

Dear distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Jin Tanaka, from Japan and I am speaking on behalf of the Youth Constituency of APRCEM

We congratulate and look forward to the implementation of youth inclusion in the countries' VNR.

This region's 32 low- and middle-income countries are home to nearly 1 billion young people aged 10-24, accounting for 60% of the world's youth. However, under the circumstances of concern, the voices of the youth are not heard and uplifted in the VNR process. In addition, youth from marginalized communities including persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+, and from Lower socio-economic backgrounds are still left out of the decision-making process.

We, the youth, call for greater promotion of the following in VNR capacity building.

1. Establish an enabling legal and regulatory platform that supports all civil society actors to contribute to sustainable development through inclusive, equitable and regular engagement with rights holders, including contribution through public consultations from the most marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Strengthen efforts and state approaches to marginalized groups, including youth, in line with the SDG's principle "no one left behind", and to engage with all relevant institutions on an equal foot. Youth organizations and advocates have an important role in the implementation of the SDGs and their contribution should be acknowledged and supported. Governments must create a conducive platform for CSOs and NGOs, especially youth-led organizations, to actively participate in the SDGs implementation process.

- 2, Ensure integration of the 2030 Agenda priorities into national policies and frameworks through knowledge sharing across countries and sectors by guaranteeing free and secured access to all data and evidence, and simultaneously evaluate policies and data to help prioritize and develop national targets and indicators.

Currently, this region lacks sufficient access to updated information, research, and technology to enable all young people to be fully informed and to access the sustainable development efforts of national policies and frameworks. There is a need to review and assess policies, data availability, and baselines to inform prioritization and nationalization of the 2030 agenda and ensure an evidence-based approach to implementation and follow up processes.

There is a need to increase knowledge sharing and build an engaging community among all stakeholders, including youth to increase the number of countries reporting the inclusion of CSOs in their governance arrangements for implementation.

3. Inclusion of children, youth and women in all their diversities for environmental protection and climate action. We are disproportionately impacted, and we must be part of this decade of action!

Youth are the leaders and changemakers to turn global thoughts into implementation at the local levels. Let's involve children and youth in decision making spaces at all levels to change the system and shift the power.