

APFSD YOUTH FORUM 2023



Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2023



Cambodia

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

In the post-COVID-19 era, the world has been impacted not only by the pandemic's effects but also by other pressing issues such as climate change, and the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Cambodia, like other nations, is focused on recovering from the pandemic's effect while the citizens face various challenges related to inclusivity, equity, sustainable livelihoods, and engaging multiple stakeholders.

As the aftermath of COVID-19, the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation in Cambodia has been drastically impeded. Among all, climate change is a significant challenge to Cambodia's sustainable development, particularly for marginalised people such as farmers in rural areas. The FAO reports that 85% of Cambodian farmers are struggling due to the unpredictable effects of climate change, resulting in unexpected disasters and fluctuating weather patterns.

As a result, the country is experiencing food insecurity, which is exacerbating existing inequalities and income gaps.

In urban areas, people have access to clean water due to the government granting a semi-private enterprise the right to monitor the supply and demand of clean water, prioritising good service and profitability. However, a majority of people in rural areas still face challenges accessing clean water, despite the government's national policy, "The Policy of Rectangular Strategy," aimed at increasing water availability. This policy has focused on quantity rather than quality, leading to negative impacts on the health and hygiene of specific groups, especially women and girls in rural or remote areas.

The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030, and the socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic has pushed it further off track. Women and girls remain disproportionately affected, struggling with lost jobs and livelihoods, disrupted education, increased burdens

of unpaid care work, and domestic violence. According to data collected through monthly media monitoring by ActionAid Cambodia, there has been an increase in gender-based violence (GBV), with an average of 35 to 40 cases of rape, domestic violence, and other attacks on women and girls reported by formal news media on a monthly basis in 2021. The patriarchal system unfairly oppresses diverse girls and women, creating barriers for them to fully exercise their potential and rights in participating in country development. Women can play a critical role in green and digital innovation, but there are challenges that need to be addressed, such as skills gaps, access to education, social norms, equal opportunities, and gender discrimination in the labor market.

Due to Cambodia's vulnerability to the effects of climate change, achieving the SDGs may be challenging. The country experiences more frequent and intense natural disasters such as floods and droughts, which affect agricultural outputs and increase poverty levels. Institutional capacity, human resources, and technical competence are major challenges for Cambodia in implementing the SDGs successfully. SDG 17 is crucial for Cambodia to make progress towards the other SDGs. To achieve the SDGs, partnerships and collaborations between international organisations, the private sector, civil society, and governments are essential. Creating sustainable development programmes in Cambodia may be difficult due to the country's poor infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. This lack of infrastructure may limit access to services and hinder the implementation of programs aimed at sustainable development.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- Initiate programmes related to the innovation of clean water production, led by youth, to raise awareness of the importance of using clean water in their community, as well as encourage youth to act on the critical issues of water, sanitation and hygiene to achieve SDG 6 through volunteerism, workshop, forum and creative competition;
- Promote youth involvement in water and sanitation by designing and delivering comprehensive training on SDG 6, project implementation skills, campaign building, and life skills. This will enable young people to have a strong voice on water and sanitation both

at the national and international levels. By providing comprehensive training, youth can become more equipped to design and implement effective projects, as well as build strong campaigns for water and sanitation awareness;

- Improve access to clean water for underprivileged communities by reforming fiscal policies to allocate more funds towards constructing infrastructure for clean water sources and networks in rural areas, thereby increasing the quality of water availability.

SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy

- Initiate youth-led enterprises that provide clean and affordable energy, while building the capacity of local experts through scholarships that prioritise green energy subjects;
- Develop decentralised energy production systems that integrate the application of renewable energy, particularly solar energy, and facilitate businesses and industries to respond to carbon market opportunities for green trade and investment;
- To retain local experts, produce brain-drain mechanisms, and provide fund support and loan mechanisms to support manufacturing that consumes solar energy;
- Promote renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce GHG emissions and their impact on health, including appropriate technology transfer, and promote the consumption, efficiency, and proper agricultural technology usage of renewable energy such as biomass and biogas;
- Develop and promote communication, information-sharing, and strategies that are environmentally sound and green regarding manufacturing, industry, and energy.

SDG9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- Encourage innovation through investment in research and development (R&D) and the provision of incentives for innovation. The government can work with universities and research institutions to promote R&D and support young innovators in developing and scaling up their ideas;
- Support young people in entrepreneurship through training and mentorship programs, as well as access to finance. The government can work with private sector partners to provide these opportunities

- and create an enabling environment for young entrepreneurs to thrive;
- Invest in green industrialisation which contributes to both economic growth and environmental sustainability. The government can promote the adoption of green technologies and practices in industries, as well as provide incentives for businesses to invest in sustainable production processes.
- Ensure that all services, infrastructure, transportation systems, and information communication technology are accessible and approachable to persons with different functional conditions.

SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Alter the norm on young people to address issues that are significant to them and their communities, as well as acknowledge women and young girls' creativity and leadership style based on their cultural experience to provide solution implementing SDG;
- Devise strategies to engage boys and men to take part in the agenda of achieving gender equality through:
 - > Promotion of men's participation, engagement and responsibility in household chores as the individual obligation;
 - > Ensuring that in the spaces where there is a violation of women's rights, men and boys are not participating;
 - > Recognising the importance that men and boys can take the stance from an early age to not participate in a forced child-marriage as a violation of women's rights.
- Call for youth organisations to work in solidarity to break the social norms and gender roles in industry, innovation, and infrastructure sectors by using digital campaigns and other innovative methods to spread increased diverse women's representatives and engagement in this sector and ensure that the space is inclusive to everyone;
- Promote global citizenship education so that it will encourage young people to think globally and act locally, as well as to understand their roles in creating a sustainable future.
- Gender responsive approaches to sustainable development must also be implemented, which includes access to comprehensive sexuality education, to ensure young people's health and wellbeing;
- Encourage sustainable lifestyles among young people, such as the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), and encourage them to engage actively in the National Youth Council to support government policies through research and data analysis.
- Increase equitable representation, visibility, voice and meaningful engagement of all youths with disabilities

SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals

- Encourage private-sector investment through incentives, as well as investments in infrastructure development, particularly in rural areas;
- Increase public understanding of sustainable development through public awareness campaigns and collaborations with civil society groups, which can contribute to the establishment of a sustainable culture. To foster political stability, the government should enhance governance, advance the rule of law, and reduce corruption;
- Access aid and technical support by collaborating with international organisations and donors, for engagement among the business sector can play a crucial role in achieving the SDGs, particularly in areas such as innovation, infrastructure development, and job creation, and regional cooperation with other nations can also be utilised to address regional challenges related to the SDGs;
- Foster political stability which can help to establish a climate that is conducive to initiatives for sustainable development. To establish a more stable political climate, the government might endeavour to enhance governance, advance the rule of law, and lessen corruption.

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 Cambodia drafting team was led by NORN Samnangseymony and PHANG Sereyroth, with inputs provided by KHANN Ly Hour, NGORN Seavmey, TOV JingSoung, ROS Casaneth, and HEAN Sinal. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.
