



Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism

Session 2. Regional Perspective on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda Presented by: Ms. Joan Carling on behalf of the AP-RCEM (Consolidated)

This is the collective statement of 150 organizations of the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development.

This region continues to be 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.

These manifestations of systemic barriers reinforce each other and they need to be collectively broken down in order for the region to achieve sustainable development.

Those further behind--indigenous peoples, dalits, ethnic minorities, rural communities and subsistence farmers are being evicted from their lands and territories that are given to corporations, large scale infrastructures in the name of green growth. These include mining operations, increasing palm oil plantations, commercial agriculture, tourist facilities, among others. These are causing more poverty to millions and prosperity to the few.

Worsening Militarism is a serious threat to the implementation of the SDGs. Military and paramilitary forces are sent to communities to quash protests and clear the way for the incoming investments such as extractives and plantations, leading to violations of individual and people's rights, violence against women and girls, and displacement of farmers and indigenous communities. Territorial, resource, and ethnic conflicts between and within several Asia Pacific countries is further fueling the import of arms, making Asia Pacific the most militarized region. Stateless people and those who migrate from conflict zones are most likely to be forced into cheap, exploitable labour or trafficked into slavery-like conditions. Military spending of Asia Pacific countries in 2015 amounted to USD 1625 billion. This huge budget should be re-allocated to support measures and programmes to provide public education, health, social protection, sustainable livelihoods and employment to the poor

These regional trends are not in line with implementation the SDGs. Further, there is an ongoing trend of government regulations making it extremely difficult for CSOs to engage in development issues, particularly at the local and national levels.

We thereby call on states to take concrete actions to implement the SDGs that are transformational, by addressing the root causes and consequences of poverty, inequality, discrimination, violence and injustice; and to build greater regional cooperation towards this end. Further, the implementation of the SDGs will not succeed without the meaningful participation of civil society and peoples' movements. Thank you very much.