

We, participants of the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development from 120 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) met in Bangkok from May 17-18, 2015 to further the regional recommendations of CSOs for consideration and action at the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

As we came together at this forum, we are deeply moved by the recent devastating earthquake in Nepal which has taken a heavy toll in terms of human lives, social, economic, ecological, cultural and psychological impacts, and we extend our solidarity to all Nepalese peoples in these difficult circumstances. Clearly, there has been a reversal of all progress in development in Nepal which puts disaster preparedness at the forefront of the development agenda. We further express concern over the plight of the trafficked Rohingya and Bangladeshi people whose condition needs urgent humanitarian and decisive political actions from countries of the region especially of Southeast Asia.

Sustainable development is a major concern for the people of Asia Pacific that is a region characterized by growth on one hand, but widening inequalities in wealth, power and resources between and within countries, between rich and poor, and between men, women, LGBTIQ, across different age groups and disabilities, on the other. The UN ESCAP's Economic and Social Survey of 2014 acknowledges that there is excessive concentration of assets in the hands of a few, with ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNWIs) in the region -- around 0.001 per cent of the region's 2013 population -- held about \$7.5 trillion worth of assets or 17 times more wealth than the combined GDP of the region's least developed countries.

Widespread injustices are rooted in this system where only a few control wealth and power and thus dictate the rules of the game to favor their interests including the use of coercion, corruption, violence and war.

It is a system that brooks no bounds. It is premised on continuous growth -- in extraction, production, consumption and waste -- that is now breaching the Earth's capacity to sustain life. The climate crisis's impacts continue to claim lives and livelihoods in many areas particularly in the Pacific islands. Disasters are becoming the new norm in the region, displacing hundreds of thousands of our people. Ecological destruction of forests, mountains, oceans, water systems and other ecosystems, often the result of the unregulated operations of large corporations, threatens the very future of the region's people.

This unjust system is perpetuated and made worse by a neoliberal model of development where the dignity of people depends on their value on the market. International finance, trade and investment rules set by the global north have diminished the capacity of States to meet their economic, social, environmental and cultural human rights obligations that lead to further concentration of wealth and power to a few families, corporations and countries.

Patriarchy, gender inequality, sexual and gender based violence and violations of women's human rights, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights, remains a persistent and entrenched problem. Women - particularly grassroots women, women with disabilities from the global south - have historically benefited the least from development, and carry the largest burden of global inequality, climate change, globalisation, militarization and growing fundamentalism.

Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression exacerbate the marginalization of indigenous peoples, dalits, migrants, refugees, slum dwellers, people with disabilities, young people, older people, LGBTIQ), people living with and affected by HIV, sex workers, people who use drugs, criminalized populations, and others. Obstacles to their full participation in various aspects of the society are largely unaddressed.

To ensure a life of dignity for all, we need a fundamental change in the mode of development. We need Development Justice. Its overarching aim must be to ensure the wellbeing and dignity of all people without discrimination and without violating the integrity of nature.

As the world draws nearer to adopting a new development agenda that promises to leave no one behind, we urge governments especially in the region to act on the following recommendations:

Challenges and Opportunities in integrating environment and development

In the lived experience of ordinary persons, the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are inseparable. We therefore call on Member States to adopt a people-centered approach to sustainability and

development. This means respecting and empowering people to have control over own lives and futures, especially those who are presently marginalized.

One way is to ensure adequate representation of such groups and their involvement in decision-making processes. In this regard, capacity building to marginalized groups with the necessary knowledge and skills to know and exercise their rights, are essential.

Ensuring full participation of civil society in the planning, implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at all levels is vital to democratic ownership of the sustainable development agenda. Community level decision-making will be critical to an integrated and holistic adoption and adaptation of the Post-2015 development agenda. The free, prior and informed consent for indigenous peoples in their lands and territories must be respected.

One major challenge pertains to the need to create solidarity between local populations, migrants, refugees and indigenous peoples. Towards this the development of more crosscutting indicators on inequality within the SDG's is key. It is important to look at the goals collectively. Further to this, the inclusion of persons with disability, young people and older people more effectively in engagements with decision-makers at the national and international level, infuse new dimensions and approaches to sustainable development.

Another major challenge to integration is the inadequate co-operation and coherence across the UN system. And likewise for member states, there is often disconnect between how different line agencies and ministries approach sustainable development. Trade ministers and finance ministries for instance often disregard human rights considerations in negotiating trade and investment agreements. Other ministries simultaneously negotiate a new set of sustainable development goals that would be thereby undermined by such agreements. We strongly urge Member States to adopt a human rights based approach to development across all line agencies and at all levels of government to ensure that human rights serves as the cement that guides all sustainable development efforts.