

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

**Title of session:**

Session 5: Regional progress toward the global development agenda: how are we faring?

**Objective(s):**

Describe the regional status of commitments and implementation of the global development agenda, looking at regional examples. Specifically, the session will facilitate discussion and sharing of structural barriers as well as good practices utilising the 2030 Agenda as an accountability tool to realise just and sustainable development commitments, including cooperation between civil society and local authorities. This session should highlight trends, noting comparative indicators, as well as give the general level of political support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

**Expected Results:**

At the end of this 1 1/2 –hour session, the following will be delivered:

- Increased understanding and awareness on the implementation progress and challenges of 2030 Agenda in Asia
- Identified recommendations/strategies for advancing democratic, accountable and progressive implementation of 2030 Agenda commitments at regional and national levels; and subsequently influence global development agenda/implementation

**Background:**

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, more than 25 countries in the Asia Pacific region have completed at least one Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, showing commitment to the process. The Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report for 2019, however, shows that the region is lagging behind on implementation of most SDGs and is not yet on a trajectory to meet the goals by 2030. There remain major differences in progress amongst different parts of the region. Overall, progress has been made in poverty reduction (Goal 1) and quality education (Goal 4), but the report shows much slower progress in ensuring good health and well-being (Goal 3) and achieving gender equality (Goal 5). More worrisome is the conclusion that the region is moving backwards when it comes to ensuring access to clean water and sanitation (Goal 6), promoting decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), and promoting sustainable consumption (Goal 12). The report highlights negative trends on many specific SDG targets related to the environment and natural resources. Despite some progress on access to affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), for example, the report warns that the declining use of renewable energy could reverse this progress.

An estimated additional \$1.5 trillion per year is needed to meet the SDGs in Asia, according to the latest progress report. While this is not an insurmountable sum for the region, actual implementation of the SDGs will require more than financial support and a focus on empowerment and inclusion.

Civil society has actively engaged in the process to critically understand, monitor and report on the status of SDG implementation to hold governments accountable to their global commitments. This includes alternative people's development justice reports and the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) that facilitates 18 diverse constituencies' democratic engagement with

governments and UN agencies on sustainable development at regional and global levels. Asia Pacific represents one of the most active participation of diverse constituencies through the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) that produces an outcome document, which is informed by a People's Forum that precedes APFSD each year to consolidate the experiences, analysis and positions of diverse civil society.

Local authorities in the region are active in building their capacity to implement the SDGs in partnership. United Cities and Local Governments of Asia and the Pacific has been active in holding training to localise the SDGs, helping local governments to translate SDGs into action. This year's ASEAN Mayors Forum focuses on "Driving Local Actions for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth to support ASEAN's efforts to accelerate SDGs achievements while ensuring effective management of urbanisation, protecting environment and inclusive growth."

Partnerships between government and civil society are key to SDG implementation; the 2019 progress report even recommends that Asia and the Pacific strengthen progress on SDG 17 to support progress across all SDGs.

### **Methodology:**

#### **Session flow as follow:**

- A panel of speakers describing some of the key features of UN SDG progress, via questions and discussion amongst moderator and panellists;
- The floor will open to the participants for further interventions
- Wrap up of the session

### **Key question:**

How does Asia fare vis-à-vis translation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda into regional actions?

#### **Sub-questions:**

- How high is the 2030 Agenda on the radar of the governments of the region? (are there differences between countries within the region in terms of commitments, action and visible results? How common is multi-country cooperation to advance the SDGs?)
- How are the global commitments translated into regional concrete actions and how are these monitored and reported?
- Are there regional mechanisms available to support public-private sector engagement in implementing, monitoring, and, reporting SDG progress?
- What are the structural barriers that hinder the meaningful implementation of the SDGs at regional level?
- Are CSOs and LAs playing an active role in promoting the implementation of the SDGs at the regional level? Are they able to play this role? What are existing mechanisms that facilitate democratic participation of peoples/diverse constituencies in implementing, monitoring, and, reporting SDG progress at the regional level?



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- How can the regional progress influence the global level implementation/commitment and vice versa?