

CONCEPT NOTE

Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum 27 August 2025 (TBC), Fiji

1.0 Background

The world is currently grappling with a range of interconnected and overlapping crises. These include the triple planetary crises of climate change, rapid biodiversity loss, and pollution, as well as deforestation, soil degradation, water scarcity, overfishing, and the depletion of natural resources, resulting in increased hunger, poverty, unemployment, landlessness, and food insecurity among others. Additionally, there are the sovereign debt crisis, the cost-of-living crisis, and ongoing wars and conflicts. Shrinking civic spaces and the increasing threats faced by environmental defenders add further pressure, making it harder for civil society to advocate for environmental protection and justice. There is also a significant lack of implementation of existing environmental policies and commitments by countries, undermining progress toward sustainability. At the same time, ongoing policy negotiations on critical issues, such as plastic pollution and other global environmental challenges, have yet to yield the necessary commitments and actions. These issues have had a devastating impact on billions of lives and have reversed significant development gains made over the past decades. Despite an increased understanding of how development and the environment are linked, the drivers of development continue to push planetary boundaries to the brink of collapse.

While there have been important strides in multilateral efforts, such as addressing climate change, preserving biodiversity, tackling plastic pollution, and managing chemicals and waste, the challenges we face are immense. There is still a long way to go in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), preventing a climate catastrophe, stopping pollution, halting biodiversity loss, and fostering synergies between the social, economic, and environmental pillars of development.

The **Asia Pacific SDG Report 2025 by ESCAP** provides the latest data and insights on the region's progress toward the SDGs. While it highlights regional achievements, it also reveals persistent challenges, such as climate change, natural disasters, and critical data gaps, which risk leaving marginalized communities behind, including rural and urban poor communities. The report shows that only 16 out of 117 targets with available data are on track to be achieved by 2030, while 18 targets are trending negatively and need urgent reversal. A significant portion of the targets in decline are related to climate change and disaster risk, reflecting the growing urgency of addressing these issues.

For decades, Asia and the Pacific have been the engine driving global growth, outpacing the rest of the world in terms of economic expansion. However, this rapid growth has come at a high environmental cost. The region has suffered immensely from the effects of climate change, severe biodiversity loss, and escalating pollution levels. Over 60% of the population in this region depends on sectors vulnerable to climate change. Each year, an average of 43,000 people lose their lives due to disasters such as storms, floods, and landslides, with the economic losses from these

events amounting to \$675 billion annually. People living in Asia and the Pacific are six times more likely to be affected by disasters compared to those in other regions.

Land degradation has affected approximately 850 million hectares, or 28% of the region's land area. While nearly 40 countries in Asia and the Pacific have committed to achieving carbon neutrality, only a few have turned these commitments into enforceable laws. Most countries in the region are not prepared to cope with the increasing intensity, frequency, and scale of extreme weather events. Although the region is rich in biodiversity, it is estimated that by the end of the century, 42% of species in Southeast Asia could be lost, potentially causing a 60% decline in regional GDP.

Asia and the Pacific are home to 149 of the 150 most polluted cities globally, contributing to 6.5 million out of the 9 million premature deaths caused by pollution each year. The region is also experiencing an upward trend in hunger, poverty, inequality, and gender-based violence, with these issues being exacerbated by various crises, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges are further intensified by corporate control over natural resources and environmental governance, which often prioritizes profit over people and planet. Moreover, false solutions promoted under the guise of sustainability, such as waste-to-energy incineration, plastic offsets, and market-based climate.

Despite these challenges, the **SDG Report 2025** highlights innovative community-level partnerships that show how local actions can help bridge critical data gaps and drive inclusive progress toward the SDGs. These partnerships are essential in ensuring that no one is left behind as the region works to overcome its challenges and move toward a more sustainable and equitable future.

Addressing these interconnected crises will require a strong political commitment to confront systemic challenges. Transformative actions and policies must be adopted through a comprehensive approach that involves the whole government and society, underpinned by a foundation of human rights and gender equality.

2.0 Seventh United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 7) and the 6th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities in Asia Pacific

The seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) will take place from 8 to 12 December 2025 at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, on the theme "[Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet](#)". The UNEA-7 will be preceded by the [seventh meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives \(OECPR-7\)](#) which will be held from 1 to 5 December 2025.

The 6th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities in Asia and the Pacific will be organized by UNEP in collaboration with the Government of Fiji from 26th to 29th August 2025. The theme of this Forum follows the theme of UNEA 7, "[Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet](#)." The 6th Forum will feed into the discussions (and outcome) in UNEA 7.

As in the previous years, Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism (in collaboration with UNEP and the Government of Fiji) will organize a one-day Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) Forum on 27th August 2025 (TBC).

3.0 Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism (APRCM)

APRCM is a platform that brings together over 500 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from across Asia and the Pacific. The platform is dedicated to promoting development justice by advocating for economic, environmental, social, and gender justice, as well as holding governments accountable to their people. APRCEM consists of a diverse range of major groups and stakeholders across 21 constituencies.

