

Bangkok Civil Society Declaration: From Inclusive to Just Development

Bangkok, Thailand.

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Asia and the Pacific civil society groups representing 92 organisations from 21 countries representing various major groups and stakeholders gathered in Bangkok to formulate a just and transformative development agenda towards post-2015 and beyond.

Our world is currently at a crossroads. Facing multiple and interconnected crises of environment, finance, food, energy, democracy and most of all a crisis of deep inequalities, we are confronted with a challenge and an opportunity.

State policymaking over the past three decades based on a neoliberal economic model has led to wealth, power and resources accruing to a minority of the world's richest and most powerful people and corporations. Our world is now a plutocracy. This model of wealth accumulation is directly responsible for the crises we now confront.

Governments have abdicated their responsibilities to protect the rights of their populations to development. State policies of privatisation of essential services, resources and infrastructure; deregulation of economies; wage suppression; political repression including restrictions on the right to freedom of association; and militarization have made the world grossly unequal, insecure and unsustainable. They have contributed to increasing consumption, financial speculation, corporate concentration, unregulated exploitation of the world's resources, and increased violations of human rights. The effects of cross border and internal conflict have significant implications for peace and security in the region affecting livelihoods and leading to displacement of vulnerable populations. Migration patterns in the region reflect the inequality of current economic systems, as well as the effects of political instability and climate change. The burden of this policy-making and the crises it has caused lies on the shoulders of those least responsible and most vulnerable: poor women and men living in the Asia and the Pacific region.

Our governments have the opportunity to chart a new course, a course that the vast majority of peoples in this region want, a course of global equity, of ecological sustainability, of social justice, human rights enjoyment and dignity for all.

We, your constituents, task you, in partnership with civil society, with developing a transformative and redistributive framework that aims to reduce inequalities of wealth, power and resources between countries, between rich and poor and between men and women. We call on you to commit to a model of **Development Justice**.

A model of **Development Justice** should be framed by five foundational shifts

1. Redistributive Justice
2. Economic Justice
3. Social Justice
4. Environmental Justice
5. Accountability to Peoples

Redistributive justice aims to redistribute resources, wealth, power and opportunities to all human beings equitably. It compels us to dismantle the existing systems that channel resources and wealth from developing countries to wealthy countries, from people to corporations and the military. It recognises the people as sovereigns of our local and global commons.

Economic justice aims to develop economies that enable dignified lives, accommodate for needs and facilitate capabilities, employment and livelihoods available to all, and is not based on exploitation of people or natural

resources or environmental destruction. It is a model that makes economies work for people, rather than compels people to work for economies.

Social Justice aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination, marginalization, exclusion that pervade our communities. It recognises the need to eliminate patriarchal systems and fundamentalisms, challenge existing social structures, deliver sexual and reproductive justice and guarantee the human rights of all peoples, particularly women, widows, dalits, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, children, youth, older persons, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV and other illnesses, sex workers, domestic workers and workers in the informal sector, survivors of trafficking, and those excluded by caste, class, income, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, or social status.

Environmental Justice recognises the historical responsibility of countries and elites within countries whose production, consumption and extraction patterns have led to human rights violations, global warming and environmental disasters and compels them to alleviate and compensate those with the least culpability but who suffer the most: farmers, fishers, women and marginalised groups of the global south.

Accountability to peoples demand democratic and just governments, transparency, and governance that enables people to make informed decisions over their own lives, communities and futures. It necessitates empowering all people, but particularly the most marginalised, to be part of free, prior and informed decision making in all stages of development processes at the local, national, regional and international levels and ensuring right of peoples to determine their development priorities. It also requires guaranteeing the right to freedom of information. The new development framework must be based on the principle of non-regression, embrace a holistic, rights-based approach, and ensure that the human rights principles of equality, equity, non-discrimination and inclusive participation and decision making underpin its policies and practices. Such an approach ensures that the most marginalized can benefit from development and growth, and become active agents of change.

To achieve redistributive justice and reduce economic inequalities within countries, governments must:

- Develop and implement laws and policies that **ensure that small farmholders, small fishingfolk, and indigenous peoples, particularly women, have access to, control over and ownership of land, fisheries, property, productive resources, information, and appropriate and environmentally sound technology.**
- End policies that promote land grabbing by governments, corporations, the military, and extractive industries; and **implement redistributive land reform** that puts ownership of land and control over natural resources back in the hands of communities, women and other marginalized groups, and strengthens **agricultural productivity and livelihoods.**
- **Peacefully resolve cross-border and internal violent conflicts which violate human rights and affect human and economic security.**
- **Provide financial protection and subsidies to small farming communities to ensure that they can participate on an equal basis in agricultural markets.**
- **Develop specific national-level and time-bound targets and indicators for reducing inequalities of wealth, power and resources, and promote fair asset distribution** between countries, between rich and poor, between rural and urban areas, and between different social groups, including men and women;
- **Reform tax policies to eliminate indirect taxes,** which disproportionately impact the poor; **implement progressive income taxes** to ensure the wealthy contribute their fair share; **implement progressive capital gains taxes and financial transactions taxes** to increase government revenue and reduce harmful financial speculation; and implement taxes on the inheritance of individual wealth and property.
- **Prioritize public financing over public private partnerships** to fulfill state obligations and strengthen public institutions; **set minimum tax thresholds and re-channel military spending to finance social spending; set specific budget allocation targets to guarantee the maximum allocation of resources to protecting and promoting human rights,** including the

right to health, education, food, and an adequate standard of living; and **increase accountability for how tax revenue is spent.**

