

Second Stakeholder Consultation for the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference

Achieving Climate Justice for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

Wednesday, 26 July 2023 (11:00-14:00 UTC+7) Online (Zoom)

CONCEPT NOTE (20 July 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.

The Asia and the Pacific region, over the past 53 years (1970-2022), has experienced almost ten weather, climate, water and seismic-related disasters each month, and a person living in this region is six times more likely to be affected by disaster events than someone living outside the region.¹ The impact of climate change is increasing the vulnerabilities and further exacerbating the inequalities in the region.

Several delegations at the 2013 Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference recognised the social impact of climate change. Delegations from the Pacific noted that their survival was threatened by climate change and that collective regional and global action was required to address that challenge. People in

¹<https://www.unescap.org/blog/asia-pacific-riskscape-how-do-changes-weather-climate-and-water-impact-our-lives>

many countries across the region, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Philippines are increasingly facing the impacts of shifting climate and the climate crisis on their livelihoods, health and well-being.

The 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration (APMD) on Population and Development adopted at the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, highlighted with concern in paragraph 66 that *the Asian and Pacific region is the most disaster-prone region of the world, noting the severe impacts of disasters on women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons, and recognizing the need to build the resilience of populations in the region, including vulnerable groups in mitigation and adaptation strategies, to reduce vulnerability to disasters*. Further to this in paragraph 24, ESCAP member States called for the participation of the affected populations in the planning and decision-making processes on relevant natural disaster risk reduction strategies. Paragraph 189, called to, *develop measures to prevent and mitigate the effects of natural disasters in urban areas, and ensure the provision of necessary and prompt assistance to affected populations, especially vulnerable groups, such as persons with disability, migrants and older adults*.

The second thematic stakeholder consultation for the 7th APPC will focus on “Achieving Climate Justice for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific”. Key themes within this consultation will include the focus on climate justice, gender justice and SRHR, debunking myths around population and climate change, climate crises- disaster, inclusion and accountability in climate change action and risk reduction strategies.

Evidence in the region points to the need for urgent action to protect the human rights of people affected, in particular women, girls and gender diverse persons. *Population growth, especially in the poorest countries where fertility rates are highest, is often identified as a primary cause of climate change. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA) successfully debunked this myth that population control is a legitimate development strategy.² Both the PoA of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action have called for the analysis of the structural links between SRHR, gender, and climate change.*

The consultation will take stock and assess progress, gaps challenges in reducing inequalities, upholding human rights.

Main findings and recommendations of the consultations will be summarized in an information paper to be submitted to the Seventh Asian-Pacific Population Conference. The objective of these consultations is to bring a bottom-up participatory approach of 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.

² *ibid*

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
- Identify resource requirements and capacity building needs
- Formulate recommendations

3. Consultation sub-themes focus

The second stakeholder consultation theme is **Achieving Climate Justice for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific**. Four sub-themes have been identified within the main consultation by the 7th APPC CSO Steering Committee.

Subtheme 1: Climate Justice, Gender Justice and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

A climate justice framework considers social justice and equity dimensions in addressing the climate change crisis. Climate change, gender equality and SRHR are inter-linked and climate change has a serious and disproportionate impact especially on women and girls, particularly the poorest, and gender diverse persons. The climate crisis is contributing to negative health outcomes including sexual and reproductive health, negative impacts menstrual health and hygiene, and can contribute to a higher prevalence of child and forced marriage, especially for marginalized groups including “**climate migrants**”, **displaced persons and refugees, and those living in climate change induced disaster zones, further exacerbating inequalities**. This sub-theme will highlight the focus on climate justice issues from the frontlines and the way forward for a climate just Asia and the Pacific region.

Subtheme 2: Debunking Myths on Population and the Climate Crises to Achieve Sexual and Reproductive Justice

This sub-theme will highlight and debunk myths around population and the climate crises. Arguments that controlling fertility is a solution to climate change are contrary to principles of sexual and reproductive justice. Sexual and reproductive justice can only be achieved when all people have the power and resources to make healthy decisions about their bodies, sexuality, and reproduction. This sub-theme will discuss the way forward for an evidence-based advocacy towards a climate just and resilient Asia and the Pacific region with respect for and fulfillment of bodily autonomy for all. It will address other myths such as the claim that climate change is a futuristic problem and not a problem of the present and highlight false solutions to current discourse with climate change agenda.

Subtheme 3: Inclusion and Accountability in Climate Change Action and Adaptation

This sub-theme will focus on those who are most impacted by climate change. Crisis-affected communities, including “climate migrants”, displaced persons and refugees, must be included in the design and implementation of humanitarian response to effectively address longer-term impacts. Climate action plans need to include investments in the health, education and empowerment of women and girls, LGBTIQ, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and other marginalized groups that are the most affected by the climate crisis. It is crucial to address the accountability gaps including climate financing accountability, by all concerned stakeholders that are contributing to the climate crises including corporations.

Subtheme 4: The Climate Crisis: Disasters and Risk Reduction Strategies including humanitarian responses

The Asia-Pacific region is one of the most natural disaster-prone regions in the world. Pandemics, disasters, and conflicts disproportionately impact marginalized communities with inequities manifesting as food and water shortages, loss of economic opportunities, lag and discontinuance of education including comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), barriers to access to health services, including SRHR, mental health and psychosocial services, and increased vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. A gender sensitive approach is needed, and young and older persons must be given a voice in planning, prevention and disaster response along with strengthening individuals’ and communities’ resilience and capacity to adapt to the climate crisis.

4. Content and format

The consultation will consist of an opening keynote address on the topic followed by two rounds of four 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. The floor will then open to questions and comments. A closing and next steps will follow.

All working groups will address the following questions

1. How are people in Asia and the Pacific, and in particular people in vulnerable situations, affected by climate change? What are the challenges?
2. Who is excluded from climate justice, gender justice and SRHR? How can one overcome exclusion and ensure that people in vulnerable situations and those faced with intersecting forms of discrimination are included and can participate meaningfully in climate justice, gender justice and SRHR
3. Are there any good practices and lessons learned in advancing climate justice in the region/nationally and in local context?
4. What should one recommend to achieve climate justice for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific be?

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 24 July 2023 at 24:00 hours (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, supported by UNESCAP 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 person 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](#)