Since 2012, APRCEM has been actively engaged with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at both the global (UN) and regional (ESCAP) levels. It has also worked closely with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), facilitating the participation of Major Groups (MGs) in the UNEA and the Regional Forum, respectively.

The elected Regional Facilitators for Asia Pacific, representing UNEP-accredited Major Groups, also act on behalf of APRCEM, bringing regional perspectives to the UNEA and other environmental processes. APRCEM is recognized as a model for regional engagement, inspiring other regions to establish similar mechanisms. More details about the platform can be found [here](#).

4.0 Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum

The Forum is intended to provide a platform for major groups and stakeholders and social movements to organize their positions and strategic inputs and ensure that voices of marginalized sectors and grassroots are included in the outcome of the 6th Forum of Ministers. The collective outcome from the MGS Forum will feed into the 6th Ministers Forum as well as in the UNEA 7 discussions.

The Major Group and Stakeholders' Forum will aim to:

- To provide major groups, stakeholders, and grassroots representatives with the opportunity to prepare and present their collective views and positions on the UNEA 7 theme, as well as regional challenges and priorities.
- To ensure that the voices and perspectives of major groups, stakeholders, and grassroots movements in the region are represented at the Senior Officials and Ministerial Forum, and that these views are reflected in the outcome of the 6th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia-Pacific.
- To offer major groups, stakeholders, and grassroots representatives from across the region the opportunity to engage in discussions and contribute their input to the UNEA process, including on draft resolutions and the draft ministerial declaration.
- To discuss and highlight community-based and people-led sustainable and innovative solutions to environmental challenges, as well as to provide policy-relevant recommendations on multilateral actions advancing sustainable and science-based climate, nature, and pollution solutions.

The main delivery is a collective outcome document/declaration from the Forum, which will feed into the Ministers' Forum. The delivery from the process will include;

- A detailed concept note to guide the discussion
- List of registered and selected participants (along with rationale for selection)
- Detailed programme and report of the Forum.

5.0 Participants and Selection Process

UNEP will support the travel of a few Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) from APRCEM to participate in the MGS Forum and the 6th Forum of Ministers. The selection of participants will be carried out by APRCEM, considering factors such as diversity, (sub) region, gender, age, capacity, and skills, as well as grassroots representation. An open call for nominations/registrations will be issued, and participants will be selected based on these criteria through a transparent and fair process managed by a selection committee. Additionally, while UNEP will support certain participants, APRCEM will also encourage MGS and CSOs from Fiji and other countries in Asia and the Pacific to register and take part in the events.

6.0 Tentative Programme

The programme will enable CSOs to bring in their varied perspectives, innovations and solutions. The theme will adopt the UNEA 7 theme, [Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet](#)".

The suggested programme is as below.

Time	Session	Facilitator/Speaker
09.00 am – 10.00 am	Opening Plenary	
09.00 am – 09.05 am	Welcome Remarks	APRCEM
09.05 am- 09.15 am	Opening Remarks	UNEP
09.15 am – 09.25 am	Opening Remarks	Rep. Government of Fiji
09.25- 09.45 am	Road to UNEA 7 & MGS Participation	UNEP
09.45 -10.00	Photo session	
10.00 am – 10.45 am	Session 1: Context and Framing	
10.00 am - 10. 30 am	Ground Level Opening; Communities in crises and a groundswell of solutions	Grassroots communities respond to environmental challenges and their wealth of solutions
10.30 am - 10.45 am	Asia Pacific; Challenges, Solutions, multilateral actions and Partnerships	Framing will provide the regional context and MGS perspectives
10.45-11.00 am	Coffee Break	
11.00 am-12.15 pm	Session 2: Peoples Solutions & Innovations; Trinity of climate, nature and pollution actions	Panel will discuss sustainable and scalable solutions across triple planetary crises and development challenges
12.15 pm – 01.15 pm	Lunch break	
01.15 pm-02.30 pm	Session 3: Science, Technology & AI in advancing solutions; State of play, Challenges & Opportunities	The talk show will determine where we are in STI and need to strengthen social and environmental safeguards & governance
02.30 pm-02.45 pm	Coffee Break	

02.45 - 04.00 pm	Session 4: Towards UNEA 7; Enhancing multilateral actions towards a resilient planet	The session will review implementation of previous UNEA Resolutions, UNEP MTS & PoW and proposed UNEA 7 Resolutions and provide regional as well global policy relevant recommendations
04.00 pm- 04.15 pm	Health Break	
04.15 pm – 05.15 pm	Session 6: Strategizing Interventions in the 6th Forum of Ministers	Discussion on modalities of official engagement as major groups and stakeholders, outcome statement & interventions/speakers in the AP Forum of Ministers.
05.15 pm – 05.30 pm	Vote of thanks and closure	

7.0 Contact

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