



Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2024



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

India is facing significant challenges due to climate change, impacting various sectors including agriculture, water resources, health, and infrastructure. Urgent action is required to mitigate these effects and adapt to the changing climate. As organisers, facilitators, activists, advocates, and researchers working around SRHR and climate justice in India, we present key recommendations categorised according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a specific focus on SDG1, SDG2, SDG13, SDG 16, and SDG 17.

India is experiencing increasingly severe climate events, including heatwaves, droughts, floods, and cyclones, resulting in loss of lives, livelihoods, and economic damage. Rising temperatures are affecting agriculture, leading to reduced crop yields and food security challenges. India has an Environmental Impact Assessment which is standard across the nation.

However, due to diverse geography, it is not relevant to all the states. In the NDC there is a big gap in monitoring and evaluation, which has not been presented yet also in terms of implementing article 6 of ACE. There is lack of access to resources to NDC as well. Climate change activism is not inclusive so far in terms of inclusion of the diverse gender, caste and other marginalised populations like Young Key populations who face consequences of climate change.

In India, 70% of the agricultural labour is done by women but because they are not owners of the land, they are not entitled to the social scheme provided by the Government for farmers. Additionally, women farmers undergo hysterectomies where their uterus is removed because they don't want to experience periods. In India, the constituency that focuses on women has very little representation of women within it. Water scarcity is becoming more prevalent, exacerbating existing challenges in managing water resources. Additionally, air pollution levels remain high, contributing to public health issues.



Climate change is disproportionately impacting women, children, and marginalised communities with displacement and discrimination occurring due to the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and marginalised communities. With regards to the feminisation of poverty, climate change is disproportionately increasing the burden on female workers/labourers. Due to floods and other climate change phenomena, women farmers not only have to do domestic labour, which is unpaid, but also engage in other domestic labour to earn money. Furthermore, there is not enough talk about the rights aspect in SRHR. There is a lack of political will from the Government in investing in the SRHR components. There is a need to think about whether we need to move away from the present terminology, which is Life Skills and RMCHA to make a more rights based approach. Vulnerable groups such as women, LGBTIQ+ persons, and children often face a disproportionate impact of climate change. It is important to acknowledge and study the gender specific impacts of climate change. Any law or policy that addresses climate change must include gender specific components which must be monitored effectively. Inclusive, accessible and quality climate education can also be imparted in educational institutions to increase awareness of the multidimensional impact of climate change.

Lack of data on SDG 16 parental engagement is necessary. There is a need to collect data but also a need for security for the data.

According to the 2022 Global Hunger Index, India ranks 107th out of 121 countries, with a moderate hunger score of 28.2. This means that around 224.3 million people in India are undernourished. The prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age is also high, at 31.7%. Stunting is a chronic form of malnutrition that can have irreversible consequences for a child's physical and cognitive development.

Challenges in tracking data include a lack of data collection infrastructure, including access to reliable survey methods and adequate data storage. The agri-marketing structure in India continues to be fragmented with a large number of intermediaries leading to high transaction costs (between 30 to 50% of the retail consumer price). These costs are exacerbated with high commissions of commission agents, high mandi (market) charges and cess in certain states (like Punjab), low investments in supply chains, poor logistics, information asymmetries, and a lack of sufficient storage infrastructure. As a result, high intermediation costs for many agri-commodities blunt their global competitiveness.

These investments in supply chains are lacking due to restrictive marketing and trading policies, such as the Essential Commodities Act of 1955, which were designed during the scarcity era. Similarly, indiscriminate exports control whenever prices of any essential commodity start going up and therefore hamper investments in supply lines. The OECD report on Agricultural Policies in India has clearly shown that Indian agricultural marketing policies have favoured consumers over producers by suppressing farmers' prices. The Producer Support Estimate (PSE) for India was negative 11.2% of the value of farm receipts between 2000-01 to 2019-20, while the Consumer Support Estimate (CSE) was one of the highest in the world (28.8 %) (OECD, 2021). India's PSE is about -4% vis-à-vis 13% for China and 17% for OECD as a group. On the contrary, CSE for India is highest at 21%. Thus, the typical consumer bias in India's marketing and trade policies still continues. Correcting this bias still remains a tall challenge.