To achieve economic justice:

- **Enact living wage laws** that guarantee that all workers, including women, those in the informal sector, agricultural workers, and migrant workers, earn enough to live with dignity; **ensure that wages grow with productivity**; and increase **cooperation between countries on exchange rates, trade and fiscal policies, and wages** to prevent a race to the bottom.
- **Implement policies to ensure that all women, men and young people have access to decent work**, including by enacting legal protections to provide security in the workplace, social protection for workers and their families, paid parental, breastfeeding, care and sick leave; promote collective bargaining, and organization, and the rights of workers to participate in decision-making that affects their lives;
- **Ensure trade, investment, financial and intellectual policy rights policies** that do not impede countries' abilities, fiscal or policy space to provide economic opportunities and services to their people or undermine the right to development.
- **Guarantee universal social protection for all**, including income security for the unemployed and those whose livelihoods depend on precarious work, the sick, the disabled, pregnant women, children and the elderly;
- **Guarantee the right to universal access to quality public health services, education, food, water, sanitation, energy and justice** and implement targeted policies and programs to ensure that women, the poorest and most marginalized, including migrants, refugees and stateless peoples, are able to access and benefit from these services.
- **Move towards economies that are owned, driven and planned by people** to meet their development needs and guarantee their human rights.
- **End policies that promote the exploitation of migrant workers** and the use of remittances to finance national development priorities, and create an enabling environment for migrant workers to enjoy their human rights; strengthen cross-border and multisectoral collaboration between countries of origin and destination to promote migrants' rights, including to social protection; and guarantee access to health, education, and other social services for migrants, regardless of their migration status.

To achieve social and gender justice and reduce social and gender inequalities, governments must:

- **Address inequalities from an intersectional approach** and recognize how factors such as age, race, ethnicity, caste, HIV status, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, poverty, migration status, refugee status, area of work, and geographic location can compound stigma, discrimination, social exclusion and marginalization and lead to violence and other rights violations.
- **Eliminate laws and policies that perpetuate discrimination** on the basis of gender, sexual orientation or gender identity; criminalize or marginalize specific groups; reinforce inequalities; and create barriers to services, particularly sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion.
- **Guarantee women's rights to inheritance, land, and property** and implement policies to expand their control over productive resources and technologies;
- **Protect and enact legal protections for sexual and reproductive rights; guarantee universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education and services** and eliminate legal and policy barriers to access; **provide comprehensive sexuality education to all children and adolescents**, in and out of school and starting from the primary school level, that challenges traditional gender norms and the acceptability of violence against women and girls; promotes gender equality and human rights, and provides them with the skills to have control over all aspects of their sexuality.

- **Guarantee the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health** for all people; implement policies and programs to ensure that the most marginalized and excluded groups can exercise this right and overcome barriers to care; ensure universal access to free health services that are available, accessible, and of good quality and provided through the public sector; and provide universal access to diagnostics and treatment for non-communicable and communicable diseases, particularly for HIV, tuberculosis, hepatitis C, and malaria.
- **Combat rising fundamentalisms; eliminate the use of cultural and religious justifications for violations of women's and girls' human rights; end child, early and forced marriage and other harmful traditional and customary practices that violate women's and girls' rights;** and guarantee women's and girls' human rights to equality, autonomy, bodily integrity, to decide whether and whom to marry, to decide the number and spacing of children, and the right to live free from violence.
- **Enact laws and policies to prevent and comprehensively respond to all forms of violence against women and girls and ensure access to immediate critical services for all survivors of sexual and gender-based violence,** including screening and referral, post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV infection, emergency contraception, safe and legal abortion, psychosocial services and legal aid.
- **Guarantee universal access to public care services and ensure quality and decent working conditions for care providers,** in order to contribute to a fairer redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work and address the sexual division of labor.
- **Limit and reduce the production of weapons** that increase inequality and violations of human rights.

