



**Asia Regional Meeting  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
24-26 September 2019**

**Title of session:**

Session 10: Tackling climate crisis: Advancing Environmental Justice

**Objective:**

To look at the impact of climate crisis in the region, and how it affects the implementation of global commitments for just, equitable and sustainable development including SDGs and the Paris Agreement. This session will also look at existing mechanisms or opportunities for CSO and LA participation in climate policy setting at national, sub-regional and regional levels to shape local adaptation, mitigation and disaster response policies in ways that could promote greater human rights, gender equality and democratic participation of those most marginalised, and greatly affected by climate crisis.

**Expected results:**

- Increased understanding of the linkages between environmental justice and sustainable development commitments across Asia.
- Shared urgency to step up just climate actions to address the root causes of environmental degradation and the impact of climate crisis, including holding actors accountable.
- Learning about the experience of various forms of partnership, to take urgent action to combat climate crisis and environmental degradation, including examples of increased engagement by Policy Forum on Development (PFD) constituencies.
- Sharing of particular initiatives and best practices that advance climate/environment justice and accountability, which would include community-owned initiatives and actions that could be replicated to respond to environmental challenges faced in the region.

**Background:**

Environment and climate change are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, with dedicated goals (SDG 12, 13, 14, 15) but also as a dimension that cuts across the 17 SDGs. There is no sustainable development without healthy ecosystems, sustainably managed natural resources, people's right to safe and healthy environment and a stable climate. Yet recent scientific reports<sup>1</sup> highlight that the global environment is more threatened than ever by unsustainable development. Humanity is nearly eclipsing a number of planetary ecological boundaries that bring us beyond the planet's safe operating space; or as the recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty warns, the world is increasingly at risk of "climate apartheid".

Climate change is an undeniable reality starkly evident in rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, and natural disasters of increasing intensity. In the past few years alone, climate-related disasters in Asia Pacific has affected 165 million people and caused close to 25,000 deaths and USD 122 billion in economic losses. There is every reason to expect the situation to worsen. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly apparent that women of the Global South are differently and more deeply affected by climate crisis. Rural, indigenous and poor women are the primary providers of food, water, and fuel to the household, relying heavily on natural resources. However, they have limited access to information and are excluded from decision-making spaces, leaving women most susceptible to climate-related hardships such as increased food insecurity, loss of land and livelihood, restricted access to resources, economic insecurity, disease and fatality during disasters.

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<sup>1</sup> [IPCC special report 2018](#) on the impacts of 1,5°C global warming; [IPBES regional reports 2018](#) on the state of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Women are key agents of change, with local knowledge in agriculture, conservation and natural resource management making it critical to ensure the full and equal participation of women in climate action. Without equal opportunity for women to contribute to the SDGs, it will fall short of its promise of 'leaving no one behind'.

A global framework comprises multilateral commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Multilateral Environmental Agreements including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Commitments to Action. However, the lack of concrete actions by governments to commit to reducing carbon emissions perpetuating climate decline has spurred growing and widespread demand from citizens, including children and youth, for more inclusive, decisive and accountable action by national governments globally. How are Asian states participating in the global response to environmental and climate change<sup>2</sup> and contributing to the progress of an ambitious global agenda? What could be the prerequisites for just, ambitious and democratically owned climate actions in the region?

**Methodology:**

- A panel debate followed by a moderated discussion.

**Key questions:**

- What are the key climate related challenges faced in the region? What is driving such climate crisis in the region?
- How are people, especially the most marginalised constituencies in the region, affected by climate injustice/crisis, and what have been the responses from the governments to mitigate/address such human rights violations?
- What are the systemic barriers to climate/environmental justice?
- Is there any regional agenda in Asia to increase the level of cooperation and coordination between states and speed up progress towards climate related targets? How is climate finance readiness in Asian countries?
- What measures are being prioritised by national governments to tackle the global environmental and climate crisis? Is that providing any concrete results? What concrete actions can be made deriving from the Member States' commitment to Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement; and what are the gaps?
- How can effective partnership help to realise the environmental ambition of the new global agenda and hold leaders accountable to the commitments made?
- What can be done to transform sector and geographic driven approaches into more holistic thinking and action, including realising common but differentiated responsibilities?

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<sup>2</sup> Amongst others, the 2020 energy and climate package; the energy and climate framework 2030; the Communication on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions pathway for 2050 and new EU policy and regulatory frameworks on circular economy and on plastics.