

Asia-Pacific Regional Statement for the 2011 Global Civil Society
Forum on Rio+20 Regional Preparatory Meeting
Held on 17-18 October 2011 at Seoul, Republic of South Korea

Below are summarized the key issues, challenges and courses of action that have been identified and affirmed in the Major Groups and Stakeholders' meeting.

On Regional Priorities and Emerging Challenges

1. As a diverse region that comprises developing countries, including small island developing states, land-locked nations and least developed countries, as well as developed countries, the Asia Pacific region has many common but also particular sub-regional priorities and challenges.
2. As a region that is home to the largest part of humanity, the right to a life of dignity free from conflict and war is integral to sustainable development.
3. Some regional and sub-regional priorities include:
 - Eradication of poverty – while many have been lifted from poverty, the region still has the most number of people living in poverty.
 - Capacity to respond to natural disasters and impacts of climate change, including monitoring, surveillance and alert systems; emergency responses; disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.
 - Conservation and sustainable use of depleting natural resources and biodiversity, including by indigenous peoples and local communities in managing forest, land and water resources, and in the practice of sustainable agriculture.
 - Specific circumstances of small island developing states in the Pacific highlighting the crucial importance of marine resources management and governance, within and beyond national jurisdictions, (including EEZs) necessary for the survival of the people in these islands.
 - More equitable distribution of income and natural resources, particularly land.
 - Stronger national policies that protect and promote food sovereignty in the face of competing resource use (e.g., land for biofuels).
 - Need for food self-sufficiency policies and regulation that would reduce reliance on imports, as well as support and incentives for sustainable food production practices.

- Regulation at the international, regional and national levels with effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure corporate social responsibility, accountability and transparency.
- Stronger regulation on foreign investments related to natural resources to protect the rights of indigenous peoples, impoverished and marginalized peoples, and the environment.
- Compliance with trans-boundary agreements to ensure equitable sharing of resources, particularly water.
- Protection and promotion of community access and control of all natural resources, which are vital for impoverished and disadvantaged communities.
- Honoring the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in national policies and laws.
- Safeguarding natural resources (including agriculture, forests, ancestral lands, waters, oceans) against commodification and privatization.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for environmentally-sound disposal of toxic substances and wastes, and enforcement of international regulations on toxic substances and wastes, in particular hazardous substances is required to avoid the adverse impacts on communities and the environment.
- Creation of local employment and recognition of labor rights to address population mobility and increasing urbanization.
- Global, regional and sub-regional systems based on science to engage communities and CSOs in community-based monitoring and sharing of data related to impacts on the three dimensions of sustainability, including inter alia chemicals and nuclear emissions.
- Involvement of communities and CSOs in the development, implementation and monitoring of new technologies or techniques.
- Compliance, accountability and transparency of corporations to redress displacements and other violations of rights against communities and the environment.

4. Some emerging challenges include:

- Worsening income and social inequalities in several developing countries that have experienced rapid economic growth, and a trend of social inequity in some developed countries.

- Massive infrastructure projects targeted for the next 10 years, with ecological and social sustainability as well as economic viability requiring thorough assessment. Several current large-scale infrastructure projects are already at the centre of controversy.
- Spread of unsustainable consumption patterns that with growing income disparities result in the wealthy consuming beyond their needs while the poor lack basic needs. Unsustainable consumption patterns put additional pressures on natural resources and the environment as well as lead to new health problems.
- Demographic changes and increased urbanization that result in declining rural workforce with resultant stresses on food production and security.
- Critical importance to the region of active promotion and support of sustainable fishing particularly involving small-scale fishers, in view of the dangerous level of depletion of fisheries resources across the region's seas and oceans.
- Need to ensure faithful and consistent enforcement of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; ban dumping of wastes and toxic chemicals into the marine environment; and ensure proper management of electronic waste, including efforts towards their reduction and eventual elimination.

On Green Economy in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development

