



Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2024



Bhutan

Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises: The Effective Delivery of Sustainable, Resilient and Innovative Solutions in Asia and the Pacific with Young People at the Forefront

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Bhutan is a landlocked country in the eastern Himalayas and is known for its stunning natural landscapes. The nation presents a unique blend of tradition and progress on its path towards sustainable development. With a population of almost 750,000, the country has made commendable strides in their initiatives for sustainable development, commitment to environmental conservation and promoting the well-being of its citizens. Despite challenges such as civil attrition, brain drain and the recent transition from LDC status, Bhutan remains steadfast in its commitment to holistic development, rooted in the principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH).

While Bhutan has witnessed significant reductions in poverty rates nationally and in rural areas, challenges persist, particularly in addressing multidimensional

poverty and ensuring equitable access to essential services across regions. Efforts to combat hunger and promote climate-resilient agriculture are underway, yet nutritional concerns among the children underscores the need for sustained interventions. Similarly, in advancing gender equality, Bhutan has made strides in legislation and women's participation in the labour market, but disparities in leadership roles and unpaid care work remain areas for improvement highlighting the complexity of gender dynamics in the country.

Bhutan's dedication to climate action is evident through proactive measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change while maintaining carbon neutrality. The country's commitment to peace, justice, and strong institutions is reflected in its transition to democracy and efforts to enhance access to justice, albeit with persistent challenges in addressing



criminal incidents and violence against women and children. As Bhutan navigates its path towards sustainable development, fostering partnerships for innovation, green finance, and resource mobilisation will be crucial for realising its ambitious goals and ensuring a prosperous future for its people while safeguarding its natural and cultural heritage.

OUR KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

SDG 1: No Poverty

- Promote family planning and educate the public on the use of contraception to empower individuals to make informed choices.
- Construct shelters and supportive infrastructure to accommodate individuals facing poverty until they can achieve self-sufficiency.
- Ensure that rural communities have access to technology to improve the quality and quantity of their produce.
- Strengthen and advocate for support groups and rehabilitation institutions for individuals struggling with drug and alcohol addiction.
- Leverage the influence of youth on social media to spread awareness and inspire positive change.
- Foster international cooperation to bring in resources, expertise, and investments that can contribute to poverty reduction.
- Encourage and facilitate international ventures that promote economic growth and create employment opportunities.
- Integrate financial literacy and financial management into the education curricula system.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- Bhutan's farmers and the Department of Agriculture should focus on and invest in sustainable agriculture methods, emphasising soil health and water conservation.
- Encourage farmers to diversify crop varieties to promote resilience to pests, diseases and climate change.
- Educate farmers on the benefits of crop diversity.
- Strengthen connectivity between rural and urban areas to facilitate market access.

- Invest in technology to improve transportation infrastructure.
- Foster collaboration between the government, private sectors and educational institutes to drive innovation in agriculture.
- Conduct proper impact assessments to understand human-wildlife conflicts in Bhutan.
- Develop sustainable solutions to protect both agricultural interests and wildlife habitats.
- Establish and strengthen post-harvest technology centres across all regions to minimise food losses.
- Provide training to farmers on proper post-harvest handling and storage techniques.
- Provide micronutrient sachets on a need basis to address nutritional deficiencies among students.
- Introduce food banks nationwide to ensure the efficient distribution of surplus food to those in need.
- Implement regular training programmes on food safety practices for personnel in administrative kitchens.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

- Adopt and implement gender-inclusive and non-discriminatory policies in organisations.
- Ensure the integration of age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education in the school.
- Implement programmes and workshops for economically active individuals on PSEA and SRHR to reduce workplace sexual abuse and harassment.
- Encourage media outlets to portray diverse gender roles and challenge stereotypes.
- Increase awareness among men regarding the services provided by national agencies.
- Create inclusive advertising campaigns that challenge gender norms.
- Foster an environment that supports businesses and organisations owned by individuals of all genders.
- Advocate for policies that promote equal representation of all genders in leadership positions.

