

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2017
JOINT CSO STATEMENT ON SDG 3: ENSURE HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

We, representing more than 150 civil society representatives from diverse constituencies in the Asia-Pacific region, affirm that health is central to sustainable development and is critical to fulfilling targets in other goals. The right to health entails accessibility (physical, economic, social, political), affordability, availability and quality of health services, information, commodities, and counselling for all. Social determinants, such as poverty, gender inequality, cultural and religious beliefs and practices, and discriminatory laws and policies, perpetuate stigma and discrimination against people on the basis of their class, age, socio-economic and educational status, caste, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identities and expressions (SOGIE), migration status, citizenship status, HIV and other health status, occupation, and all forms of disability, which impact on their access to health care information, services, and commodities. Geographic location, especially rural and remote settings and informal settlements that lack infrastructures and systems, further undermines their access to health services.

The state of the environment, including climate change, pollution, soil erosion, and water contamination directly impact on the health and wellbeing of people. Climate change and pollution have adverse effects on people's health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Conflicts and disasters also hinder access to health services; SRHR is not prioritized in emergency responses, with adverse consequences for women and girls and increased vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. Corporate takeover of food and nutrition systems has pushed non-communicable diseases to be an emerging threat. Inimical trade agreements hamper access to affordable, quality medicines and treatment.

While Universal Health Coverage has been rolled out in many countries, it does not address the social determinants of health, such as poverty; gender inequality; legal and policy barriers such as restrictive laws on accessing safe abortion services and post-abortion care, non-recognition of sexual rights, criminalisation of sex work, drug use, same-sex relations, and gender identity and expression; stigmatisation of key populations, including people living with HIV; lack of comprehensive, quality, and disaggregated data; lack of adequate health financing and rising fundamentalisms and populism.

In order to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all, we call upon Members States to:

- Put in place policies and programmes that effectively address structural barriers and social determinants of health, such as equitable redistribution of power and resources, availability of evidence and disaggregated data, social protection floors, and legal and policy reform to promote equitable healthcare access and reach the most marginalised.
- Ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, and implement measures like provision of comprehensive sexuality education, prevention of early and unintended pregnancies, and access to safe and legal abortion and post-abortion care. Provide quality, comprehensive, gender-responsive, youth-friendly, disability-friendly SRH services at all levels of healthcare, and a minimum standard package during emergencies. Ensure linkages with services for HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, and psychosocial disability, amongst others.
- Address barriers, regulations, policies and practices that prevent access to affordable medicines, including HIV treatment, and make full use of existing flexibilities under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- Ensure coordinated action of government, judiciary, and civil society to enact appropriate public health laws and other measures to reduce the supply and demand for substances harmful to health, regulate production and selling of harmful and unhealthy products, while promoting healthy behaviours to prevent and control non-communicable diseases.
- Decriminalize people who use drugs, sex workers, and persons of diverse sexualities, including adolescents and young people within these populations, to ensure their full access to health care and services.
- Ensure safe and healthy working conditions for all, as well as adequate compensation, benefits, and voice for health workers.
- Prioritise public health services and ensure equitable health financing, including free commodities and services for poor and marginalized people. Increase domestic budget allocation to the health sector (at least 15% of GDP).
- Ensure access to health for all persons with disabilities and establish health systems that enable physical and geographic access, as well as language translation services.
- Ensure an enabling environment in institutionalising meaningful participation of civil society and social movements in all aspects of health policy development and programming at all levels.