

**CSO Statement - VNR Session**  
**28 March 2022**

I am Feliciano Soares of Timor Leste and I speak on behalf of APRCEM.

In the People's Forum last week, we in APRCEM, assessed the CSO engagements in the country VNR processes, drawing lessons from this year's VNR countries and the SDG monitoring and accountability in countries across Asia Pacific.

We noted the lack of inclusivity, transparency and meaningful CSO participation in the VNR processes and overall SDG policy development, implementation and monitoring. **Fewer countries reported on the inclusion of non-state actors** in governance for SDG implementation than in previous years.

We have witnessed shrinking civic space, criminalisation of the civic dissent, direct attacks on human rights and environmental defenders, compounded by the **lack of funding support for CSOs** to participate in key engagement arenas creating absence of democratic dialogue and accountability as experienced by some of our colleagues especially in South Asia subregion last year among others.

The shrinking civic spaces raised by civil society across parallel and shadow reports is being ignored in the official VNR reports. **APRCEM demands:**

1. **Inclusive and Participatory VNRs:** Establish an **enabling legal and regulatory framework** that **supports all** civil society actors to contribute to sustainable development through inclusive and regular engagement with right-holders, including inputs from the most marginalized and vulnerable groups such as women, LGBTIQ, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples, among others. This also entails retracting restrictive and repressive laws and policies that limit CSOs' capacity to enact their role as development actors and participate in development processes.
2. **Urgent actions on the Leave No One Behind** agenda by prioritising the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities and addressing the root causes of inequalities. Prepare a dedicated chapter on leaving no one behind in VNR reports that details country-wide approaches and targeted policies and financing SDGs

3. **Transparent SDG Reporting and Accountability:** Provide an account of local-national level reporting and accountability processes for 2030 Agenda in VNR reports, demonstrate progress made between reports, and link country commitments to the 2030 Agenda to human rights treaties.
4. **Recognition of CSO Reports:** Ensure disaggregated data on the lived realities of marginalised people by utilizing civil society and citizen-led research. Advocate for civil society and shadow VNR reports to be incorporated in official VNR reports of governments and recognized in the sub-regional, APFSD and the UN's High-level Political Forum processes.

Finally, at the UN level, APRCEM is concerned about the state of multistakeholderism, with the emphasis on private sector actors in UN processes, facilitating corporate capture. **APRCEM challenges what is referred to as multistakeholderism.** We demand the UN to realize its own potential as stated in its charter, as our global compass both in thought and action. The UN processes must undergo **a paradigm shift towards development justice** that ensures that people's voices will be heard and no one is left behind.