

## **Agenda Item 2: Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific**

Thank you chair, it is my privilege to speak on behalf of the women's constituency of APRCEM.

At the midway year of the 2030 Agenda, women and girls in Asia and the Pacific continue to grapple with the cascading effects of the climate crisis, of corporatized development which commodifies basic needs and resources, and the militaristic response to the COVID-19 pandemic leaving more women vulnerable to violence and poverty. While the richest 1% of the world more than doubled their wealth, 820 million people suffer from food insecurity, among 60% of them are women and girls living amidst the biggest cost-of-living crisis in the 21st century.

Year after year, we see drastic cuts in funding public services in favor of infrastructure, military expenses and debt servicing leading to severe impacts on education, health, and basic social services spending. Because women benefit the most from these services, they are disproportionately affected in the necessary conduct of unpaid care and domestic work in the household as a result of flawed development architecture.

Women also spend on average 11 hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work, the longest in all regions. Apart from the lack of formal opportunities available to women of all diversities, 70% of the global labor force are women and girls in informal work facing poverty wages and unsafe working conditions with little to no access to social protection mechanisms. Women-led small scale enterprises suffered severely without sufficient government subsidies.

Making up for financial loss, governments are enticed to privatize basic yet fundamental needs such as water supply, and critical services of education, health, and agriculture. 1.1 billion people in Asia still live in areas with severe water distress as universal access remains a challenge in water governance and management. This, compounded with the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis to rural and remote areas with increased military presence make women's access to local life-giving resources and sustainable livelihood more difficult and prone to unabated violence. Women in conflict areas are the most vulnerable to weaponized sexual violence, leading to forced migration and displacement to areas without access to public infrastructures and protective services.

Therefore, on behalf of all women in all diversities in the region, we urge the member states to:

- Safeguard women and girls against exploitation and global capitalist interests.
- Ensure that technological advances in agriculture contribute to food production and land nourishment without depriving local and indigenous women of control over their land, resources and territories.
- Engage women in policy making at all levels in a meaningful, transparent and inclusive manner. Dedicate sufficient support for childcare infrastructure in recognition of women and girl's global economic contribution with care and domestic work.
- Promote and uphold the rights of women and girls to resources for health and economic recovery and ensure safety net provisions that will support employability, ensuring decent work for female, youth, low-skilled and informal workers.
- Governments in the region need to step up actions to respond to SDG17 on the means of implementation and global partnerships in a people-centered and human rights-based approach with gender equality and equity principles at the forefront. Such approaches need to

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inform domestic resource mobilisation and ODA distribution for equal and equitable allocation of financial resources across sustainable development dimensions.

We strongly express our concern about the shrinking civic spaces in engagement arenas, as in the case of our colleagues in South Asia during their subregional forum last year. To promote and push for a regulatory environment that supports all civil society actors, we must uphold inclusive and consistent engagement to a shared vision of sustainability, equitability, and inclusivity.

Thank you for this opportunity.