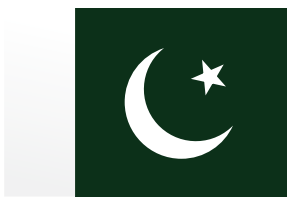




Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2024



Pakistan

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

A comprehensive situational analysis of Pakistan's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reveals a multifaceted landscape shaped by a combination of challenges and opportunities. As of 2023, the Sustainable Development Report places Pakistan at the 128th rank out of 166 countries, underscoring the need for a closer examination of key SDGs such as No Poverty (SDG 1), Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Climate Action (SDG 13), Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

SDG 1 focuses on poverty eradication, and the declining score from 5.6 in 2015 to 3.8 in 2023 raises concerns. Despite unsuccessful post-flood rehabilitation efforts, persistent economic challenges, inflation, and agricultural decline continue to hinder poverty alleviation strategies. The need for clear planning and prioritisation is evident.

SDG 2, addressing zero hunger, faces challenges due to climate change impacts on the agricultural sector, compounded by environmental issues such as continuous smog and fog. A lack of focused funding and strategic planning impedes efforts to achieve zero hunger.

In SDG 5, gender equality, and gender-responsive policies are in place, but gender gaps persist. The economic challenges, underscored by inflation, emphasise the urgency of empowering women. The lack of policies addressing justice issues further compounds gender disparities.

SDG 13 calls for climate action, and Pakistan experiences severe climate effects, including smog and fog in Lahore. Climate resilience programs and the integration of climate justice principles in policy frameworks are crucial to ensure sustainable development.



SDG 16, focused on peace, justice, and strong institutions, faces challenges due to political instability and a lack of justice policies. Inclusivity for marginalised communities, including the LGBTIQ+ and differently-abled, requires attention, and gatekeeping by policy institutions hinders grassroots initiatives.

SDG 17 emphasises partnerships for the goals. The lack of ownership and clear action plans impedes effective collaboration, while domestic funding requires proper planning and measurable data. Political parties need to play a more active role in supporting SDG initiatives.

Several cross-cutting themes, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) stigma, digitalisation in political processes, and youth involvement, highlight the interconnectedness of these issues. Recommendations include prioritising funding, strengthening gender-responsive policies, enhancing climate resilience, fostering inclusive institutions, encouraging collaboration, improving data availability, and ensuring political stability for sustained SDG progress.

In conclusion, navigating the complex terrain of sustainable development in Pakistan necessitates a holistic and coordinated approach. By addressing the challenges outlined across key SDGs and implementing the recommended strategies, Pakistan can pave the way for a more sustainable and inclusive future.

OUR KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

SDG 1: No Poverty

- **Targeted Women's Empowerment Programmes:** Develop and implement targeted programmes to empower women economically, providing access to education, skills training, and entrepreneurship opportunities. This can help break the cycle of poverty and contribute to gender equality.
- **Social Safety Nets Enhancement:** Strengthen and expand social safety net programmes to provide immediate relief to vulnerable populations and prevent them from falling into poverty during economic downturns. Ensuring these programmes are **robust and inclusive is crucial.**
- **Financial Inclusion Initiatives:** Promote financial inclusion initiatives to ensure access to banking services and credit facilities, particularly for women in rural areas. This can empower individuals to build financial resilience and participate more actively in the economy.
- **Job Creation Strategies:** Implement policies that stimulate job creation, especially in sectors affected by recent disasters. This will not only provide employment opportunities but also foster economic resilience at the community level.
- **Community-Driven Poverty Alleviation:** Foster community-based initiatives that empower local communities to identify and address specific poverty-related challenges through participatory approaches. This approach ensures that solutions are contextually relevant and sustainable, addressing the unique needs of each community.
- **Enhanced Domestic Funding:** Strengthen domestic funding mechanisms for poverty alleviation programmes, ensuring adequate resources are allocated and utilised efficiently to address the diverse and evolving needs of the population. This may involve establishing transparent and accountable financial structures to support poverty reduction initiatives at the national and local levels.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Implement and enhance climate-resilient agricultural practices to mitigate the impact of climate change on food production. Invest in modern technologies and training for farmers to adapt to changing climate conditions and improve productivity.
- **Post-Flood Rehabilitation and Sustainable Recovery:** Continue successful post-flood rehabilitation efforts with a focus on sustainable recovery for the agricultural sector. Introduce measures to rebuild and strengthen infrastructure and support affected farmers in their recovery efforts.
- **Food Security Measures:** Prioritise initiatives and policies that directly address food security, including diversified farming practices and the promotion of resilient crop varieties. Strengthen food distribution systems to ensure equitable access, especially in remote and vulnerable areas.
- **Public Awareness on Sustainable Consumption:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate communities on sustainable consumption practices, reducing food waste, and promoting a balanced and diversified diet. Encourage and facilitate community-led initiatives for sustainable food practices and local food production.

