Asia Regional People's Declaration 2026

This People's Declaration has been adopted by 30 civil society networks and organisations in Asia, which participated in the Asia Regional People's Assembly 2026 that was held online on 1 October 2026. Over 116 community members, CSO leaders and academicians participated in the Assembly. These messages and key calls to actions will be taken to the World Bank and IMF annual meeting to be held in Bangkok in October and COP31 in November in Türkiye.

The external debt of developing countries has grown to $12.3 trillion with debt servicing becoming a major problem. 46 countries - with a population of 3,4 billion people - spend more on debt servicing than on either health or education - several around 50% of their budgets. Besides changes in the scale of debt, the current debt financing architecture has become market driven. Private creditors now hold roughly 59% of the external public and publicly guaranteed debt of LMICs, growing from approximately 41% in the early 2000s. This exposes countries to changes in global interest rates, investor risk

appetite, exchange rates and refinancing conditions, while making debt restructuring more complex. The major causes for the debt and economic distress are the loan conditions set by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) guided by the World Bank and the IMF that impose austerity measures making debt repayment a priority over social spending. Higher interest rates are charged from the southern nations in comparison to the rich countries. This crisis-instigating policies or debt trap diplomacy of IFIs perpetuated harmful policies that deepen economic injustice in the global south.
Several Asian countries are under debt crisis like Pakistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Lao PDR and others which has affected their investment in social protection. As a result, vast populations are vulnerable to poverty, inequality, economic crises, health emergencies, and climate change. Worst hit people are women, farmers and fisherfolk, Dalits, communities discriminated by work and descent, indigenous and tribal communities, persons with disabilities, elderly people; people affected by pandemic diseases such as HIV, TB, and malaria; and LGBTQI groups. This has led to unrest and protests by people in many Asian countries.

The escalating climate emergency underscored by catastrophic disasters like the recent devastating avalanche and floods in Nepal disproportionately ravages vulnerable communities who bear zero responsibility for global emissions. Climate emergencies also call for strengthened fiscal response. However, often the responses are taken at the expense of community interests. Several Asian countries are experiencing their hottest years, with floods, heatwaves, and fires affecting millions. Sea level rise and salinity are already reducing crop yields, and countries like India, China, Nepal, Pakistan, Cambodia, Bangladesh and even some parts of Central Asia (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) have faced severe droughts, long term flood, cyclones, drinkable water crisis and extreme heat, with South Asia sometimes reaching the limits of human survivability. Meanwhile, the Philippines ranked third in Asia for unusual heat linked to climate change and the man-made disasters are a primary driver of internal and cross-border labour migration, as farmers and fishers lose their livelihoods increasing risks of exploitation and trafficking.

Several countries in Asia are facing **democratic backsliding,** centralization of power, shrinking civic space, restrictions on freedom of expression and association and growing surveillance. This results in increasing marginalization and exclusion of civil society, social movements, workers, women, youth, Dalit, historically marginalized and excluded communities. Limited public trust in democratic institutions, weak accountability mechanisms and politicization of critical budgetary needs has hindered the

effectiveness of democratic practices. There is an urgent need to ensure meaningful participation and representation of civil societies in political decision-making, accountability mechanisms, human rights affairs and public life.

Wars, conflicts and militarism bring devastating consequences to communities directly and indirectly – inflict profound harm on human life and dignity. Bombing campaigns and missile attacks destroy vital civilian infrastructure, displace entire families, wipe out livelihoods, and end precious human lives. The military action by the U.S. and Israel against Iran and the cascading violence across the Gulf have deepened human suffering and destabilized regional and Asian economies. The ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza demands urgent global action, raising critical questions about the credibility of international law and multilateral institutions to protect human rights, and calling for an immediate end to military violence, accountability, and a commitment to a just peace.

Key Demands:

1. We demand the Asian nations to finance SDGs and strive to achieve it by 2030.
2. We refuse to accept another Agenda 2030 framework as a post-2030 agenda that is lacking accountability and adequate financing. We call for ambition in the negotiation of the post-2030 framework, ensuring that financing for environmental sustainability, health resilience, social justice, and gender equality to be further prioritized. The accountability framework and financing the goals must be ensured.
3. Overhaul of debt architecture and the international financial architecture led by the World Bank and IMF must be done for debt justice, climate justice and social justice.
4. We demand an end to the austerity measures and reject the increasing privatization of essential services for health, education, housing, sanitation etc.
5. There should be Parliamentary debates to understand the impact of different agreements signed by a nation with the World Bank and IMF on a country's economy and its citizens.
6. The WB and IMF must link their programmes to the achievement of SDGs.
7. We demand a far comprehensive and far ambitious financing to social assistance, community empowerment, and adaptive social protection.

