



**ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2018**

**Report on Fifth Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable
Development Transformation towards sustainable
and resilient societies**

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1. Background of APFSD(Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development)

In September 2015, UN Member States adopted the ‘2030 agenda’. These set of aims called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda¹. This ambitious global agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals listed below.

Table 1.1



Commonly known as the SDGs, this set of 17 goals has a corresponding 169 targets to facilitate measurement of countries progress and achievements. It is important to note that the agenda seek a balance between its three key dimensions; economic, social and environmental..

Unlike in the former Millennium Development Goals, (MDG where many low-income countries were to undertake the major commitments), the 2030 Agenda presents a universal framework where all counties, low, middle and high income, have to undertake SDG commitments. The Agenda also provides a ‘Means of Implementation’ with every goal where all governments are encouraged to support each other’s efforts to gain financial and non-financial resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The RIO+20 Conference also established the institution called the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). This is the main United Nations platform on SDGs and has central role in the review and monitoring of countries’ progress towards achieving the SDGs. The HLPF meets annually and has mandated the regional commissions of the United Nations to feed regional perspectives into the global implementation process through regional preparatory meetings. In keeping with this mandate, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) holds the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) annually since 2014. **The APFSD is a regional and inclusive preparatory event for the HLPF that is held under the auspices of the**

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

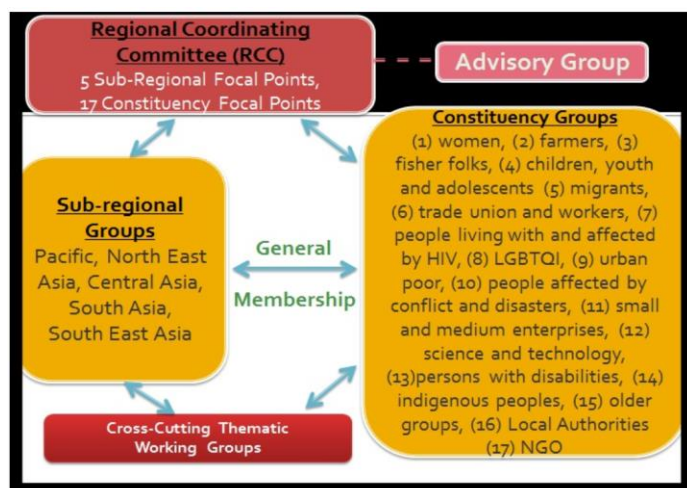
ECOSOC(Economic and Social Council) at the United Nations.²

2. Who is Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)

Civil Society Organization (CSOs) have always been active partners in development around the world and have in particular always engaged with the MDG and the SDG processes. The 2030 Agenda and the HLPF identifies them as key stakeholders in the process of planning, implementation and monitoring of all sustainable development work and in particular the 2030 Agenda itself. CSOs in the Asia Pacific have been reiterating the call for Development Justice as an underpinning framework for their engagement with Agenda 2030 at the regional and national levels that puts at the core principles such as economic, social, ecological, redistributive justice and accountability to the peoples. For facilitating this role, UN ESCAP has been co-convening the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum since 2014. ESCAP have a partnership with AP-RCEM(Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism) which is a platform for CSOs to organize themselves to coordinate and articulate their positions on sustainable development in general and on Agenda 2030 in particular.³

AP-RCEM is a civil society platform aimed to enable stronger cross constituency coordination and ensure that voices of all sub-regions of Asia Pacific are heard in the intergovernmental SDG processes at the regional and global level. The platform is initiated, owned and driven by the CSOs and seeks to engage with UN agencies and Member States on the Post-2015 as well as other development related issues. As an open, inclusive and flexible mechanism, AP-RCEM is designed to reach the broadest number of CSOs in the region, harness the voice of grassroots and peoples' movements to advance development justice that address the inequalities of wealth, power, resources between countries between rich and poor and between men and women.⁴

● A Structure of AP-RCEM



² <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/People%27s%20Forum%202018%20-%20Program.pdf>

³ <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/People%27s%20Forum%202018%20-%20Program.pdf>

⁴ <http://asiapacificrcem.org/about-rcem/what-is-the-rcem/>

3. 2018 Asia Pacific Peoples’ Forum on Sustainable Development (APPFSD)

This Asia Pacific Peoples’ Forum on Sustainable Development was held on March 25th -27th in Bangkok, Thailand prior to the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2018, to be convened by ESCAP on 28-30 March 2018. The APPFSD 2018 specifically aims to;

