

ASPBAE convenes youth and coalition meetings in lead-up to Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

22-23 March 2019, Bangkok, Thailand



The Asia Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development (APPFSD) was held to consolidate civil society positions and recommendations for a regional sustainable development agenda.

Preparatory meetings were organised by ASPBAE in the lead-up to the [6th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development \(APFSD\)](#). The meetings were held to orient participants on the APFSD, agree on key messages, and map out strategies for engagement. The meetings served as an excellent opportunity for exchanging views and sharing experiences between and among the youth constituencies, the national coalitions, and education practitioners.

The youth meeting was organised on the first day with youth representatives sharing the results of the consultations that were held in their respective countries to discuss the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), particularly [SDG 4](#) (Goal 4 on education), from the perspective of young people. The meeting agreed on a joint statement that outlines the youth agenda on the SDGs.

The second day of the preparatory meeting was more intense with participants coming from 12 countries and representing national coalitions, youth organisations, and NGOs. They were joined by ASPBAE staff Cecilia Soriano, Anita Borkar and Rene Raya, and ASPBAE EC member Peter Clinton Isaac Foasese.

The coalition representatives presented highlights of the spotlight reports that they have prepared in time for the APFSD and the forthcoming [High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) to be held in New York in July 2019. The spotlight reports offer an alternative analysis that highlight the perspective of civil society and marginalise groups on the SDG progress and implementation process. At the end of the second day pre-meeting, participants consolidated the reports and came up with a joint position paper that serves as guide for the delegation's participation and intervention to both the APFSD and the civil society-organised People's Forum.



At the People's Forum, Asia-Pacific civil society organisations explored common ground and actions, developed common messages, and coordinated strategies for more effective participation in intergovernmental processes on sustainable development.

ASPBAE delegation advocates for the SDGs in solidarity with movements beyond education

Asia-Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development (APPFSD)

24-26 March 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

As in previous years, civil society organisations from across the region came together and convened the [Asia-Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (APPFSD).

The People's Forum was organised by APRCEM, the [Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism](#) (APRCEM), to consolidate civil society positions and recommendations for a regional sustainable development agenda. Asia-Pacific civil society organisations (CSOs) from different sectors

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The People's Forum aimed to -

1. Foster sharing and learning from a variety of experiences of organisations and constituencies and to enhance capacity of civil society participants on sustainable development at the national, regional, and global levels, and on the opportunities and modalities for engaging these processes, including identifying and dealing with key systemic issues/barriers to the achievement of sustainable development;
2. Help build an understanding of sustainable development as a comprehensive whole with strong inter-linkages across its various dimensions and components; therefore, to also link the work of various other CSO campaigns, peoples' movements, grassroot constituencies, scientific and academic communities across national borders;
3. Dialogue on the structure and content of the APFSD with its theme '*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in Asia and the Pacific*', formulate joint positions, as well as strategise interventions at the [6th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (APFSD), the [High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF), and other processes; and
4. 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.

The ASPBAE delegation, which included ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano and Rene Raya, ASPBAE Executive Council member representing the South Pacific, Peter Clinton Isaac Foese, and coalition representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea, participated in the three-day Forum, organised side events related to SDG 4, and facilitated discussions among education stakeholders.



The People's Forum aimed to, amongst other things, 1. Foster sharing and learning from a variety of experiences of organisations and constituencies and to enhance capacity of civil society participants on sustainable development.

The different constituency groups convened on the first day of the Forum to discuss the key messages that were to be carried forward to the APFSD.

Aside from ASPBAE delegates, youth representatives from the [Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women](#) (ARROW), [Soroptimist](#), and academic institutions participated in the education cluster meeting.

Members of the ASPBAE delegation divided themselves across different constituency groups, specifically on indigenous peoples, youth and children, and NGOs. This helped ASPBAE members to familiarise themselves with the diversity of civil society participants within APRCEM and the agenda of various sectors and constituency groups.

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ASPBAE organised workshops during the People's Forum on accountability on SDG 4, transformative education for people's empowerment, and harnessing the power of people's movements.

ASPBAE organised its first side event on 'Transformative education for people's empowerment and social justice: unpacking SDG 4.' ASPBAE provided an overview of SDG 4, followed by presentations by the [Afghan National Education Coalition](#) (ANEC) on its advocacy on literacy-education and peace building, while [Azad Foundation](#) (India) shared its gender-just framework on skills development for decent work.

Group discussions on policy recommendations on SDG 4 were held and consolidated in a plenary session which served as contribution to the overall statement of the People's Forum.

ASPBAE organised its second workshop on 'Accountability on SDG 4 - CSO space and engagement' which focused on reviewing the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in SDG 4 policy decision making. Civil society representatives from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Philippines, Timor Leste, Myanmar, and Thailand participated in this side event.

Brief conversation starters were provided by coalition representatives from [CAMPE](#) (Campaign for Popular Education), Bangladesh; [E-Net Philippines](#); and the National Coalition for Education, India ([NCE India](#)), to provide a glimpse of SDG processes in different country contexts.

Other participants also shared their country contexts and discussed options for meaningful engagement in SDG processes. Among the recommendations proposed were the need to engage the media, create narratives that connects directly to the masses, lobby with opposition parliamentarians, and strengthen solidarity with other movements.

The People's Forum provided a meaningful venue for civil society coming from different sectors and countries to explore common grounds, develop common messages, and coordinate strategies for effective participation in regional and global SDG processes.

For the ASPBAE delegation, the People's Forum was an occasion to meet other sectors and movements, appreciate their issues and advocacies, understand different perspectives in education, and deepen the analysis on the barriers that impact education.



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