5. In view of the need for clearer understanding on the concept of “green economy,” participants reaffirmed sustainable development as the overarching paradigm and centered discussions on key attributes of sustainable “economies”, viz:
 - Built on sustainable production and consumption patterns and ensuring all people’s wellbeing;
 - Democratises access to, ownership and control over productive resources and assets, particularly for women, and promotes equitable access to opportunities for advancement and improvement of human and family welfare;
 - Provides decent work and right livelihoods and ensures that social benefits are distributed equitably among all peoples;
 - Fosters citizen participation;
 - Upholds social justice, human rights, equity, and gender equality;
 - Achieves economic sufficiency;
 - Safeguards animal welfare and protects ecosystems;
 - Ensures agriculture systems and supply chains are sustainable and humane; and
 - Regulates financial markets and holds firms accountable for the social and environmental impacts of their operations.
6. Governments in Rio 1992 agreed to reform existing patterns of consumption and production in pursuit of sustainable development objectives, recognising the link between poverty and unsustainable production and consumption patterns. However, more attention has been given to environmentally friendly production than on consumption patterns. High economic growth in the region has been accompanied by unsustainable consumption patterns. A more rational pattern of consumption is needed to ensure a more rational pattern of production. Consumption patterns are in turn highly influenced by the distribution of incomes across and within countries.
7. Due to the unequal distribution of world incomes, an inordinately large share of goods and services produced are targeted for those with purchasing power. On the other hand, the poor who have great unmet needs but limited capacity to pay lack basic goods and services such as housing, clean water, sanitation, health services, basic education and food. Solutions cannot be found in the market mechanisms, but must be provided in public policy and government actions. Governments must ensure universal access to basic health, education, sanitation, and other essential services, removing all social and cultural barriers that discriminate against minorities including on the basis of age, sexuality, ethnicity, caste, disability and gender.
8. Economy and economic life must be defined not in the narrow sense of efficiently allocating scarce resources, but as the range of processes,

activities, relations and structures involved in and affecting the provisioning for human life in all its fullness, integrity and dignity. These include not only those involved in “production” as commonly understood, but also activities, processes, relations and structures in what is termed “social reproduction,” rendered primarily through the unrecognized and un(der)valued labor of women.

9. Technological fixes alone will not solve environmental problems that are consequences of social and economic factors. Fundamental issues such as access, intellectual property rights (IPR), and assessment of the potential impacts of new and untested technologies (e.g., geo-engineering, ocean fertilization, etc.) before they are released in the environment and deployed commercially must be addressed in the development and transfer of technologies.
10. Opposition was expressed against nuclear energy, mega-dams and agrofuel plantations; instead, governments are called upon to scale up public financing to provide wide access to renewable energy.
11. Opposition was similarly raised against the privatisation and commodification of nature and ecosystem functions that lead to further marginalization of communities.
12. There is need to uphold food sovereignty to address the global food crisis. Communities should have the right to determine their patterns of food production and consumption, and farmers should be able to prioritise food production for domestic consumption. Governments must support small-scale farmers, including women, as they form the heart of sustainable food production systems and along with their families, are the primary objects of rural development.
13. The pursuit of sustainable development in the rural areas must aim at the optimum balance between rural and urban development, with the view towards avoiding problems attendant to excessive rural-urban migration. Efforts to promote sustainable cities via green infrastructure, improved waste management, access to sustainable sanitation and urban food sufficiency are likewise important, but need to be mindful of this rural-urban balance that is determined, among other things, by environmental carrying capacities.
14. Financing sustainable development and a just transition to sustainable economies requires significant public financing, financial and technology transfer from more endowed to less-endowed countries, private sector investments that are productive and non-speculative in nature, and fair and innovative modes of taxation, including a financial transaction tax.
15. Market-based mechanisms that permit developed countries to avoid the delivery of commitments to deep cuts in their greenhouse gas emissions and pass on such obligations through the markets must be reconsidered.

16. Governments must provide enabling policies for promoting sustainable economies as an important impetus to eradicate poverty reduction and achieve sustainable development. Governments must also examine fiscal policies and economic instruments to promote measures conducive to promoting sustainable development, and remove measures detrimental to such objectives including those that subsidize fossil fuel use and support inefficient resource use and economic activities.
17. Governments need to establish regional and inter-regional programmes for supporting capacity development in support of sustainable development. These must inherently involve mechanisms that promote the active participation of stakeholder groups and organisations to exchange good practices and expertise and to support pilot projects, research work, human resource development including training and education, and network activities within and across countries.
18. Stronger partnerships among governments, civil society organisations, private businesses and stakeholder groups must be established for promoting sustainable economies. Such partnerships need to be within frameworks of accountability and transparency including regulation. In line with this, research institutes, educational institutions and other stakeholder groups are enjoined to support good practice case studies and promote dissemination of information on such good practices for promoting sustainable economies in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development.
19. As young people make up more than 40 per cent of the world's unemployed, governments must provide children, adolescents and youth with education, training and opportunities for the active participation in economic, political, social and cultural life; promote youth employment rights, and security to prevent their marginalisation and social exclusion; and child labour by addressing the conditions that lead to it.
20. Finally, disaggregated indicators to monitor and assess sustainable economies need to be developed, not based on GDP, but on people's wellbeing, inclusiveness, social equity, human rights, gender equality, decent

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