



Regional Breakout Session: Asia-Pacific
Wednesday 16 April, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

IDENTIFICATION	
Session/plenary title	Youth at the Forefront: Leveraging Science and Social Inclusion for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific
Session/plenary focus	Asia and the Pacific
Session/plenary UN co-lead UN 1	ESCAP
Session/plenary UN co-lead UN 2	UNDP
Session/plenary youth co-lead 1	Asia Pacific Youth Caucus
Session/plenary UN co-organizers	UNICEF
	UNFPA APRO
Session/plenary youth co-organizers	SAARC Youth Platform
	Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES

The Asia-Pacific regional session for the 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum will allow participants to formulate concrete region-specific recommendations from young people that could be acted upon by Member States and other stakeholders in implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The session will focus on the review, gaps and challenges of the 5 goals in question, building on the Asia-Pacific preparatory meeting, namely the Youth Forum of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2025 (19-21 February 2025). The overarching theme for this is: Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no young person behind in Asia and the Pacific”.

In the Asia-Pacific region, there are approximately 700 million youth aged 15-24 years. Accounting for around 60 per cent of the world’s young people, they have the aspirations and capacity to shape the region’s future. However, too many of them are unable to fulfil their potential to participate effectively in society and contribute to socioeconomic development. Indeed, they face many challenges in the context of the five SDGs under review. Mental health and accidents have a major impact on youth well-being. Moreover, every year, around one in eight unintended births take place in the region. The safety of young women and girls across the region is also at risk, with high rates of physical and/or sexual

intimate partner violence, especially in the Pacific. Available data suggest that one in two 15-24-year-old women in the Pacific, one in four in South Asia, and one in six in South-East Asia have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence.

Although there have been recent improvements in the youth unemployment rate in Asia and the Pacific, at 13.9 per cent in 2023, it remains far higher than the rate for adults (at around 3.0 per cent). Rates of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) have also declined in recent years; however, given very high rates among young women in South Asia (at 42.4 per cent), in aggregate terms, one in five (20.4 per cent) youth in the region were in NEET status. Another concern is that, since the year 2000, the shares of young adults in the Asia-Pacific region working in temporary jobs have risen from one in five to one in four. By 2021, South Asia was the only subregion with the agricultural sector as the largest employer of young people (at 35 per cent). In other parts of Asia and the Pacific, since 2021, the sectoral reallocation of youth employment from agriculture has primarily been to non-manufacturing industry (mainly construction) and traditional services (including trade, transport, accommodation and food services).

Youth in the Asia-Pacific region are often at the forefront of scientific and evidence-informed initiatives to promote sustainable development, this includes their pivotal role in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources. As with any aspect of youth engagement, partnerships at global, regional, national and local levels are critical. While achieving SDG 17 is vital for progress towards all the goals, in only one of its 21 indicators, Internet Users, is the Asia-Pacific region on track to achieve its target by 2030.

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION/PLENARY

- To ensure that young people's diverse views are meaningfully included in essential follow-up and review processes, and that decisions involving them are equitable and evidence-informed.
- To take stock of, from a youth perspective, the progress, gaps, and challenges in achieving SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17 in the Asia-Pacific region, and formulate concrete recommendations to enhance greater participation of youth in all development domains.
- To showcase youth-led good practices in science and innovation that promote their inclusion and engagement in decision-making.
- To share the [APFSD Youth Call to Action](#) to inform national, regional and global intergovernmental forums.
- To elevate youth leadership and engender greater exchange of ideas, as well as stronger and more equitable partnerships among youth and policymakers and other stakeholders.
- To promote intergenerational solidarity between young and older persons for greater understanding and social cohesion.

OVERALL FORMAT/STRUCTURE

Proposed flow:

- Welcome and opening remarks: 5 minutes
- Audience engagement: 5 minutes
- Keynote remarks from the Chinese government delegation: Ms. Liu Kai, Deputy Secretary-General of All-China Youth Federation - 5 minutes
- Fireside chat(s) on Goal 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17: 25 minutes + moderated interventions from the floor 30 minutes
 - Leonardo Bolstad - SDG 14 and 17
 - Monica Jose- SDG 3 and 5
 - TianTian Dai- SDG 8
 - Interventions from the floor including from the member states
- APFSD-Youth Call to Action: 3 minutes
- Wrap up and closing remarks: 5 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(approx.100 words)

- What are the main progress, gaps and challenges in achieving Goals 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17 in the Asia-Pacific region from a youth perspective?
- How can youth, irrespective of gender, contribute more effectively to Goals 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17, and what innovative actions and recommendations are needed to move ahead?
- How can youth engagement, based on science, inclusion and sustainability be enhanced, including through interaction with older persons, to build societies for all ages?
- How can youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship be leveraged for better health and employment opportunities?
- What can be done to ensure that disadvantaged youth are not left behind?

