



Asia Pacific Major Groups Forum on Environment
3rd October, Colombo, Sri Lanka and Online
On the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific,
3rd to 6th October, Colombo, Sri Lanka and Online

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and the context

The world is facing multiple, interconnected and overlapping crises. Besides, the triple planetary crises of climate, rapid biodiversity loss and pollution, uneven recovery from COVID 19 pandemic, sovereign debt crisis and cost of living crisis, and wars and conflict have impacted the lives of billions of people adversely and have reversed hard earned development gains over the last decades. Despite a better understanding of the relation of development and environment, development drivers continue to threaten breach of more and more planetary boundaries. Though we have notable achievements in multilateral processes in climate, biodiversity, plastic pollution, conservation of biodiversity in the oceans and the high seas, chemicals and waste; we do still have mammoth challenges in preventing climate catastrophe and pollution, implementing global biodiversity framework and in achieving the SDGs.

Asia and the Pacific has been the global engine of growth for the past decades making higher economic development than the rest of the world. However, the cost of this growth has been immense environmental degradation. The region has been plagued by rapid climate change impacts, unprecedented biodiversity loss and pollution. More than 60% of the population in the

region is dependent on climate sensitive sectors. On an average 43,000 persons are killed every year in the region due to storms, floods and landslides also imposing economic losses worth \$ 675 each year due to disasters. A person living in Asia Pacific is six times more likely to be affected by disaster than other regions. Land degradation has affected about 850 million ha or 28% of land area in the region. About 40 countries in the region have pledged to achieve carbon neutrality in the region but only a handful of them have enshrined these pledges in law. Most of the Asia Pacific countries are unprepared to face extreme weather events, which is growing in intensity, frequency and scope. Though rich in biodiversity, it's projected that 42% of all the species in South East Asia could be lost by the end of the century risking up to 60% loss in the regional GDP. 149 out of the 150 most polluted cities in the world are in the Asia Pacific, which witnesses 6.5 million out of 9 million excess mortalities due to causes related to pollution. Hunger, poverty, inequality and gender based violence has been rising consistently in the region due to a variety of crises mentioned above and exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic.

We cannot overcome the interlocking crises without a strong political will for addressing systemic challenges, fostering transformative policies and action in a “whole of government” and “whole of society” approach rooted in human rights and gender rights.

Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 6) and the 5th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

It is in this backdrop that UNEA 6 will take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 26th February to 1st March 2024. UNEA is the highest platform for discussing intersection of environment and development, and for environmental law making and spurring action on multilateral environmental agreements. The UNEA is preceded by regional consultations of environment ministers (and high officials).

The 5th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities in Asia and the Pacific will be organized by UNEP in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Government of Sri Lanka from 3rd to 6th October 2023 at Colombo and online. The theme of this Forum follows the theme of UNEA 6 “**Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.**” The 5th Forum will provide regional perspectives and will contribute to the outcomes of the UNEA 6.

As in the previous Forum of Ministers and Environment authorities in Asia Pacific, Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism will organize a one day Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) Forum on 3rd October, 2023 in hybrid manner in collaboration with the UNEP and the Ministry of Environment, Government of Sri Lanka.

The Forum is intended to provide a platform for major groups and stakeholders to discuss and organize their positions and provide strategic inputs towards 5th AP Forum and towards the preparation of the UNEA.

The Major Group and Stakeholders' Forum will aim:

1. To enable major groups and stakeholders and grassroots representatives to prepare their collective views and positions on the UNEA 6 Theme and regional inputs.
2. To ensure that the voice and views of major groups and stakeholders and grassroots communities in the region are shared at the senior officials and ministerial Forum and reflected in the outcome of the 5th AP Forum.
3. To provide opportunities for major groups and stakeholders and grassroots representatives from across the region also to deliberate and provide inputs to to the UNEA process including draft resolutions and draft Ministerial Declaration.

Asia Pacific Regional CSOs engagement Mechanism (APRCM)

APRCM is a platform of more than 500 CSOs from Asia and the Pacific. The platform is committed to promote development justice including advocating ensuring economic, environmental, social and gender justice and accountability to people. The Platform comprises a wide variety of major groups and stakeholders across 17 constituencies, 5 sub-regional groups and various thematic groups. The APRCEM has, since 2012, engaged extensively with Agenda 2030 at global (UN) and at Asia Pacific (ESCAP level). It has also worked closely with the UNEP and UNEP ROAP facilitating MGs participation in the UNEA and Regional Forum respectively. APRCEM is considered as a model engagement mechanism at the regional level and has inspired other regions to develop regional engagement mechanisms. More details on the mechanism can be found [here](#)

Selection of Participants for the Forum

UNEP will support the travel of a few MGS from APRCEM for participation in the MGS Forum and the 5th Forum. The selection will be conducted by the APRCEM based on the considerations of diversity, (sub) region, gender, age, capacity and skills, and grassroots representation. An open call for nominations/registration of participants (till 9th August) will be followed by selection on above criteria by a selection committee in a transparent and fair manner. Besides the participants supported by UNEP, APRCEM will also encourage MGS and CSOs from Sri Lanka and other countries in Asia and the Pacific to register and participate.