Violent Extremism impacts the security, welfare, and dignity of numerous individuals residing in both developed and developing nations, along with threatening their tranquil and sustainable lifestyles. Furthermore, it presents significant challenges to the safeguarding of basic human rights of those who are the most vulnerable to its repercussions. In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council ratified Resolution 2250, marking the inaugural thematic resolution dedicated to Youth, Peace, and Security (UNSCR 2250). Widely regarded as a groundbreaking international legal framework, UNSCR 2250 lays down the constructive role which young people can play in fostering peace. It calls for the formulation of policies and programs by both the international community and member states, aiming to guarantee the substantive involvement and participation of youth in the peace and security agenda. Despite so many years since UNSCR 2250, no comprehensive national level policies addressing violent extremism have been adopted, which takes into account hate speech, cyberbullying, false narratives promoting enmity among other aspects.

OUR KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

SDG 1: No Poverty

1. Ensure the regulation of the labour market and cease child labour.
2. Put in place stringent laws for policy making with regards to rights of migrant labour and safeguard the rights of education for children from displaced families.
3. In Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) there is a big gap in monitoring and evaluation which has not

been presented yet, also in terms of implementing article 6 of ACE. There is a lack of access to resources to NDC. Therefore there is a need for the **implementation of ACE and access to the resources of NDCs**. ACE and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which focuses on capacity building, education, and skill building for climate action, and carbon credits respectively should also be explored.

4. Include marginalised communities and farmers in decision-making processes including youth in all their diversity and ensure capacity building for marginalised communities collaboratively. This collaboration must happen at local, national and regional levels with all allies and stakeholders (private, Government, and UN agencies).
5. To combat the problem of hunger and food security, we must look back at our cultural history of not wasting any food and focusing on food rather than on consumerism.
6. With regard to financial inclusion through blockchain, we must leverage blockchain technology to create transparent and secure microfinance platforms, facilitating access to credit for marginalised communities. This can empower individuals to start small businesses, invest in education, and escape poverty.

SDG2: Zero Hunger

1. Digital marketing platforms such as e-NAM negotiable warehousing and commodity futures and recent government initiatives like AIF, Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India), and FPOs still need to be filled with timely incentives, investments and monitoring.
2. Other policy interventions should include freeing up agricultural markets to greater competition, giving farmers the freedom to sell what they want, where they want, and when they want without any restrictions on sale, stocking, movement, and export of farm produce. This will provide an enabling ecosystem to private enterprises to invest freely in the agriculture value chain development as it will gradually boost investment in building efficient and sustainable supply chains, while ensuring a better share of farmers in consumer rupee. For future food and nutritional security, linking farmers to markets would be a critical need.
3. With solar energy costs coming down drastically, investment in solar powered cold storages will reduce the costs as well as losses of agricultural produce, particularly perishables, and improve storage quality. Further promoting contract farming and other forms of Public Private Partnerships to drive local innovations

in the supply chain will also help reduce market risk for farmers and improve their price realisation.

Investing in food processing and value addition and also linking processing with organised retailing will go a long way to build efficient value chains from farm to fork.

4. Utilise vertical farming methods within urban environments to enhance food production proximity to consumers, helping the environment, diminishing transportation expenses, and generating local employment opportunities. Additionally, this approach can enhance urban dwellers' access to fresh and nutritious food. Empowering farmers to establish the minimum support price (MSP) in alignment with their production costs is integral to this initiative.
5. The rising cost of education and rising number of suicides by youth is also an issue contributing to poverty of households to detrimental impact. Merely putting an age restriction for coaching won't solve this issue.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

1. Ensure and provide inclusive and affordable health access for people of diverse SOGIESC, YKPs and other marginalised caste groups and persons with disabilities.
2. Ensure horizontal reservation for trans people in terms of education, jobs and other schemes provided by the government.
3. **Institutionalise the CSC:** It will serve as a tool to have a dialogue with the government. India should make it a protocol to make gender friendly sites.
4. Data and policy should be inclusive with regards to SOGIESC interrelationship to disability, caste, climate change, and other intersectional aspects.
5. Ensure the implementation of an inclusive education system and workplace with dignity for all.