- **International Collaboration for Hunger Alleviation:** Engage in international collaborations to share knowledge, technologies, and resources for sustainable agricultural practices and hunger alleviation. Collaborate with global organisations and neighbouring countries to address shared challenges and work towards regional food security.
- **Community Support and Inclusivity:** Establish support networks and community centres that provide a safe and inclusive space for LGBTIQ+ individuals, offering resources, counselling, and community-building activities. Promote inclusivity within cultural and religious spaces, fostering dialogue and understanding to counteract societal stigma against the LGBTIQ+ community.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

- **Strengthen Gender-Responsive Policies:** Review, strengthen, and implement gender-responsive policies to address existing disparities and promote equality in all sectors, including education, healthcare, and the workplace. Introduce and enforce measures that ensure equal pay, opportunities, and representation for women, reducing gender-based discrimination.
- **Empower Women's Economic Participation:** Implement programmes that empower women economically, providing access to skills training, entrepreneurship opportunities, and financial resources. Encourage the private sector to adopt inclusive hiring practices, promoting diversity and equal opportunities for women in the workforce.
- **Address Stigma around SRHR Topics:** Allocate resources for comprehensive and stigma-free sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education and services, addressing the cultural and societal barriers that contribute to stigma. Conduct awareness campaigns to destigmatize SRHR issues, encouraging open discussions and promoting informed decision-making.
- **Promote Women's Inclusion in Decision-Making:** Advocate for increased representation of women in decision-making processes at all levels, including government, business, and community leadership. Encourage political parties and institutions to adopt affirmative action measures that ensure a more equitable representation of women in political roles.
- **Enhance Support for Women's Health:** Invest in healthcare infrastructure and services that specifically address women's health needs, including maternal healthcare, family planning, and access to quality healthcare in rural areas. Provide support for mental health initiatives, acknowledging the unique challenges faced by women and promoting holistic well-being.

SDG 13: Climate Action

- **Climate Resilience Programme:** Implement a comprehensive Climate Resilience Programme specifically tailored for post-disaster recovery, especially focusing on the rehabilitation of the agricultural industry impacted by recent floods.
- **Low Carbon Economy Act:** Enact and enforce a Low Carbon Economy Act to promote sustainable practices, reduce carbon emissions, and transition towards cleaner and renewable energy sources, contributing to climate action.
- **Sustainability Measures:** Introduce and promote sustainability measures across various sectors, encouraging businesses, industries, and communities to adopt environmentally friendly practices, contributing to the overall reduction of environmental degradation.
- **Quantitative Data Collection:** Enhance data collection efforts with a focus on measurable and quantitative data related to climate change impacts, ensuring the availability of accurate and actionable information for evidence-based decision-making.
- **Climate Justice Integration:** Integrate climate justice principles into policies and programmes, addressing the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities and ensuring an inclusive and equitable approach to climate action.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

- **Justice Sector Reforms:** Undertake comprehensive reforms in the justice sector, focusing on enhancing the efficiency of the judiciary, improving legal frameworks, and addressing issues related to corruption. This will contribute to the establishment of a fair and effective legal system.
- **Community Policing Initiatives:** Promote and implement community policing initiatives to build trust between law enforcement agencies and local communities. Community policing fosters collaboration, strengthens relationships, and ensures a more inclusive and responsive approach to maintaining peace and order.
- **Inclusive Policies for Marginalised Communities:** Implement policies that specifically address the needs and concerns of marginalised communities, including differently-abled individuals and the LGBTIQ+ community. Ensuring inclusivity within policies and practices promotes social justice and strengthens the foundations of a just society.
- **Youth Engagement in Civic Activities:** Encourage and support meaningful youth engagement in civic activities, providing platforms for their voices to be heard in decision-making processes. This not only enhances democratic values but also ensures that the perspectives of the youth are considered in policy development.
- **Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms:** Strengthen mechanisms for transparency and accountability within governance structures. This involves implementing measures that ensure public institutions are accountable to the citizens they serve, thereby fostering public trust and confidence in the system.

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 Pakistan drafting team was led by Maria Iqbal Shah, Sila Nighat Shahid, and Fathima Yaseen. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

- **Funding and Support for Youth-Led Organisations:** Allocate dedicated funding for youth-led organisations working towards sustainable development goals, emphasising initiatives that focus on local community needs. Establish mentorship programs and capacity-building initiatives to empower youth-led organisations with the skills and resources required for effective project implementation.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making and Action Plans on social media/digitalisation:** Utilise digital platforms, especially social media, to disseminate inclusive decision-making processes and action plans related to SDGs, ensuring transparency and public engagement. Encourage government agencies, NGOs, and grassroots organisations to create informative content that showcases their initiatives and invites public participation.
- **Measurable Data for Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Develop and implement robust data collection systems to gather measurable data on various aspects of sustainable development, facilitating evidence-based decision-making. Collaborate with academic institutions, research organisations, and technology experts to enhance data analytics capabilities and ensure the availability of accurate and up-to-date information.
- **More Inclusivity for Differently-Abled People and the LGBTIQ+ Community:** Advocate for the inclusion of differently-abled individuals and the LGBTIQ+ community in decision-making processes related to sustainable development initiatives. Implement policies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by these communities, fostering a more inclusive and diverse approach to development.
- **Promoting Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality:** Prioritise women's empowerment initiatives within the context of SDG 17, recognising the crucial role women play in fostering sustainable development. Encourage women's active participation in decision-making processes and leadership roles within partnerships, ensuring gender equality in all aspects of collaborative efforts.