



# YOUTH CALL TO ACTION

## SOUTH EAST ASIA

### (THAILAND, LAO PDR, AND TIMOR-LESTE)

*Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for a sustainable future for young people in all their diversity.*

## Situational Analysis

Thailand, Lao PDR, and Timor-Leste face interconnected challenges related to climate change, water security, youth employment, infrastructure development, and gender equality. While each country operates within a different economic and institutional context, youth across the three nations experience shared vulnerabilities linked to environmental degradation, inequality, and limited participation in decision-making processes.

Thailand has many talented young individuals who are ready to support, lead, and initiate change to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Youth have the passion, knowledge, and skills necessary to drive the transformation the world needs to move toward a sustainable future. However, young people often lack resources, financial support, and guidance from key stakeholders in the private sector, government, and other groups.

Lao PDR continues to experience disparities in rural healthcare access, youth unemployment, and informal labor conditions. A significant proportion of young people face limited access to quality education, digital infrastructure, and formal employment opportunities, leading many to seek work abroad. Gender wage gaps and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work further constrain economic participation. Freshwater ecosystems, particularly within the Mekong Basin, remain central to livelihoods and food security but are increasingly vulnerable to climate variability, hydropower development, and environmental degradation. Strengthening social protection systems, expanding digital inclusion, promoting sustainable domestic job creation, and enhancing climate resilience remain critical priorities.

Timor-Leste faces structural infrastructure gaps in health services, water access, sanitation, electricity coverage, and digital connectivity. Climate-related

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risks including drought, coastal degradation, and food insecurity, disproportionately affect rural communities. With a young and rapidly growing population, sustainable economic diversification and climate-resilient development are urgent national priorities.

Across all three countries, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires strengthened climate governance, inclusive economic transformation, gender-responsive policy implementation, and institutionalised youth participation mechanisms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations for Thailand, Lao PDR, and Timor-Leste on selected SDGs to achieve optimum targets are as follows:

### SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- » Strengthen national health systems to address climate-related health risks and improve service delivery in rural and remote areas.
- » Expand community-based and mobile health services to ensure equitable access for vulnerable populations.
- » Increase public investment in preventive healthcare, nutrition, anti-stunting programs, and mental health services.
- » Improve early warning systems for climate-sensitive diseases and disaster-related health risks.
- » Align national health strategies with climate commitments and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

### SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

- » Integrate gender-responsive budgeting into national climate and development policies.
- » Ensure meaningful participation of women including young women in climate, energy, and economic decision-making processes.
- » Expand access to sexual and reproductive health services, particularly in rural and underserved communities.
- » Strengthen prevention and response systems for gender-based violence.
- » Support women-led green enterprises and climate-resilient livelihood initiatives.
- » Strengthen gender equality mechanisms at the

workplace. As many young people enter the workforce, cases of sexual harassment, both physical and verbal, continue to be reported by women across age groups. All women, especially young women, should feel safe and confident at work.

### SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- » Invest in climate-resilient water supply systems, including rainwater harvesting and drought-resistant infrastructure.
- » Expand safe sanitation and WASH facilities in schools, health centers, and rural communities.
- » Protect watersheds and freshwater ecosystems through reforestation, sustainable land management, and strengthened environmental regulations.
- » Establish community-based water management systems with youth participation.
- » Develop integrated and real-time water monitoring systems to improve drought and flood preparedness.

### SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- » Expand renewable energy systems, including decentralised solar mini-grids in rural and island communities.
- » Provide financial incentives and targeted subsidies to improve affordability of renewable energy technologies.
- » Develop technical and vocational training programs to prepare youth for green energy employment.
- » Promote community-based renewable energy initiatives.

- » Ensure transparency and accountability in energy financing and implementation mechanisms.

## SDG 8 & SDG 9: DECENT WORK, INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- » Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, including roads, public facilities, and digital connectivity.
- » Establish innovation centers supporting green technology, agro-processing, and youth entrepreneurship.
- » Promote sustainable local industries and economic diversification to reduce dependency on extractive sectors.
- » Align education systems with digital skills, sustainable agriculture, and climate-resilient technologies.
- » Strengthen partnerships between government and private sector to support inclusive green growth effectively. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence contrasts sharply with the slow development of AI literacy among youth.
- » Limited digital literacy and access contributes to inequality in developing innovative youth leaders in Thailand. Many young people lack access to digital devices, stable internet connections, and the skills needed to use digital tools safely and effectively. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence contrasts sharply with the slow development of AI literacy among youth.

## SDG 11 & SDG 13: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND CLIMATE ACTION

- » Integrate youth and people with disabilities' participation into urban planning, disaster risk reduction, and local adaptation strategies.
- » Strengthen early warning systems and disaster preparedness at municipal and community levels.
- » Improve solid waste management systems and promote recycling initiatives.
- » Promote climate-resilient housing standards,

sustainable transport options, and green public spaces.

- » Integrate climate education into national curricula and public awareness campaigns.
- » Increase domestic climate finance allocation and institutionalise youth participation in NDC monitoring and reporting.
- » Youth should not be mere passengers but active co-planners in shaping the cities they aspire to live in. Cities must be inclusive for people with both visible and invisible disabilities. Public facilities should not be designed solely based on assumptions about what persons with disabilities may need. Instead, their perspectives and inputs should be directly incorporated into the planning and design process.

## SDG 17 (PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS)

- » Establish national multi-stakeholder platforms for SDG and NDC coordination.
- » Improve access to international climate finance and technical assistance.
- » Enhance capacity-building programs for government institutions.
- » Promote regional cooperation within Asia-Pacific for water security, clean energy, and climate resilience.
- » Develop transparent and accessible SDG progress monitoring systems.
- » Formalise Youth Advisory Mechanisms to support national reporting under the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

*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 18-20 February, 2026. The Southeast Asia Sub-Regional Brief drafting team consisted of Rawiporn Tangkunnasombat and Rochana Sirivadhanabhakdi (Thailand); Chintanaphone Chanthavong (Lao PDR); and Isaura Baptista Barros (Timor-Leste). Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.*