To achieve environmental justice and shift to sustainable consumption and production:

- **Reclaim and secure peoples' rights to define, own, control and ensure the sustainability of the commons; promote responsible stewardship of natural resources,** such as forests, rivers, watershed, and coastal environments; recognize and promote indigenous peoples' resources and traditional knowledge in the sustainable management of natural resources.
- **Promote ecological agriculture** to guarantee food sovereignty and prevent hunger and its consequences.
- **Reorient production, consumption and distribution systems** to meet peoples' needs rather than to accumulate profits.
- **Allocate sufficient resources towards and promote scientific and traditional knowledge** for understanding the social and environmental costs and impacts of human activities; popularize this information and enact regulatory measures on this basis.
- **Commit to carbon emission reductions and provide new, adequate, predictable, and appropriate climate finance** that contributed by countries from public resources on the basis of historical responsibility for climate change, and address the needs of those most affected, including for adaptation and mitigation.
- **Promote energy conservation and efficiency; phase out subsidies for the fossil fuel industry** while guarding against adverse impacts on low-income and marginalized groups; and promote community-based decentralized renewable energy systems as the main component of a renewable energy transition program.
- **Promote technologies for eco-efficiency and work toward elimination of waste;** build infrastructure and mechanisms to reduce, recycle and reuse waste; and redesign products to ensure durability and optimum use.
- **Ensure resource extraction,** such as water use, fishing, logging and mining, **is according to the needs of communities and subject to sustainable management,** while protecting the rights of fisherfolk, small farmholders, indigenous people and women.
- **Develop and operationalize legal frameworks to protect livelihoods of poor and marginalized people and avoid environmental disasters,** particularly as a result of resource extraction.

- **Prepare a new UN protocol to recognize State responsibilities to provide support to climate-displaced populations.**
- **Develop international mechanisms to address loss and damage caused by climate change,** with special attention to its gender-differential impacts.
- **Promote the creation of decent jobs** with the aim of creating environmentally-sustainable industries, promoting environmental awareness, and protecting against environmental destruction.
- **To develop and institutionalize mechanisms to monitor and mitigate the social and environmental impacts of development initiatives.**

To guarantee accountability to peoples and participation of civil society:

- **Establish comprehensive and inclusive mechanisms for meaningful citizen participation in determining, implementing and monitoring development goals and indicators at all levels;**eliminate barriers to participation, such as cultural and language obstacles; create the conditions for and guarantee the involvement of women, youth, indigenous communities, people with disabilities, people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, grassroots movements and marginalized groups, among others; and build the capacity of decision-makers to facilitate meaningful citizen participation.
- **Provide adequate and stable financial support and capacity development to civil society organizations to enable effective and substantial public participation in policy dialogues** and in implementing agreements and legislation at all levels.
- **Recognize and support the legitimate role of civil society actors in promoting human rights**and ensure an enabling environment for civil society organization development effectiveness.
- **Institutionalize mechanisms for civil society participation in policymaking processes and in policy dialogue forums at the local, national, transboundary, regional and global levels,** while respecting their right to self-organize; guarantee adequate and stable financial, institutional and political support from governments and the UN system to ensure operational effectiveness, sustainability and national ownership.
- **Guarantee and institutionalize the right to freedom of information.**
- **Ensure a fully transparent and inclusive monitoring process for implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda that makes information freely available to all stakeholders at all operational levels (local, national, regional, and global);** include process indicators to improve qualitative evaluations; and guarantee the consideration of reports from beneficiaries, in particular from the most socially marginalized, on how development programmes impact their lives.
- **Develop mechanisms to monitor and regulate the growing influence of the corporate sector in development, including in public-private partnerships; increase accountability of corporations and the private sector,** including through mechanisms that would bind corporations to respect human rights and other international laws (not just on a voluntary basis), including in their cross-border activities;**reinstate the UN Center for Transnational Corporations** to ensure that binding commitments are implemented and agreed to by states in charge of regulating these corporations; and **establish independent commissions or other bodies for accountability, that have mechanisms for redress**to hold corporations accountable for human rights and environmental violations.

To reduce economic inequalities and injustice between countries and finance the post-2015 agenda:

- **Respect existing commitments and pledge new and additional funds for financing the post-2015 development agenda;** identify means of implementation to accompany every goal; and develop a separate comprehensive commitment to guarantee means of implementation for the entire framework.

- **Monitor and enforce commitments of donor governments to provide a minimum of 0.7 percent of GDP to official development assistance (ODA); eliminate conditionalities on ODA; and track and monitor ODA spending** to ensure accountability and transparency.
- **Develop innovative means of financing for development, including by abolishing havens for transnational corporations; debt cancellation, debt swapping and debt servicing; pollution taxes; and global financial transaction taxes.**
- **Provide special considerations to address the development challenges of least developed countries, small island developing states and other fragile and conflict-affected countries, including preferential trade status** so that they can compete in the global market and raise domestic revenues.
- **Eliminate trade regulations that force countries to reduce subsidies or increase taxes on basic necessities** such as food staples and medicine to domestically finance development schemes.
- **Remove barriers to access of developing countries to relevant technologies** and know-how that are barred by intellectual property rights regulations; and **ensure that intellectual property rights are not used to consolidate and strengthen corporate control** over productive capacities in developing countries.
- **Establish an international technology facilitation mechanism to coordinate and enable the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries and communities; build the capacity of countries to coordinate, assess and ensure that transfer of technology is based on and appropriate to their needs; and include clauses for technology transfer and ownership to the receiving country in all direct financial investment.**