

COUNTRY YOUTH

# CALL TO ACTION 2025

APFSD Youth Forum | Feb 19-21, 2025

Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science and evidence based solutions for the 2030 agenda and its SDGs for leaving no young person behind in Asia and the Pacific



We, the diverse youth of Nepal of the APFSD Youth Forum 2025, including caste, class, gender, disability, and indigenous origins demand quick and effective policy action. We will not accept the current situation quo of systemic discrimination, economic hardship, and ecological destruction. Our shared vision is for an inclusive Nepal, where no one is left behind adhering to the intersectional lens and every person has access to healthcare, economic stability, non-discrimination, gender equality, an accessible society for persons with disabilities and an alive environment. We demand that the government, private sector and civil society act immediately on our recommendation. We demand bold, decisive action right now.

## Situation Analysis

Nepal has made some progress in health, gender equality, and economic growth but faces persistent challenges. Nepal's Health Policy 2019 and Health Sector Strategic Plan (2023-2030) prioritises multi-sector partnerships, Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and SDG localisation, but implementation remains slow. Maternal mortality improved from 258 to 151 deaths per 100,000 live births (2015-2022), while under-five mortality dropped from 39 to 33 per 1,000 live births. However, only 14.2% of women aged 15-19 use modern contraceptives, and 1 in 10 teenagers are mothers. (1) Out-of-pocket healthcare costs have risen to 54.2%, (2) suicide rates are increasing by 7.2% annually, (3) and substance use disorders have nearly tripled since 2008. (4)

Gender and economic disparities (SDG 5 & 8) remain stark. While 47.8% of women participate in major decisions, only 22.9% are employed, mostly in unpaid labor. (5) Gender-based violence affects 23% of women,

and 32.8% of women aged 20-24 are married before 18. LGBTQ+ communities continue facing legal and social exclusions. Poor labour rights, lack of skill training, and weak market management hinder economic growth, while persons with disabilities struggle for inclusion. (6) (7)

Environmental degradation and governance issues (SDG 14 & 17) threaten sustainability. Pesticide overuse and urbanisation degrades ecosystems, while reliance on foreign aid weakens economic independence. Corruption remains rampant (ranked 108th globally), (8) and the digital divide isolates marginalised groups. Weak technological investment and poor public-private collaboration slow innovation, requiring urgent action for sustainable development.

## Recommendations

Our recommendations for Nepal on selected SDGs to achieve optimum target are as follows-

### SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

- Increase health budget allocation as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended target of 5 percent of GDP and explore the innovative health financing mechanisms, such as health insurance schemes and performance-based financing, to improve the efficiency and sustainability of health spending, mental health services, substance abuse rehabilitation, and inclusive healthcare services with mobile health care centers in both rural and urban areas.
- Mandate disability-inclusive healthcare policies and ensure the availability of sign language interpretation, braille materials, and assistive technologies.

Co-convended by:



In collaboration:



In partnership:



- Develop a national mental health framework integrated into primary healthcare with adequate funding and specialist training for service providers and implement strict regulations to combat misinformation about health services. Implement protections for healthcare workers against threats and violence while also holding them accountable for medical negligence through strict oversight mechanisms.
- Eliminate discrimination in healthcare & strengthen accountability by enforcing strict policies against discrimination in healthcare facilities to ensure equitable treatment for all, including marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities (PWDs), trans individuals, dalits and indigenous communities by providing anti-discrimination training for healthcare providers to promote ethical and inclusive medical practices.
- Continue prioritising key initiatives such as routine vaccination, empowering communities, decentralising authority to local governments with proper monitoring and surveillance and providing training and sessions for healthcare professionals. Additionally, actively engage youth in health initiatives to further strengthen the system and drive sustainable improvements.
- Address social and cultural barriers to accessing healthcare services and promote the empowerment of individuals and communities to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Increase access to contraceptive devices for women of reproductive age group and for adolescent mothers.

### SDG 5: Gender Equality

- Strengthen legal frameworks by enforcing gender equality policies, eliminating discriminatory laws, and ensuring equal rights. Decriminalise adolescent sexuality, enable self-identification for transgender citizenship, amend article 11(5) and 11(7) and 11(3), 11(6) and other discriminatory provisions to enable women to transfer citizenship to their children and decriminalise abortion by amending the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights (SMRHR) Act and repealing restrictive Penal Code provisions to protect reproductive rights.
- Mandate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) at all grades, expand youth-friendly and disability-inclusive Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) services, train healthcare providers on contraception and gender-based violence (GBV), and engage communities to challenge harmful norms and practices.
- Strengthen GBV support services with shelters, helplines, and psychosocial aid. Ensure safe, inclusive spaces through gender-sensitive, disability-friendly

policies. Build accessible restrooms, enforce anti-discrimination measures, and promote diversity through awareness programs to challenge stereotypes and support LGBTIQ+ individuals.

