

Tokyo Democracy Forum (TDF) 2022

10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)
Asia Democracy Network (ADN)
Asia Development Alliance (ADA)



We, the participants of the Tokyo Democracy Forum (TDF) 2022 held on 14-15 February 2022 under the theme "Defending Civic Space in a Time of COVID-19 Pandemic with a Focus on SDG16+", adopt the followings recommendations based on the survey, research and discussions on challenges, threats and oppression to CSOs and civic space as well as opportunities and strategies for international engagement on democracy, human rights and SDGs in Asia.

SDG16+ implies that the 'peaceful, just and inclusive societies' (SDG16) can be effectively achieved through the simultaneous efforts in other interlinked SDGs and targets, concretely, combining original 12 targets of the SDG16 with the additional 24 targets from seven other SDGs (1,4,5,8,10, 11 and 17), taking the total number of 36 targets.

The TDF is a joint initiative by the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), Asia Democracy Network (ADN), and Asia Development Alliance (ADA) to defend civic space through mutual dialogues and cooperation in Asia.

1 Fundamental freedoms and human rights such as freedom of expression, assembly and association must be ensured and promoted in the process of recovery and rebuilding from COVID-19 pandemic.

2 Civic space needs to be ensured to promote inclusive partnership where civil society actors can play a key role as an equal partner, and governments need to make more efforts to ensure and provide enabling environment for effective functioning of CSOs in governance process including appropriate and effective funding mechanisms for local advocacy CSOs in Asia.

3 Social security and safety net such as a universal social protection as well as social solidarity enterprises need to be promoted as a way to ensure the basic economic and social rights of the vulnerable people in a society and to tackle widening inequality.

4 Domestic laws and policies that restrict and hinder the international solidarity and cooperation among CSOs in Asia need to be revised in accordance with the principles of international human rights laws and at the same time, internet freedom and internet security need to be ensured.

5 Free and equal access to vaccine should be recognized as a basic right to health and in this regard, intellectual property right of the vaccines should be waived as a way to tackle vaccine inequality and discrimination.

6

More effective communication and coordination among CSOs need to be promoted both domestically and internationally through SDG16+ approach on civic space in the collective response to the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

7

Democratization and inclusive democratic governance is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of the SDGs and participation of the overseas migrants in election process need to be ensured.

8

Citizen-generated data for participatory monitoring, research and advocacy linked to SDGs framework in particular through SDG 16+ approach, needs to be promoted in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and there should be more space at the UN APFSD and HLPF to address civic space issues related to the SDGs.

9

Regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) and South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), as well as G7 and G20 Summits, need to protect and promote civic space and enabling environment for civil society organizations in cooperation with respective governments.

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Transparency and accountability on multilateral and bilateral development cooperation agencies such as the Asia Development Bank (ADB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and other relevant agencies need to be strengthened for effective development cooperation.

We will continue to learn about good practices from other countries and commit ourselves to implement these recommendations through our respective organizations and networks.

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Tokyo Democracy Forum (TDF) 2022 is a joint initiative by the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), Asia Democracy Network (ADN), and Asia Development Alliance (ADA), to defend civic space through mutual dialogues and cross-border cooperation in Asia, and took place virtually for 2 days, as a part of the online conference “HAPIC”, organized by JANIC.

The main objective of the TDF is to increase awareness of shrinking civic space, human rights, and the importance of SDG16+ among CSO leaders, policymakers, governments, academia, and corporations across Asia. The TDF provides a platform for a wider range of stakeholders to share experience on advocacy initiatives, implementation, challenges, and progress with regards to SDGs.

The following topics were addressed as the theme of the sessions.

- State of the SDGs Implementation in Asia through the Voluntary National Review (VNR) with a focus on SDG16+
- Comparison of how Asian CSOs views on civic space, human rights, and democracy have changed after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Challenges, threats and oppressions to civil society organizations and civic space in Asia
- Recommendations to the UN, Regional Organizations and Regional Development Banks, and governments in Asia for defending civic space

Presenters include:

- **Abdul Awal**, Chairperson, Campaign for Good Governance (SUPRO)
- **Arjun Bhattarai**, Secretary General, NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN)
- **James Gomez**, Regional Director, Asia Centre
- **Harshvrat Jaitli**, Chief Executive Officer, Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)
- **Eunji Kim**, Project Researcher, The Korea Center for Sustainable Development (KCSD)
- **Asel Kurmantayeva**, Development Manager, Innovation for Change initiative, Civil Society Development Association (ARGO)
- **Anselmo Lee**, Regional Coordinator, Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development (APSD)
- **Rebecca Malay**, GCAP Philippines Convener, Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)
- **U. Mandkhaitseten**, Executive Director, Centre for Human Rights and Development
- **Nguyen Phuong Linh**, Executive Director, Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSD)
- **Zia ur Rehman**, Chief Executive, AwazCDS-Pakistan
- **Ry Sovanna**, Policy, Legal and Advocacy Manager, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)
- **Gopal Krishna Siwakoti**, President, INHURED International
- **Shamshod Yunusov**, Program manager, Nationwide Movement "Yuksalish"

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