

APFSD YOUTH FORUM 2023



Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2023



Bangladesh

Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Asia and the Pacific with Young People at the Forefront

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Bangladesh is a country that has made significant progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The country has integrated the SDGs into its national development plans and has been making concerted efforts to implement them. The promotion of SDGs is tremendously high at the government level, with a clear idea among local government officials. However, there is a lack of proper implementation, which hinders achieving the goals. Capacity building based on youth, mainly focused on the government level, needs to be extended to rural sector youth and grassroots youth organisations. Bridging youth with governments and being accountable and transparent in the process of implementing or providing solutions to SDGs is necessary. There is a need for easier and more transparency on funding. However, the lack of facilities for diverse, minorities and grassroots young people is creating a communication gap between youth and the government.

Moreover, there is a lack of access for young people to policy-making and opportunity assessment before implementing any activity. The inclusion of grassroots young people is also insufficient. While youth from diverse groups are brought up front, there is a lack of access to policy influence, and young people are not getting the opportunities to get engaged if not actively involved in partisan politics. Strengthening communication through a common platform, mitigating the knowledge gap of SDG youth-related happenings and updates, and creating a youth-friendly decision-making space is essential. Bangladesh is passing the time of demographic dividend, which means the majority of the whole population is now of working age. The young people in Bangladesh are tremendously contributing to achieving the SDGs, both individually and also by initiating different activities at the grassroots and national levels. All these indicate that continued efforts and cooperation among all stakeholders are necessary to ensure that Bangladesh can achieve its goals by 2030. But the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a significant challenge to the country's progress toward

achieving the SDGs. In this situational analysis, the focus will be put on Bangladesh's efforts to recover from the pandemic in the context of SDG implementation with special emphasis on **SDGs 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 17**. The analysis is as follows:

SDG5, which focuses on **gender equality**, is of particular concern in Bangladesh. The pandemic has led to an increase in gender-based violence, and women have been disproportionately affected by the economic fallout of the pandemic. Women in Bangladesh are more likely to work in the informal sector, which has been hit hard by the pandemic. The government is working to address this issue by providing financial support to vulnerable women and ensuring that gender-responsive policies are in place.

SDG6, which focuses on **clean water and sanitation**, is also a priority for Bangladesh. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of clean water and sanitation in preventing the spread of disease. The government is working to ensure that everyone in the country has access to clean water and sanitation facilities. This includes providing handwashing stations in public places and distributing hygiene kits to vulnerable communities.

SDG7, which focuses on **affordable and clean energy**, is also a priority for Bangladesh. The country has made significant progress in expanding access to electricity in recent years. However, the pandemic has slowed progress in this area, as investments in renewable energy have been delayed. The government is working to address this issue by prioritising investments in renewable energy and expanding access to clean cooking fuels.

SDG9, which focuses on **industry, innovation, and infrastructure**, is also important for Bangladesh's recovery from the pandemic. The country's economy has been hit hard by the pandemic, and there is a need for investment in infrastructure to support economic recovery. The government is working to attract foreign investment and support the growth of local businesses.

SDG11, which focuses on **sustainable cities and communities**, is also a priority for Bangladesh. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of livable cities and communities. The government is working to create sustainable cities that are resilient to future crises. This includes investments in public transportation, green spaces, and affordable housing.

SDG13, which focuses on **climate action**, is also a priority for Bangladesh. The country is one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The pandemic has highlighted the need for urgent action to address the climate crisis. The government is working to prioritise investments in climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

SDG17, which focuses on **partnerships for the goals**, is also important for Bangladesh's recovery from the pandemic. The government is working to strengthen partnerships with international organisations, civil society, and the private sector to support the country's recovery efforts. This includes partnerships to promote sustainable economic growth, expand access to clean energy, and strengthen resilience to future crises.

In addition to SDGs 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 17, Bangladesh is also working towards achieving the rest of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The country has made significant progress in poverty reduction (**SDG1**) and improving access to education (**SDG4**). However, challenges remain in ensuring food security (**SDG 2**), reducing inequalities (**SDG10**), and promoting sustainable consumption and production (**SDG12**). Climate action (**SDG13**) is particularly important for Bangladesh, as it is one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Achieving the SDGs requires a coordinated effort across different sectors and stakeholders. Strong partnerships (**SDG17**) between the government, civil society, and the private sector are crucial to ensure the successful implementation of the SDGs and to build a more resilient future for Bangladesh.