NAMES AND TITLES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Moderator: Riju Dhakal, Nepal, ARROW (riju@arrow.org.my)

Riju Dhakal, programme officer at ARROW, is currently based in Kathmandu, Nepal and has been actively engaging herself around public health issues and her passion especially lies in the area of adolescent and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. She has been an active youth activist for the past six years in Nepal and has also represented the national issues and young people in several regional and international platforms like Human Rights Council, SDG Summit, APFSD and many more. As the past president of a prominent youth organisation in Nepal, YUWA, she has actively worked at the national level for the review and monitoring of the ICPD25 in Nepal. And now, as an advocate of the region, she is currently engaged with 17 national partners from 14 countries of the region including Nepal, India, Laos, Fiji, Cambodia, Philippines, Pakistan, Maldives, Bangladesh,

Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Mongolia and Sri Lanka to generate on-ground evidence on the issues of young people, their SRHR as part of national ICPD30 review processes supported by ARROW.

Youth Speakers

Monica Isabel Jose, Philippines (monicajose2021@gmail.com)

Monica Isabel Jose is a development studies student, aspiring humanitarian worker, and multidisciplinary creative from the province of Bulacan, Philippines. She describes herself as a hopeful realist, envisioning a world where every child has the opportunity and capacity to dream and play. Over the past years, she has been engaged in various efforts towards inclusive societal development for communities in the Philippines and beyond. She sees photography as an extension of her commitment to inclusive development. Her ongoing photo documentary work, *The Line*, focuses on the lives of those living below the poverty line and those holding the line—the individuals working to challenge and address inequality.

Leonardo Bolstad, New Zealand (leonardobolstad@gmail.com)

Leonardo Bolstad (Reo Aoki) is a Japanese New Zealander pursuing a Bachelor with Honours in Electrical and Humanitarian Engineering at the University of Canterbury. He focuses on international collaboration through science and cultural exchanges, particularly around the UN SDGs. As the Regional Youth Champion for Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania for the Global Coalition Digital Transformations for Health Lab, he bridges regional health issues. An advocate for SDG 7 (Clean and Affordable Energy), Leonardo was invited to COP29 with a New Zealand Overflow Party Pass and fosters international collaboration by organising global conferences for IEEE, the world's largest technical organisation.

Dai Tiantian, China (tdai.2009@outlook.com)

Dai Tiantian, a dynamic young leader born in 1990, has extensive experience in international investment, corporate strategy, and sustainable development. As the Deputy Director of the Centralized Services Department at CGE (Chile's leading power distribution company), she focuses on enhancing corporate governance, administrative management, and stakeholder communication while promoting responsible investment and sustainable energy initiatives. As a strong advocate for inclusive development, Dai actively engages in CGE's community initiatives, including the Ilumina Program, which has provided mentorship and training to over 1,400 high school students across Chile. She has also championed digital literacy programs for elderly residents and vocational training initiatives that have empowered more than 640 women over the past four years. These efforts have equipped thousands in underserved communities with the skills to achieve financial independence, workforce reintegration, and social mobility, fostering gender equality and economic resilience. Since joining State Grid International Development Limited (SGID) in 2016, Dai has supported the development of energy infrastructure in Chile, Greece, Oman, and other regions, ensuring access to safe, reliable, and sustainable electricity services. She has also represented State Grid at high-profile forums, including the China-Africa Energy and Power Conference. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Finance (with a minor in Foreign Affairs) from the University of Virginia and a Master's Degree in Conference Interpretation from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. Dai's contributions have been recognized with first prize in State Grid's 2023 Belt and Road International Excellence Competition, as well as SGID's 2023 Outstanding Employee Award and 2021-22 Youth Role Model Award.

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

The APFSD Youth Forum 2025 was an intersectional group of over 541 young people, activists, and advocates from 34 countries and territories across Asia and the Pacific region, representing youth-led, youth-serving and feminist organizations, changemakers, social entrepreneurs, activists, and students who have gathered together for the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) Youth Forum 2025, held in hybrid modality, from 19th - 21st February 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand. 130 young people have joined in-person with unique and diverse individuals ranging from age 13-30, across all backgrounds and identities including persons with disabilities, persons with various sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, youth from ethnic and minority groups, and various socio-economic backgrounds, amongst others. The call to action, as part of the outcome of the APFSD Youth Forum 2025 reflects the collective voice and demands of young people, and is indicative of the strength of young people's commitment to the attainment of the sustainable development goals. This APFSD Youth Call to Action put forward the recommendations and outlines demands from young people for sustainable, inclusive, and evidence based solutions, with focus on the SDGs under review for this year— SDG 3 (Good Health and Well- being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

ADDITIONAL DETAILS, SUGGESTED READING, IF ANY

- Employment trends for youth in Asia and the Pacific: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/employment-trends-youth-asia-and-pacific>
- Beijing+30 Asia Pacific Youth Blog: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/stories/in-focus/2024/03/in-focus-beijing30-in-asia-pacific/beijing30-asia-pacific-youth-blog>
- Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event: Asia-Pacific Youth taking the Pact for the Future Forward: Amplifying Youth Voices from the Regional to the Global-level: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/V37_Asia-Pacific%20Youth%20taking%20the%20Pact%20for%20the%20Future%20Forward%20Amplifying%20Youth%20Voices%20from%20the%20Regional%20to%20the%20Global-level.pdf
- A Turbulent Future: How Climate Change Impacts Young People in the Pacific: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-05/how_climate_change_impacts_pacific_island_youth.undp_policy_brief_may_2024-3.pdf
- Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2025: <https://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd12>
- APFSD Youth Call to Action 2025: <https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/APFSD-Youth-Forum-2025-Call-to-Action.pdf>