomes and next steps

A summary report will be drafted after the meeting and posted on the ESCAP website. The summary will inform an information paper that will be drafted, summarizing the outcomes of all stakeholder consultation.

8. Background

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 60 per cent of the world's population. It is undergoing a momentous transition from younger, more rural populations to older, more urban ones. While sharing some general trends, other population levels and trends differ across subregions and countries. For example, some are already experiencing population decline, whereas others continue to grow, albeit at a declining rate. The size, structure and dynamics of regional populations influence and are influenced by economic and social development, climate change, natural disasters and conflicts. In order to ensure sustainable development, it is important to fully understand the interactions between these factors.

9. Background documents

[2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development](#);
[Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Declaration on Population and Development](#);
[2020 Report of the Committee on Social Development on its sixth session, containing the Asia-Pacific indicator framework](#);
[Summary report prepared in follow-up to the Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development in 2018](#); and
[2021 ESCAP Population Data Sheet](#).
Additional information is available on the UN ESCAP dedicated [website](#)