- 1) foster sharing and learning from the variety of experiences of organizations and to enhance capacity of civil society participants
- 2) help build an understanding of sustainable development as a comprehensive whole with strong interlinkages across its various dimensions and components
- 3) Hold dialogue on the structure and content of the APFSD with its relevant theme ‘Sustainable Development Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies’.
- 4) reflect on the work of Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism and agree on joint actions and follow up to civil society positions adopted to strengthen and support each other’s ideas, plans and actions across national borders. In this forum, there were more 200 participants from many CSOs and grass root NGO a few from INGO.⁵

Several plenary meetings were held that focused on the 2018 HLPF theme **“Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”**. There were 21 workshops in systemic issues to interlinkage between goals. Sungho Lee(ChildFund Korea) and Vuong Dinh Giap(ChildFund Vietnam) have been actively engaged on every session and workshops and emphasized on the importance of child issue on every goals.



Left to right: Giap and Sungho at the 2018 APPFSD



SDG 11 workshop session

In SDG 11 workshop, there were ongoing discussions regarding how to ensure sound policy for urban development. Most participants addressed the ‘right to live’ and ‘demolishment law’ for each countries. There were no participants apart from ChildFund who raised child rights issues over current urbanization trends. **Participants from ChildFund Korea and Vietnam addressed the issue for children who are living in urban settings and added that children should put in first place to be considered most vulnerable and marginable people in the process of urbanization.** At the end of workshop,

⁵ <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/People%27s%20Forum%202018%20-%20Program.pdf>

ChildFund had successfully ensured that child rights issues were included in workshop final report which was being sent to CSOs statement draft team.

- **Issue: Children are more vulnerable in the context of increasing urbanization and their future at can be at risk in regards to them reaching their full potential.**
- **Recommendation: Child protection systems need to be strengthened at both a formal systems level and informal community based child protection level.**

During the forum, ChildFund Korea and ChildFund Vietnam had a chance to set up an exhibit booth and communicated with all stakeholders on child rights issues as well as having the opportunity to introduce the work of the ChildFund Alliance.



ChildFund reports shared at the meeting



ChildFund reports shared at the meeting

4. 2018 Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

This year the theme of APFSD 2018 is “Transformation toward sustainable and resilient societies with a focus on 2018 SDG Goals that are under review. These include; SDG 6-water and sanitation, SDG 7-energy, SDG 11-inclusive, safe and resilient cities, SDG 12-sustainable consumption and production, SDG 15- life on land.) and 17(Partnerships for the Goals). Apart from reviewing the progress of the SDGs and the 2018 HLPF goals, the APFSD 2018 also reviewed and supported the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process where countries offer to report on their own progress at the HLPF each year.



The Forum supported the presentation of voluntary national reviews and assessed the progress made with regard to the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. This Forum assessed of progress in the implementation of Sustainable

Development Goals at the regional level and interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals.⁶

During the forum, ChildFund Korea and ChildFund Vietnam actively joined plenary session with other CSOs and several workshops by addressing not only the importance of the child protection issue but also interlinkage between other goals and child protection issue. This was with an aim to support the concept of mainstreaming child rights into broader SDG considerations.



Left to right: Sungho and Giap at the 2018 APFSD



SDG 6 workshop session

There were main plenary sessions that addressed the process of implementation for each country. Following the statements of Governments, CSOs had a chance to bring their own issue and address the gap based on the Government statement in regards to national implementation. Apart from main plenary sessions, thematic workshops and side events were organized by Governments and CSOs Coalitions. Overall, this meeting addressed the following agenda;

- Assessment of progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15 at the regional level
- Assessment of the interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals
- National perspectives and progress through the lens of the voluntary national reviews
- Progress on the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

With robust and continued advocacy by CSOs, the final statement for ESCAP included the following issues; multi-stakeholder participation, women and children,

⁶ <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/People%27s%20Forum%202018%20-%20Program.pdf>

- Para 3.

The Forum noted efforts in the region to identify and empower poor and vulnerable populations, **including women and children**, and to strengthen resilience through social inclusion, health, education, housing, nutrition and food security, water and sanitation strategies and awareness programmes.

- Para 16.

More efforts should be made to ensure **just and equitable access** to water and sanitation for all, **with a particular focus on women and children and poor people**.

- Para 34.

Major groups and other stakeholders highlighted the need for an **integrated approach** to Sustainable Development Goal implementation given the close links between poverty, food security, energy, health, sustainable cities and climate change, among others.

- Para 35.