SDG 13: Climate Action

1. **Strengthen Climate Resilience:** Strengthen the Environmental Impact Assessment and implement measures to enhance resilience in vulnerable communities through infrastructure development, early warning systems, and disaster preparedness plans.
2. **Strengthen structural changes** in terms of having proper legislations, systems and laws that are more inclusive, cover the intersectional perspective, and reach out to marginalised communities.
3. **Implement the ACE** and access to the resources of NDCs.
4. **Collect data** in a manner which does not impact the safety of the communities.

5. **Promote Renewable Energy:** Accelerate the transition to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
 6. **Sustainable Transport:** Invest in sustainable transportation infrastructure, including public transit systems, cycling lanes, and electric vehicle adoption, to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector.
 7. **Reforestation and Afforestation:** Launch large-scale reforestation and afforestation programmes to increase carbon sequestration, restore degraded ecosystems, and enhance biodiversity.
 8. **Climate Education and Awareness:** Integrate climate change education into school curricula and community outreach programmes to raise awareness and create a culture of sustainability and resilience.
 9. **Control of Industrial Carbon Emission Rates:** To effectively manage industrial carbon emission rates, we propose the establishment of a governmental monitoring board responsible for evaluating annual carbon emissions generated by industries. It is imperative to institute a specified carbon emission threshold as a guiding parameter. In cases where an industry's emissions exceed this threshold, we recommend mandatory financial support toward the development of new green startups and public sector green energy projects. This strategy ensures accountability and fosters the transition to sustainable industrial practices.
 10. To combat climate change along with the rapid infrastructure development, focus should also be on green highways.
 11. Addressing climate change requires collective action and commitment from all stakeholders. India can take significant strides towards building a more sustainable and resilient future for all its citizens by implementing the recommendations outlined in this document.
4. **Preserving the Indigenous Community** - The Government should guarantee real FPIC in tribal areas, strengthening it in the FRA and PESA and empowering Gram Sabhas. This means clear guidelines, local language information, and respecting tribal decision-making to ensure informed consent on mining projects, safeguarding communities, livelihoods, and ecosystems.
 5. Inclusive and non-discriminatory national and regional policies on disaster response relief measures/plans which include, inter alia, the special health and reproductive needs along with safety needs of marginalised women and young girls as well as sexual and gender minorities.
 6. Laws addressing adolescent sexuality and adolescent pregnancy need to be reviewed in a way that they address evolving capacities of adolescents to achieve SDG target 5.6. In this regard, the UNCRC recommends: "States parties should take into account the need to balance protection and evolving capacities, and define an acceptable minimum age when determining the legal age for sexual consent. States should avoid criminalizing adolescents of similar ages for factually consensual and non-exploitative sexual activity." In 2019, in General Comment No. 24 on Children in the Justice System, the CRC asked States to remove status offences, which criminalise adolescents who engage in consensual sexual acts with one another.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

1. The government must focus on imparting age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (inclusive of SOGIESC and disability) in educational institutions.
2. Ensure that laws actually meet the ends of justice, and care should also be taken of the overreach of laws, along with the missing laws.
3. Ensure the policy and laws related to discrimination against marginalised populations should be implemented properly.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

1. Remove all strict laws around hate speech and misutilisation of freedom of speech.
2. Build a comprehensive policy framework at the national level to support and enhance Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) efforts.

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 India drafting team was led by Karon Lama and Leena Joshi, with inputs provided by Vaibhav Gaur, Meher Suri, Dev Nagar, Parth Bhatt, Ranu Tiwari, Najwa Khader, Arnav Shreyash, Jivitesh Gupta, and Sharin D'souza. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.
