



# Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2024



## Central Asia

Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan

## 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 AND

- Young activists and CSOs often operate in environments where government surveillance, censorship, and restrictions on freedom of assembly limit their capacity to advocate for change. While these conditions pose significant hurdles, they also drive innovation in activism, pushing youth towards creative forms of expression and digital advocacy.
- The exclusion of young people from political participation and decision-making processes stifles fresh perspectives in governance. This challenge underscores the urgent need for reforms but also highlights the resilience and determination of young activists fighting for their space in the political arena.
- There is a disconnect between the skills young people acquire through education and those demanded by employers, leading to high youth unemployment rates.
- This situation calls for a reevaluation of educational curricula and better emphasis on vocational and technical training, presenting an opportunity to reshape the future workforce.
- The reliance on extractive industries and remittances for economic stability makes the region vulnerable to global market instabilities. This challenge requires innovation encouraging young entrepreneurs to explore sustainable business models and new sectors.
- Deep-rooted gender norms restrict the opportunities available to young women and girls in education, employment, and social life. The struggle against these inequalities fuels a growing movement for gender justice, led by young feminists and allies across the region.
- Inequities in education and healthcare access prevent the development of the region's youth, affecting their long-term health and economic prospects. Addressing



these disparities is critical but also opens avenues for youth-led initiatives focused on community health and education programmes.

- Central Asia's susceptibility to climate change impacts, such as water scarcity and land degradation, poses a direct threat to the livelihoods of young people, especially those in rural areas. This challenge inspires youth towards environmental activism and sustainable practices, aiming to mitigate the effects of climate change on their communities.
- While the digital divide limits access to information, education, and digital entrepreneurship opportunities, it also prompts innovative solutions to bridge connectivity gaps, encouraging initiatives aimed at expanding digital literacy and access among underserved communities.
- There are challenging working conditions of rangers in Mongolia, which are often overlooked by the public. Due to labor shortages and budget constraints, rangers are effectively covering four times more land than documented. Consider implementing innovative technologies like drones to support their work.
- There are not enough exchange programmes among regional activists to share knowledge and skills. While events like the APFSD Youth Forum are valuable for exchanging ideas on a broader scale, there is a need to focus on practical skills exchange to enable effective implementation at the local level.

## OUR KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

### SDG 1: No Poverty

- Enhance statistical data collection and analysis to understand poverty and its causes better.
- Provide training and mentorship programs to support the successful launch of small businesses.
- Address traditional practices and norms that perpetuate social injustices.
- Ensure equitable access to quality healthcare and education, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas.
- Promote sustainable farming techniques to ensure food security and preserve the environment.
- Equip rural families with education and training to effectively manage resources and improve agricultural practices.
- Provide social protection for youth engaged in informal work and unpaid domestic labour.
- Improve access to welfare support for vulnerable populations through public welfare system reforms.

- Implement tailored social protection and care systems to reduce extreme poverty and disparities.
- Establish centralised water, heat, and sanitation systems to address disparities in access.
- Enhance healthcare quality and accessibility, expanding budgets for basic services and empowering providers to deliver non-discriminatory care.

### SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- Support sustainable agriculture practices that do not harm the environment.
- Mandate breastfeeding spaces in public spaces and workplaces.
- Enhance child nutrition programmes, especially for children aged 0-5, through local and national hospitals.
- Improve advanced water management and irrigation systems to enhance crop quality.
- Promote good nutritional practices and increase the intake of vitamins and minerals.
- Improve nutrition among pregnant women, particularly in rural areas.
- Increase nutrition education, including school meals and teaching children healthy eating skills.
- Encourage reporting of acts of violence and abuse.
- Advocate for balanced food intake across all age groups.

### SDG 5: Gender Equality

- Implement policies to prevent discrimination against women in the workplace, including measures to address inappropriate questions about marriage or pregnancy.
- Support work-life balance for women by providing facilities such as childcare centres or kindergartens at workplaces.
- Ensure equal access to quality education for girls at all levels, addressing barriers such as school safety and menstrual hygiene management facilities.
- Combat workplace harassment through the implementation of laws and regulations.
- Introduce gender equality education courses in schools to promote awareness and understanding.
- Promote a zero-tolerance culture towards all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Advocate for equal opportunities in education, healthcare, and employment for girls and underrepresented groups, ensuring they have access to these fundamental rights.

### SDG 13: Climate Action

- Utilise data-driven technology for real-time environmental monitoring and mitigation actions.
- Prioritise the prevention of tree cutting over planting new trees, recognising long ecosystem restoration times.
- Integrate climate change education across all levels of national curricula to enhance awareness and understanding.
- Create opportunities for youth participation in climate action initiatives and decision-making processes.
- Manage natural resource extraction to minimise environmental impacts and align with sustainable development goals.
- Promote emission reduction practices and the development of renewable energy, ensuring equitable economic benefits.
- Accurately quantify greenhouse gas emissions for informed national climate contributions and policy-making.
- Incorporate air quality indicators and improvement outcomes into the planning of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) from the perspective of health impacts, air pollutants, source sectors, and economic and finance considerations.
- Develop national plans for a just transition to renewable energy, extreme weather preparedness, and environmental disaster resilience.
- Ensure climate plans are gender-sensitive, human rights-based, and grounded in climate justice.
- Support youth-led and focused climate initiatives and entrepreneurship for a sustainable future.
- Implement tax allowances and benefits to promote sustainable production and consumption.
- Launch public campaigns and establish mandatory training programmes on environmental issues for students at all educational levels.
- Provide sponsorships for environmental activism and encourage youth.
- Address the challenging working conditions of rangers. Consider implementing innovative technologies to support their work.
- Inspire young individuals to pursue careers in the environmental sector by offering a variety of related majors.

### SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

- Promote an environment that encourages civic engagement from citizens, civil society actors, community, and grassroots organisations.
- Broaden space for civil society and civic engagement with institutional protections.
- Digitise and open-source governmental services to minimise opportunities for corruption.
- Introduce and enforce comprehensive anti-discrimination laws to ensure equality and protect civic spaces.
- Create opportunities for youth to engage in peace and justice initiatives, including volunteer programs and internships with relevant institutions.
- Encourage active participation of youth in political processes and platforms for sharing ideas and solutions.
- Address statelessness by ensuring legal identity for all, including birth registration in line with SDG 16.9.
- Reduce all forms of violence and disputes in the region to prevent conflict escalation.
- Ensure the rule of law, protect human rights for everyone, and provide equal access to justice.
- Implement transparent and equitable natural resource management practices.

### SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

- Advocate for and implement legal reforms that protect the rights of youth and civil society organisations to operate freely and engage in advocacy.
- Create formal mechanisms for youth participation at all levels of governance, including youth advisory boards and consultations with youth organisations.
- Encourage and fund projects led by young people focused on conservation, sustainable agriculture, and climate action, integrating their ideas into policy decisions.
- Focus on regional practical skills exchange programs to enable effective implementation at the local level.

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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 February 15-17, 2024. The Central Asia drafting team consists of Aizhan Dzhanayeva (Kyrgyzstan), Nodira Tillayeva (Uzbekistan), Saruul-Ukhaan Sodbaatar (Mongolia), Enkhuun Byambadorj (Mongolia), Tergel Jargalsaikhan (Mongolia), and Selbi Esenova (Turkmenistan). Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.*

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