Member States highlighted the importance of (a) government ownership/political leadership; **(b) stakeholder engagement and consultation**; (c) coordination, within government and with stakeholders and development partners; (d) integration with national planning; and (e) ensuring the availability of quality, disaggregated data for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals and their follow-up.

- Para 39.

Major groups and other stakeholders emphasized the **importance of inclusiveness and the meaningful participation of civil society, in particular those representing marginalized groups**, including in establishing indicators that reflect the aspiration of the Sustainable Development Goals. Voluntary national reviews could serve as an accountability mechanism to hold Governments accountable and responsible to the people.

- Para 41.

Member States highlighted their follow-up and contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific. **The active participation of civil society, youth, women, vulnerable groups, businesses and others was noted as a need**, to be enhanced through capacity-building programmes which actively partnered with a diverse range of stakeholders.⁷

5. A major achievement & Lesson Learnt

ChildFund discovered many opportunities and challenges by attending on 2018 Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). Please find below some achievements and lessons learnt to be shared within the Alliance for future engagement in SDG events at the regional level.

⁷ http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/APFSD5_4E.pdf

▪ **Building solid coalition with Asia-Pacific CSOs**

It is obvious that civil society needs to work together to end violence against children. A single organization cannot address and solve all issues due to the complexity and depth of child protection issues. Participation in the APFSD has provided an opportunity to build up strong and solid networks with the diaspora of Asia-Pacific CSOs. ChildFund is seen as International NGO and donor NGO in Asia-Pacific context. Given that reason, we have a different role and responsibilities as an INGO that enables us to capture and elevate the relevant SDG messages from grassroots CSO organisation. In that sense SDG engagement mechanism in Asia and realized the function and role between ESCAP and AP-RCEM. Moreover, ChildFund Korea and ChildFund Vietnam raised its profile at Asia regional level by actively participating the forum. It is also something ChildFund achieved for attending this regional forum.

▪ **Inter-linkage with other SDGs**

The nature and characteristics of SDG is the links of crosscutting issues between goals e.g. health, poverty and access to clean water. Each SDG goal has a naturally associated link with all other goals. It is noted that there is a huge gap in addressing children's issue on the entire suite of SDGs not just SDG 16.2 (Ending Violence Against Children). For example, at the SDG 11 workshop, most participants touched on livelihoods, and the need for human settlements that are inclusive and economically/socially viable. This was noted as particularly relevant in light of increasing urbanization of population and slum developments. ChildFund Korea and ChildFund Vietnam strongly advocated that children's issue is needed to be addressed, particularly for children living in slum areas. At the end of workshop, it was agreed that child protection is one of the significant recommendations to be responded to.. In the SDGs context, ChildFund should acknowledge that it is very useful and important to connect children's rights issues to other relevant sector and SDG goals.

▪ **Child Friendly Accountability**

The success of implementation of SDGs depends on its ability to become a priority and an everyday act for many, including the ordinary people. With or without knowledge most ordinary people and communities practice and promote values that are captured by SDG targets. There is a need to bring people's own sustainable acts into the center of implementation. Moreover, youth participation is crucial factor for implementation of SDGs. However, there remains limited evidence on how children are involved in their daily life and that their voice is heard in the SDG's. . With this in mind, Child-Friendly Accountability was shared as one of good example to promote accountability of duty bearer.

6. Conclusion

ChildFund Alliance released its strategy 2016-2021. In the strategy, one of the major aims is to be a champion organization on Ending Violence Against Children (SDG16.2)by implementing evidence based advocacy programs that respond to child protection needs and amplify children's voice to be heard at National, Regional and Global levels. To pursue this objective, an Advocacy Task Force was established in early September in 2016 with representatives from several Alliance members. The Advocacy Task Force members regularly meet to discuss implementation of the Alliance Advocacy Strategy. The overall aim of our advocacy is to support the implementation of SDG target 16.2 and

related targets and ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence and exploitation. To be a champion organization for SDG 16.2, we encourage ChildFund member to be actively engage in each regional meeting.

As an International NGOs, we want to be more visibility and influence on policy advocacy by actively participating in relevant regional advocacy engagements. In 2018, it was first time for ChildFund to take part in 2018 Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and it was a great opportunity for us to leverage our work into regional engagement to raise our profile as well as to influence SDG process of implementation and annual statement to the High Level Political Forum. Continued development of strong networks with other CSOs in Asia and other stakeholders will ensure that ChildFund can play an important role in shaping the agenda for setting child rights issues to be promoted and linked to other Goals. In doing so, ChildFund Alliance will enable influence at local, national, regional and global level to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence and exploitation.