SDG 13: Climate Action

- Encourage individuals to adopt sustainable lifestyles, such as buying eco-friendly goods with longer shelf lives, phasing out fast fashion, embracing local attire, popularising thrifting culture, and opting for greener transport systems.
- Allocate funding for research on threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, emphasising climate-relevant topics, particularly in climate-sensitive areas.
- Provide funding opportunities for scholars conducting research on climate-related issues.
- Implement a system to validate data from undergraduate and master's research projects, utilising the research findings in policy formulations and implementation.
- Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system for wastewater treatment plants and carbon emissions in factories to ensure sustainable and controlled use.
- Implement controlled burning and tree felling in forests prone to forest fires to reduce excess debris, making it easier to control and prevent rapid spread during wildfires.
- Explore waste as a source of energy.
- Promote green transportation systems, including electric transportation, bicycle-friendly infrastructure, and trams, to reduce carbon emissions.
- Ensuring government and private sectors practise green procurement practices to ensure eco-friendly and sustainable sourcing.
- Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system for environmental clearance to ensure responsible and sustainable developmental activities.
- Integrate greener and climate-resilient technologies across various sectors, promoting sustainable practices.
- Install accurate and efficient early warning systems in lakes and rivers to mitigate the impact of climate-induced events.
- Incorporate climate-resilient infrastructure in both public and private goods and services.
- Introduce Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in local businesses and government sectors to ensure responsible customer services.
- Provide funding for innovative projects that promote green technology, climate-resilient models, and sustainable solutions.
- Reduce carbon footprint by supporting local businesses and promoting sustainable consumption practices.
- Encourage eco-tourism in the eastern part of Bhutan.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

- Enhance basic facilities, pay, and allowances for individuals working in the country.
- Establish a dedicated research and advocacy centre to focus on legal issues, policy analysis, and justice sector improvement.
- Provide scholarships to individuals aspiring to study law, ensuring inclusivity in the legal profession.
- Introduce smaller courts or speedy trial mechanisms to handle petty issues, relieving the burden on the main justice system.
- Organise paralegal consultancy and training programs to empower individuals to advocate effectively on legal issues also, including individuals from the executive and legislative body.
- Establish a properly structured plan for working on the governance and implementation of the units and a committee to provide support and proper access to information relevant to the public.
- Compile confidential information for further investigation and references, avoiding public disclosure.
- Integrate technology and innovative tools into the justice system to streamline and expedite the justice process.
- Ensure the inclusion of the youth perspective and voices of affected individuals in decision-making processes.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

- Explore opportunities to diversify revenue sources, including the development of eco-tourism, technology services, and niche industries aligned with sustainable development principles.
- Create an environment that encourages innovation and economic growth in emerging sectors.
- Encourage private investment in sustainable development projects through well-structured PPPs, ensuring that both economic and environmental goals are met.
- Foster strategic partnerships between the government and the private sector through well-structured PPPs.
- Continue engaging with international donors and development agencies to secure financial aid and grants.
- Strengthen diplomatic ties and advocate for support from countries and organisations committed to sustainable development.
- Explore opportunities for green financing and impact investment.
- Establish frameworks for green bonds to attract investors interested in projects with positive environmental and social impacts.
- Implement community-based development programs to empower local communities in sustainable initiatives.
- Foster a decentralised approach to development, ensuring diverse regions benefit from sustainable practices.
- Encourage the development of indigenous solutions and attract international collaboration, fostering a culture of innovation.
- Invest in education and capacity-building programmes to equip the workforce with skills for sustainable development.
- Build a skilled workforce essential for implementing and managing sustainable projects effectively.
- Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the impact of sustainable development projects.
- Actively participate in global climate funds and initiatives that support climate-resilient and sustainable development projects.
- Actively promote sustainable practices at all levels, encouraging businesses and individuals to adopt eco-friendly measures.

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 February 15-17, 2024. The Bhutan drafting team was led by Palden Wangchuk Dorji, with inputs provided by Bhawana Pradhan, Dechen Wangchuk, Lakey Tshering, Tashi Bumpa, Jamyang Pelma, Rinchen Niksum Dorji, and Tandin Wangmo. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.
