

# APFSD YOUTH FORUM 2023



## Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2023



# Thailand

**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

Thailand lacks progress in reaching the goal on clean water and sanitation. While many Thai citizens drink water from surface and groundwater sources, it is reported that one third of the surface water is of poor quality in Thailand. Groundwater is polluted by agricultural run-off pollutants, aquaculture and sewage. The increased waste produced during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., face masks, single-use plastics, etc.) could impact water quality due to poor waste management. Without policy and action, Thailand does not offer free access to clean drinking water. Furthermore, in addition to there being no legal gender recognition for transgender and gender-diverse people, there are also no inclusive policies in regards to sanitation and toilets. This results in violence and discrimination against the community, especially among children and youth where many LGBTIQ+ children avoid

going to toilets in schools in fear of bullying, causing long-term physical illness.

In April 2022, the PM2.5 concentration in Thailand's air was four times higher than the WHO annual air quality guideline value. In 2016, it was estimated that over 33,000 deaths in Thailand were attributable to ambient air pollution. There have been five draft bills on Clean Air, but none have passed.

Thailand's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions account for less than 1% of global emissions, and per-head emissions are lower than the world average, but air quality has become a bigger cause for concern in recent years. According to data from BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2022, Thailand's carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions growth of 0.8% annually in 2011-21 is higher than the global average of 0.6%, but still lower than the Asia-Pacific average of 1.8%. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are

projected to peak before 2030, according to data from the International Energy Agency. Thailand benefits from a high share of the service sector, which emits fewer emissions than industry. Nevertheless, power generation contributed to 36% of Thailand's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, followed by industry (30%) and transport (28%). This highlights Thailand's need to diversify the energy source of its manufacturing industry by moving away from fossil fuel-based power, as well as expanding the fleet of low-carbon transport.

In terms of SDG 9, while Thailand implements Universal Healthcare Coverage, people from marginalised communities still struggle to access such services. Persons with disabilities cannot access basic facilities due to the lack of accessible infrastructure. While the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted mental health outcomes, especially of children and youth, mental health services are not equally available. For instance, mental health service providers refuse to treat children under 18 years without parental consent, and there are no sign language mental health services for deaf or hard-of-hearing people.

It is important to recognise the social inequality that leads to certain groups being impacted during the climate crisis. Women, LGBTIQ+, children, and persons with disabilities are often left behind in policy-making. Furthermore, education in Thailand still perpetuates binary misogynistic norms, contributing to violence and discrimination.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### SDG5: Gender Equality

- Promote women role models and LGBTIQ+ role models through inclusive media representation and other advocacy policies.
- Develop strategies to combat abortion stigmas by educating the public on the importance of safe and accessible abortion. Make sensitisation training mandatory for abortion providers, expand abortion facilities and ensure services are affordable and accessible to all.
- Invest and expand research, data collection and data transparency. Prioritise collecting evidence that can mobilise public and policy decision makers to prioritise and implement evidence-based gender equality policies.
- Encourage multi-stakeholders, specifically public and private sectors to establish new research institutions.
- Encourage more diverse representation in school and policies to end school-related gender-based violence.
- Expand on the current national laws and regulations that mandate provision of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in schools. Children should receive age appropriate CSE that includes the topic of gender, power, SRHR, equality, menstruation, consent, sexual and gender diversity, SGBV, and pleasure. CSE should also address specific needs of LGBTIQ+, trans and gender diverse children, particularly addressing drop out rates, bullying and lack of support systems in school.
- Produce mass media, movies, dramas, and television programmes that promote equality.

### SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- Urge the government to condemn monopolised controls of electricity and water by allowing other parties to be involved in share-holding.
- Remind and reiterate that clean drinking water accessibility is a human right.
- Ensure that water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is trans-friendly in relation to toilets in binary norms.
- Acknowledge and improve waste management on used medical face masks and other medical tools.

## SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy

- Call for multi-stakeholders cooperation on implementing solid policies on renewable energy.
- Advise the government to create tangible and affordable electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions.
- Remind developed countries to collaborate with less developed countries to develop green initiatives.
- Draw the parties' attention to invest in researchers of renewable energy that are applicable in a particular country.

## SDG9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

- Consider adopting telecommunication and telemedicine by utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI) to aid people who live in rural areas with healthcare at lower prices.
- Strongly expand on self-care health initiatives, especially for marginalised populations who have limited access to medical facilities and health-care resources. (Ex: HIV/STI Self-testing kits, early medical abortions).
- Develop social media/online platforms to disseminate quality and essential information on self-care etc.
- Invest and prioritise in data collection, data transparency and evidence-based research.
- Strongly ensure infrastructure in our community has an inclusive design to support women, children, youth, the LGBTIQ+ community, people with disabilities and marginalised groups.
- Express its hope to the government, private, and public sector to invest in research and research institutions that benefit everyone in a community.
- Endorse GPS traceability policies of the radioactive material and monitor the radioactivity Cesium-137.

## SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Draw attention to providing a more competent mental health care and support system to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people and people with disabilities (including mental illnesses) have the support they need going out of COVID-19 with the cooperation from the government, public and private sectors.
- Emphasise the challenges of disabilities in public transportation.
- Call upon the government authorities, public and private sector to design the city with the sense of inclusivity.
- Support the uniform disability act to ensure accessibility for all.

## SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals

- Further increase women, youth, and marginalised groups participation in policy-making and decision-making by inviting them to raise voices and concerns on a national scale.
- Encourage women with economic independence and decision-making about their own lives;
- Endorse youth participation in grassroots, national, and global level
- Strongly recognise civil society's vital role in implementing and realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and non-governmental organisation bills.
- Encourage national and regional collaboration with multi-stakeholders.
- Encourage partnerships between people in the community; children, youth, women, men, LGBTIQ+ persons, elderly persons, and people with disabilities.

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*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 Thailand drafting team was led by Pailinsiri Gronphet, with inputs provided by Atitaya Phoemphon, Geemin Lee, Peeranee Suparak, Prim Rajasurang Wongkrasamengkol, Shane Bhatla, and Tomoko Ikuta. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.*

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