Programme

The programme will enable CSOs to bring in their varied perspectives and innovations and solutions. The suggested programme is as below;

Time	Session	Facilitator/Speaker
09.00 am -09.30 am	Opening Plenary	Karin Fernando (CEPA, SL)
	Opening Remarks	Dr. Dechen Tsering, Regional Director, AP, UNEP
	Opening Remarks	Mr. Anil Jasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Government of Sri Lanka
09.30 am – 09.40 am	Group Photo	
Session I (09.40 am – 11.00 am)	Road to UNEA 6	Facilitator-Wali Haider (Roots for Equity, Pakistan)
09.40 am – 10.00 am	UNEA 6, Regional Priorities & MGS participation in UNEA 6 process and in the 5 th APMF	Ms. Radhika Ochalik, Secretary of Governing Bodies & Director, Governance Affairs Office HE Mr. Firas Khouri, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives & Ambassador of Jordan to Kenya Mr. Subrata Sinha, ROAP, UNEP
10.00 am -10.30 am	Peoples voices & expectations from UNEA 6 Guiding question; What are the communities lived reality, their contribution, challenges and demands?	Mamta Kujur (Jashpur Jan Vikas Sanstha. India) Isagani Jr (Ladlad Caraga INC, Philippines) Visaka Dharmadasa (Association of War Affected Women, SL)
10.30 am -10.45 am	Regional Priorities Guiding question; What is the state of affairs in the region on climate change, pollution, biodiversity, environment and development, and what are the regional priority & policy imperatives?	Ajay K Jha, Regional Facilitator, Asia Pacific
10.45 am – 11.00 am	Reflections from the floor on regional priorities	
11.00-11.15	Q&A	
11.15 am- 11.20 am	Coffee break	
Session II	Road to UNEA 6 continued	Facilitator- Karin Fernando (CEPA, SL)

(11.20 am - 12.40 pm)		
	<p>Guiding questions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the progress on the implementation of UNEA 5 Resolutions • What are the proposed Resolutions for UNEA 6 • Whether and how the draft Ministerial Declaration does incorporate traditional and emerging challenges and balances regional concerns and interests of specific groups? 	<p>Elinita (Neth) Dano (ETC Group, Asia)</p> <p>Hemantha (Centre for Environmental Justice, SL)</p> <p>Wali Haider (Roots for Equity, Pakistan)</p> <p>Prem Singh Tharu (Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, Thailand)</p> <p>P.P. Sivapragasam (Human Development Organization)</p>
12.20 pm – 12.40 pm	Q & A	
12.40 pm – 01.40 pm	Lunch	
Session III (01.40 pm – 03.20 pm)	Peoples Solutions and Innovations	Facilitator-Gomer Padong (Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia, Philippines)
01.40 pm – 03.00 pm	<p>Guiding Questions;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are people and communities (including marginalized and vulnerable communities) responding to triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution (and others), what are their challenges, solutions/ innovations and achievements? 2. What are the demonstrated models of rights based and inclusive approach in specific sectors amid multiple crises 3. What are their recommendations to make these solutions and innovations shared across their communities and region? 	<p>Fazly Noor Mohamed (Lanka organic Agriculture Movement)</p> <p>Hanieh Moghani (Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment, Iran)</p> <p>Kala Peiris (Sri Lanka Centre for Development Facilitation, SL)</p> <p>Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk (Sustainable Development Foundation, Thailand)</p> <p>Ajay Kumar VB (Equities Foundation, India)</p> <p>Phuong Ngo (SCODE, Vietnam)</p> <p>R V Bastian (Free & Equal Rights, Indonesia)</p>
03.00 pm – 03.20 pm	Reflections and input from the floor & Q & A	
03.20 pm – 03.40 pm	Coffee break	
Session IV (03.40 pm – 05.00 pm)	Enhancing transformative multilateral actions	Facilitator-Joy Hernandez (International Trade Union Confederation, Philippines)
03.40 pm – 04.40 pm	<p>Guiding question;</p> <p>What multilateral actions can help overcome climate change and pollution</p>	<p>Elinita (Neth) Dano (ETC Group, Asia)</p>

	and ensure compliance of global biodiversity framework, multilateral environmental agreements and improve global environmental governance?	Jayantha Wijesingha (Rainforest Protectors of Sri Lanka) Syed Jehangir Hassan Masum (Coastal Development Partnership, Bangladesh) Mahesh Pandya (Paryavaran Mitra, India) HR Chiranthi Thavisha (Hype, SL)
04.40 pm-05.00 pm	Q&A	
Session V (05.00 pm – 06.00 pm)	Planning for 5th AP Forum	Karin Fernando & Ajay K Jha
05.00-05.40	Finalizing the collective outcome document of the MGS Forum	
05.40 pm-06.00 pm	Planning Interventions in the 5 th Forum	

Expected outcomes

The deliverables from the process will include a concept note to guide the discussion, list of registered and selected participants (along with rationale for selection), detailed programme and report of the Forum. The key deliverable is a collective outcome document/declaration from the Forum which will feed into the Science Policy Business Forum, Officials Forum and the Ministers Forum.