- Enhance access to technology and digital literacy for women and marginalised groups including communities discriminated against based on work and descent, implement online safety initiatives, and strengthen laws to combat digital violence, including cyberstalking, harassment, and abuse.
- Governments and social media companies must establish clear policies to identify and penalise hate speech, with clear ways to report, monitor, and punish offenders, making sure that freedom of speech does not come at the expense of the dignity and safety of minorities.
- Implement climate change related Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Plan (GEDSI) Strategy and Action Plan 2077-2087 at all levels of government and sectoral agencies.

### SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Ensure fair wages, job security, equal pay, workplace safety, and eliminate child labour while preventing exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Implement inclusive employment and workplace accessibility policies by addressing the vulnerabilities that specific groups such as dalit youths uniquely face including systemic violence, forced sex work, human trafficking, sexual slavery and modern slavery.
- Integrate financial management literacy courses in school curriculum, documentations of the indigenous knowledge and practices with strengthened collaborations to improve market connections, supply chains, and provide financial and technical support to boost small businesses and indigenous enterprises.
- Promote adequate social protection by creating safer working environment where every worker can work with respect without discrimination and safety from occupational hazard, and health in emerging low-carbon jobs while supporting the just- transition to sustainable economies.
- Ensure inclusive and effective reservation policies, conduct a thorough evaluation of the reservation system to guarantee equitable representation and the inclusion of all marginalised communities in every sector.
- Promote the recognition and support of traditional occupations practiced by marginalised communities, such as the dalit community, by enacting policies that protect these jobs and ensure safe working conditions.



This should involve offering training on safe practices, providing access to modern tools, and delivering financial support to enhance productivity. Furthermore, raise public awareness about the cultural significance of these occupations to combat discrimination and foster respect for all forms of work, empowering individuals to maintain their traditional livelihoods with dignity and safety.

- Develop and implement a youth employment strategy that prioritises job creation and skills training for young people. This strategy should focus on enhancing access to employment opportunities across various sectors, fostering partnerships with educational institutions and the private sector, and ensuring that youth are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the demands of the job market in line with SDG 3b.

#### SDG 14: Life Below Water

- Governments and organisations should promote alternative livelihoods for fishing communities, such as sustainable farming, eco-tourism, and to reduce dependency on overfishing. Eco-friendly wastewater treatment plants and filtration technologies should be encouraged to improve water quality and prevent pollution. Strict regulations on fishing policies should be enforced to ensure sustainability and protect aquatic ecosystems.
- Strict waste management systems should be implemented to prevent plastic and chemical waste from contaminating water bodies. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices should be promoted to reduce harmful agricultural runoff and protect water quality.
- Promote multilateralism, collaboration, and partnerships concerning protection of mountain and marine ecosystems as both are interlinked with each other.

#### SDG 17: Partnerships for goals

- We urge strengthening local industries and reducing reliance on external aid. Programmes and projects should be owned and driven by governments and communities they intend to benefit, and backed up by national priorities.
- Provide and encourage three tiers of government for the provision of multiple opportunities for youth to develop, master, and apply critical skills including life and leadership skills maintaining transparency.
- Ensure meaningful youth participation by engaging youths and girls, community discriminated on work and descent (CDWD), LGBTIQ+, young PWDs and other marginalised communities in dialogue in all stages of decision-making and dialogue by improving existing participatory mechanisms and creating new ones.
- Encourage public private partnership to drive sustainable investment and strengthen corporate social responsibility of the corporate sector to uplift standard of living of the marginalised.

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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 19-21 February, 2025. The Nepal drafting team consisted of Alka Shrestha, Angel Lama, Anjali Sai Chalise, Anmol Rai, Bishwamitra Bhitrakoti, Deepa Parajuli, Dhana Bahadur Tamang, Ganga Shahi, Jyoti Kumari Jha, Jaldeep Sapkota, Kashish Shrestha, Kunjani Pariyar Pyasi, Laxmi Chaudhary, Mandira Shrestha, Manita Sharma, Niru Maya Tamang, Nishant Kumar, Prajwal Subedi, Pratigya Kayastha, Puskar Panta, Renuka Pun, Rijan Thapa, Rita Upreti, Safalta Maharjan, Samikshya Dahal, Sadikshya Acharya, Shyam Krishna Adhikari, Swastika Parajuli, Umesh Balal Magar, Yashika Shrestha. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.*

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