This is critical as the proliferated planetary crises continue to impact the vulnerable and poor community unproportionately.

8. Unconditionally cancel external debts of low- and lower-middle-income countries to liberate crucial public resources needed for universal social protection, climate adaptation and disaster response.
9. ODA commitment by the wealthy nations must be met to fund social protection and climate adaptation measures in southern nations.
10. We demand a UN Framework Convention of Sovereign Debt and we call for meaningful discussions and opportunities for civil society to participate in the process.
11. Conduct people's audits to highlight the use of public and publicly guaranteed debts and cancel those that haven't been put to the use of the masses.
12. Asian countries must adopt a framework of Universal Social Protection that is publicly funded
13. Fiscal policies must prioritise investment in public services, decent work, and climate resilience over debt servicing
14. Progressive taxation systems must be adopted by nations including the wealth tax and inheritance tax.
15. Change in the method of allocating Special Drawing Rights by the IMF with a focus on LMICs to navigate external shocks beyond their control.
16. United Nations General Assembly should formally declare recent Nepal avalanche as a Global Climate Emergency
17. Establish accessible, grant-based financing mechanisms delivered directly to frontline and marginalized communities to address historical climate debts without trapping developing nations in further loans
18. Fast-track a rapid, equitable shift away from fossil fuels to renewable energy systems under public and community control, ensuring secure livelihoods and protection for displaced workers
19. Hold wealthy historic polluters, major corporations, and fossil fuel conglomerates legally and financially accountable for ecological devastation and escalating human rights abuses
20. An accountable and democratic governance should be placed that protects civic freedoms and ensures meaningful participation and representation of youth, women, workers, farmers, Dalits and marginalized communities.
21. States should respect and protect fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of association and expression both online and offline.
22. Countries should protect civic space and the human rights defenders who play a crucial role in protecting the interests of the marginalized and historically excluded communities for their democratic rights.

23. Recognize the crucial role of civil society in speaking out against the suppression of democratic freedom and promoting sustainable and equitable development.
24. The US-Israel-Iran must immediately halt all military actions, cease unilateral strikes, and commit to diplomatic channels to establish a lasting peace in West Asia.
25. Israel must immediately end its military assault and genocidal attack on Gaza. We call for an immediate, permanent ceasefire, and end to the siege, and give unhindered access for international humanitarian aid.
26. The international communities and the United Nations must use all diplomatic leverage, including an immediate arms embargo and enforcement of international humanitarian law, to protect all civilians and hold accountable those responsible for war crimes, killing of innocent people including women and children, and human rights violations.
27. We call for a peaceful, just, inclusive, and sustainable Asia, strengthened through dialogue, cooperation, and respect for the voices and dignity of all people.

Together, we build a better Asia.

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ENDORSED BY:

1. Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)
2. Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF)
3. Global Forum on Communities Discriminated by Work and Descent (GFoD)
4. Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development (APSD)
5. Asia Democracy Network (ADN)
6. Asia Development Alliance (ADA)
7. South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)
8. ActionAid International - Asia Region
9. Aide Et Action – International
10. Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA), India
11. NGO Federation of Nepal
12. Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
13. Noakhali Rural Development Society, Bangladesh
14. Sri Lanka United Nations Friendship Organisation (SUNFO)
15. Sanayee Development Organisation (SDO), Afghanistan
16. Pakistan Development Alliance (PDA)

17. Africa Japan Forum (AJF), Japan
18. Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)
19. APCASO
20. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
21. Recourse
22. Equity Society Nepal (ESN)
23. Foundation for Sustainable Development and Climate Action (FSDCA), India
24. Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)
25. LDC Watch
26. International Migrant Alliance (IMA) Research Foundation, Bangladesh
27. Jaag Welfare Movement, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan
28. Indonesia Youth Coalition to Climate Action (YOU-CAN)
29. Association Global Humaniste
30. Banten Traditional Community Council
31. Global Humaniste