In conclusion, Bangladesh has made significant progress toward achieving the SDGs, but the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a significant challenge to the country's progress. The government is working to address the challenges posed by the pandemic and ensure that progress toward achieving the SDGs continues. The focus on **SDGs 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 17** is critical to the country's recovery from the pandemic and long-term sustainable development.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are some recommendations on how young people of Bangladesh can accelerate the recovery from COVID-19 and help achieve sustainable development goals:

- 1. Policy dialogue between young people and government:** Creating a space for dialogue between young people and policymakers can promote more inclusive policy-making and help ensure that the needs and perspectives of young people are taken into account.
- 2. Better coordination between local changemakers:** Establishing a more interconnected network can lead to better coordination among local changemakers, increasing their impact and promoting sustainable development.
- 3. Capacity building of youth innovation:** Capacity building programs can help young people innovate and create new opportunities, even with limited resources due to shrinking funding opportunities caused by COVID-19.
- 4. Accelerate PPP and PPYP to achieve the SDGs:** Public-private Partnerships (PPP) and Public Partnerships with Young People (PPYP) can accelerate progress toward achieving the SDGs by bringing together different sectors and leveraging their strengths.
- 5. Making ministries and policymakers more accessible to the youth:** Facilitating access to government officials, ministries, and policymakers can help young people bring their ideas and perspectives to the table, promoting more inclusive policy-making.
- 6. Citizen's involvement in infrastructural development:** Consulting with citizens and young people before implementing infrastructure projects can help ensure that their needs and perspectives are taken into account, promoting more sustainable and inclusive development.
- 7. Family/parent-centric campaigns:** Family-centric or parent-centric campaigns can promote a supportive environment for young people working toward sustainable development goals.
- 8. Promote awareness and prevention measures:** Young people can play a role in promoting COVID-19 prevention measures and encouraging others to follow guidelines.
- 9. Advocate for sustainable development:** Young people can advocate for sustainable practices in their communities, schools, and workplaces, promoting sustainability and the SDGs.
- 10. Participate in community development initiatives:** Young people can participate in community development initiatives, such as waste management and water conservation programs, promoting sustainable development.
- 11. Engage in digital innovation and entrepreneurship:** Leveraging digital technologies, young people can innovate and create new opportunities, such as online businesses and digital marketing.
- 12. Build capacity and skills:** Young people can build their capacity and skills by participating in training programs and workshops on topics such as entrepreneurship, sustainability, and technology.
- 13. Engage in policy advocacy:** Young people can engage in policy advocacy by participating in consultations with policymakers to advocate for policies and programs that promote sustainable development.

Overall, young people can play a significant role in promoting sustainable development and accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 in Bangladesh by leveraging their skills, knowledge, and creativity to build a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future for all.

To advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the young people of Bangladesh at the forefront, it is essential to focus on specific SDGs and generate recommendations to achieve them. **Here are six recommendations for each of the SDGs 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 17:**

SDG 5 (Gender Equality):

- 1. Increase access to gender-based education:** Providing more access to gender-based education to both boys and girls can help to create a more gender-sensitive society.
- 2. Increase women's representation in leadership roles:** Creating more opportunities for women in leadership positions can help to break down barriers and stereotypes.
- 3. Engage men and boys in gender equality:** Engaging men and boys in gender equality conversations can help to change societal attitudes towards gender and create a more inclusive society.

4. **Eliminate discriminatory laws:** Eliminating discriminatory laws that prevent women from accessing resources and services can help to create a more inclusive society.
5. **Promote women’s economic empowerment:** Creating more opportunities for women to access education and employment can help to promote women’s economic empowerment and reduce gender inequality.
6. **Ensure the inclusion of the trans community:** Ensuring that the trans community is included in decision-making processes can help to create a more inclusive and diverse society.

SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation):

1. **Promote sustainable water usage:** Promoting sustainable water usage practices such as rainwater harvesting and water conservation can help to ensure the availability of water for future generations.
2. **Increase access to safe drinking water:** Increasing access to safe drinking water can help to improve the health and well-being of communities.
3. **Promote sustainable sanitation practices:** Promoting sustainable sanitation practices such as composting and biogas production can help to reduce water pollution and improve soil fertility.
4. **Invest in water infrastructure:** Investing in water infrastructure can help to improve water quality and distribution, particularly in rural areas.
5. **Encourage responsible industrial practices:** Encouraging responsible industrial practices such as the use of closed-loop systems and water recycling can help to reduce water pollution and waste.
6. **Increase awareness about water scarcity:** Raising awareness about water scarcity can help to encourage people to adopt more sustainable water practices.

SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy):

1. **Promote the use of renewable energy:** Promoting the use of renewable energy such as solar, wind, and hydropower can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change.
2. **Increase access to clean energy:** Increasing access to clean energy can help to reduce energy poverty and improve the quality of life for communities.
3. **Encourage energy-efficient practices:** Encouraging energy-efficient practices such as the use of energy-efficient appliances and light bulbs can help

to reduce energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

4. **Invest in energy infrastructure:** Investing in energy infrastructure can help to improve the efficiency and reliability of the energy supply.
5. **Support research and development:** Supporting research and development in clean energy technologies can help to drive innovation and reduce the cost of clean energy.
6. **Promote energy conservation:** Promoting energy conservation practices such as turning off appliances when not in use can help to reduce energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure):

1. **Encourage innovation:** Encouraging innovation can help to promote economic growth and development.
2. **Increase investment in infrastructure:** Increasing investment in infrastructure such as transportation and telecommunications can help to improve connectivity and promote economic growth.
3. **Encourage sustainable industrialisation:** Encouraging sustainable industrial practices such as the use of renewable energy and closed-loop systems can help to reduce environmental impact and promote economic growth.
4. **Increase access to finance:** Increasing access to finance can help to promote entrepreneurship and support small and medium-sized enterprises.
5. **Encourage public-private partnerships:** Encouraging public-private partnerships can help to promote innovation and support sustainable development.
6. **Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation:** Promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation can help to create job opportunities and sustainably promote economic growth.

SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities):

1. **Promote sustainable transportation:** Encourage the use of non-motorised transportation, such as bicycles and walking, and promote the use of electric vehicles.
2. **Build climate-resilient infrastructure:** Construct infrastructure that is designed to withstand the impacts of climate change, such as flooding and extreme weather events.

3. **Foster green spaces:** Develop and maintain green spaces, such as parks and urban forests, to improve air quality, reduce heat island effects, and enhance the quality of life.
4. **Adopt smart city technologies:** Embrace innovative technologies to improve the efficiency of urban services, including waste management, energy use, and traffic flow.
5. **Encourage sustainable building practices:** Encourage the use of green building techniques, such as using renewable energy sources, incorporating green roofs, and reducing water consumption.
6. **Promote participatory urban planning:** Involve local communities in the planning and design of urban spaces to ensure that their needs and priorities are reflected in the process.

SDG 13 (Climate Action):

1. **Increase awareness of climate change:** Educate young people and the wider community about the causes and impacts of climate change, and encourage them to take action to reduce their carbon footprint.
2. **Promote renewable energy:** Encourage the development and use of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydropower.
3. **Support climate adaptation:** Assist vulnerable communities in adapting to the impacts of climate change, such as the sea-level rise and extreme weather events.
4. **Promote sustainable agriculture:** Encourage the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices, such as agroforestry, crop diversification, and water-efficient irrigation.
5. **Foster green jobs:** Promote the development of green industries, such as renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and green infrastructure.
6. **Promote climate finance:** Encourage the mobilisation and distribution of climate finance to support climate action in developing countries.

SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):

1. **Strengthen partnerships:** Encourage partnerships between governments, the private sector, civil society, and communities to advance sustainable development.
2. **Promote knowledge sharing:** Promote the sharing of knowledge and expertise among different stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of sustainable development efforts.
3. **Mobilise resources:** Mobilise resources, including financial and technological resources, to support sustainable development initiatives in developing countries.
4. **Foster innovation:** Foster innovation in science, technology, and business to promote sustainable development.
5. **Encourage international cooperation:** Encourage international cooperation and collaboration to advance sustainable development across borders.
6. **Strengthen monitoring and evaluation:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress towards sustainable development goals and identify areas for improvement.

In conclusion, sustainable development is a critical goal that requires the collective effort of all stakeholders, including young people. The SDGs, including SDGs 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 17, outline various targets that require urgent action to ensure a sustainable future. The youth of Bangladesh have a critical role to play in advancing these goals, as they represent a significant portion of the population and have unique perspectives, skills, and knowledge to contribute. By promoting awareness and advocacy, building capacity and skills, engaging in community development initiatives, and participating in policy dialogues, young people can drive progress toward achieving the SDGs and ensure a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for all. The government, civil society, private sector, and other stakeholders must also work together to create an enabling environment for youth participation and support their efforts to advance sustainable development in Bangladesh.

The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok on March 18-20, 2023. The Bangladesh drafting team was led by Md. Tahseen Ahmed and Umme Salma with inputs provided by Azaz Ullah, Manisha Meem Nipun, Md Jahirul Islam, Md. Noman, Md Munna Biswas, Mosleh Uddin Suchok, Nowshin Matin, Omar Faruk, Rafiul Islam, Rezwana, Shadesh Rahman, Shakila Islam, Shawon Hasan, Shirmin Akhter Dolon, and Tahsin Rahman. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.
