

Asia Pacific Youth-Led Regional Consultation Recommendation Report

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Recommendation report prepared by Asia Pacific adolescent girl leaders
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I. Introduction

People and communities in the global south are vulnerable, marginalized, and deprived of basic human rights, even though their contributions to climate change are minuscule. Climate change — the deadliest byproduct of a human-created environmental disaster — is a universal problem that can only be addressed through an intersectional solution. The intersections of climate change and gender equality must be centered because of the disproportionate effects of climate change on women and girls and because of the potential synergies between gender and climate justice.

Young people who recognize the need to conserve our planet and its people stand at the forefront of the fight against climate change. Youth voices must be actively included and validated in advocacy and decision-making spaces with measures for leadership accountability and transparency.

II. Methodology

The Asia Pacific youth-led regional consultation was led by two adolescent girl leaders from the Asia Pacific Region and supported by two researchers working in academia.

The Consultation included 22 participants from India, 1 participant from Latin America, 1 participant from North America, and 1 participant from Australia. All the participants were youth or allies for youth engagement.

Additionally, an online survey was created for those who were unable to attend the live (virtual) consultation.

During the consultation, youth leaders demanded that global leaders focus on three R's: resilience, responsibility, and Resolve/resolution.

III. Discussion Points and Key Recommendations:

- *Regional climate change priorities:*
 - Women's roles in the agriculture sector are often invalidated and their work is rarely recognized. Farm women find it hard to recover from climate disasters because they lack access to basic economic resources, largely due to farm women's dependency on their male counterparts. Women often stay in abusive relationships or inhumane conditions due to financial dependency leading to higher rates of gender-based violence. The emotional labor that women undergo is harmful and their well-being is at stake.
 - Superstitious beliefs and social norms have taught most women in the Asia Pacific Region to eat last, depriving them of the basic nutrition and health benefits required to carry out agricultural activities. Governments and policymakers should consult farm women and trust their expertise in the agriculture sector. Being inclusive of the voices of these invisible food producers is the need of the hour. We must encourage young girls to be leaders in agrarian economies and develop environmentally responsible agricultural practices.

- Climate justice cannot be achieved, without ensuring that modern slavery is being addressed. Migration leads to the trafficking of women and girls, who are stripped of their education and are not paid enough. Women, girls, and young people should be placed at the center of all conversations concerning climate change, along with survivor voices. Young people become victims and easy labor when conflict or natural disaster strikes.
- NGOs and civil society should be encouraged to form mental health support groups for migrants who are displaced due to climate conditions.
- Due to the mass suicides of male farmers in the Asia Pacific region, widows of these farmers are being exploited in large numbers by landowners, money-lenders, and other officials. Women and girls should be educated about laws, regulations, financial rights, and sexual and reproductive health rights.
- *Gap areas in the climate discourse and main challenges to youth voice and agency in climate and disaster risk reduction discussions:*
 - Often there is a disparity between the perspectives of youth and older generations. This generational divide leads to gaps in understanding during discussions on climate change and its impact on gender equality.
 - Most informal discussions concerning climate change and disaster risk reduction are being dominated by women and girls; however, most of the decision-making spaces are dominated by older individuals, a majority of whom identify as men. Women and girls must be at the decision-making table as both leaders and those most affected by climate change.
 - Boys and men are missing from conversations on the intersections of gender equality and climate change. Boys and men must be made aware that although women and girls make up 50% of the world's population, they are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. Most often, as a result of being brought up in a society that is deeply embedded in patriarchy, boys are lacking in discussions concerning gender equality. To enhance social cohesion and reduce bigotry, the media should deemphasize biases, stereotypes, and prejudices and instead focus on greater cross-group contact
 - Decolonizing climate change language is important, as complex terms used to discuss climate change are only helpful for older individuals who have a seat at the decision-making table. Most people in the global south facing the consequences of climate change don't have the literacy or the power to harness the colonized language widely used (i.e., carbon emissions, net zero). Children and young people must be substantially and actively involved too. Changing the narrative is essential. This means using practical terms and simplified language that the average person can relate to in the context of their lives.
- *Leadership/government actions for those most affected:*
 - Establish formal youth-led advisory bodies within governments with a diverse representation of young people; Establish safe spaces where young people are allowed to freely and fairly share their ideas and recommendations for implementation by the governing bodies.
 - Most people who are negatively impacted by climate disasters are often supported by grassroots-level climate activists and other locals. In the Asia Pacific region, the prior response from government actors has been minimal. Greater attention

- should be paid to disaster preparedness and risk reduction for improved disaster response.
- Governments should invest in the livelihoods of people who were forced to migrate due to harsh climate conditions. Women, in particular, are more often prone to living in undesirable environments after being forcibly displaced.
 - To advance climate justice, we must ensure the human rights of workers, safety, and occupational standards. Governments that employ women sea divers to work in marine sectors do not provide enough essential equipment for their safety.
 - Even though the agrarian economy is the largest economic sector in the Global South, it has the fewest investments and funding. Governments must invest in more research and development for this sector. Anthropogenic climate change causes climate disasters that affect women in agricultural sectors, especially those in underdeveloped and developing nations of the Global South.
 - Governments should encourage schools to initiate discussions and introduce climate change education with students from a young age. Students should be made aware of the consequences that women and girls, in particular, are facing and should be motivated to advocate for gender justice in the context of climate change.
 - Governments, especially from the Global South must involve more youth representatives. A suggested framework for this would be to include one representative under the age of 25, who identifies as a woman, and ensure that any political body involved with investments, funding, or resource allocation also includes a representative of that demographic. Such inclusivity is crucial both at government and grassroots levels.
 - Governments must design and develop outreach campaigns to guide and support women/girl-led organizations in learning about mechanisms for accessing climate funds. They must maintain experts in gender studies and climate change to assist.
- *Innovative strategies that youth can use to influence climate change strategies*
 - Social media is a powerful platform to connect with people from all over the globe and advocate for change on a larger scale. It helps bridge the communication gap between generations, genders, and diverse identities. Through social media, one can gain various opinions and perspectives, therefore helping organizations and bodies gain a wider and better understanding of issues.
 - Interactive sessions, posting online to spread awareness, and using youth-friendly language along with infographics are great ways for young people to advocate for climate change and gender equality through social media platforms.

IV. Acknowledgment

We are grateful for all the valuable recommendations and opinions provided to us by young people and their allies from the Asia Pacific Region. We thank UN Women for actively engaging with young adolescent girls in the processes of CSW66, and look forward to seeing our recommendations being implemented across various bodies.