

# CONCEPT NOTE

Asia and the Pacific Youth Symposium 2024  
Online | Zoom Virtual Conference  
17-19 April 2024

*Theme: Weaving the Future of Asia and the Pacific through Inclusive Climate Action*

## I. Asia Pacific Youth Symposium Overview

The 4<sup>th</sup> Asia and the Pacific Youth Symposium (APYS4) is a social dialogue exchange that convenes governments, non-government organizations, youth, and other key stakeholders in development to discuss major and emerging climate issues in the region. These meaningful discussions ultimately revolve around the region's collective efforts to equip youth with the skills to access and create green jobs, encourage youth engagement in policy decisions and making processes, and for young women and girls to shape the Just Transition.

Building on the knowledge and learnings from previous youth events and programming, APYS4 will feature a fully online program composed of workshops and dialogues, which will culminate through the drafting of a Youth Agenda, bringing forward youth voices to the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Board of Governors (AM57) in Tbilisi, Georgia.

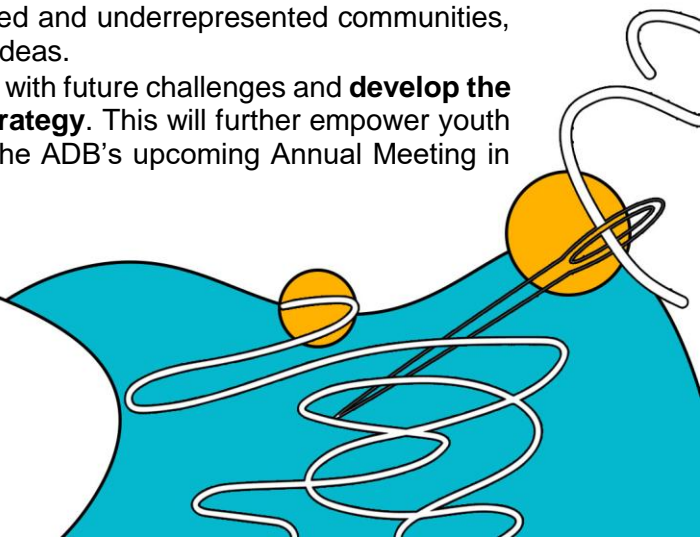
A fully online APYS event will remove barriers to entry, allow for simultaneous translation into multiple languages, and reduce safeguarding risks, facilitating participation from a wide range of Asia and the Pacific youth and a safe space for intergenerational dialogue between youth and adult stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.

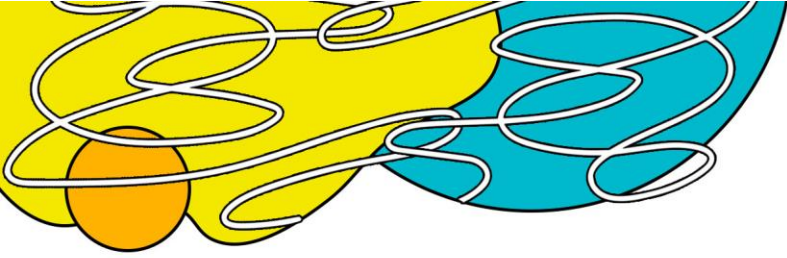
APYS4 also provides opportunities for networking among ADB staff, government representatives, the private sector, the academe and think tanks, civil society, and youth-led or youth-centered organizations as well as fostering their collaboration on shared visions.

## II. Objectives

The objectives of the APYS4 are to:

- **Illustrate and consolidate the contribution of youth** to innovative solutions for tackling climate change, including mobilizing climate financing, aligned with the first and third shifts of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) new operating model.
- Ensure **inclusivity** in our symposium by actively promoting the participation of diverse youth groups, including those from marginalized and underrepresented communities, to foster a rich exchange of perspectives and ideas.
- Build the capacity of youth networks to engage with future challenges and **develop the Youth Agenda further into an actionable strategy**. This will further empower youth voices to effectively present their insights at the ADB's upcoming Annual Meeting in Georgia.





- Provide a multifaceted networking opportunity that bridges generations, sectors, and countries, while also offering youth a **tangible chance to collaborate** directly with international organizations and CSOs. This will also facilitate an impactful exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices, further empowering youth to contribute effectively to societal and environmental solutions.

### III. Background: Youth and Asia and the Pacific

With over 60% of the world's youth population residing in Asia and the Pacific,<sup>1</sup> the region stands at a pivotal crossroads where the involvement of young people is essential for promoting economic growth, fostering social inclusion, and tackling the pressing issue of climate change. Today's younger generation holds the right to significantly shape the policies and decisions of governments, the private sector, and international organizations—decisions that will have a lasting impact on their future.<sup>2</sup> In light of this, the region has seen a wave of youth-led climate activism, influenced by global movements like Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion. These young activists are increasingly visible and vocal, staging strikes, protests, and campaigns to urge action from leaders and policymakers. Their engagement is a testament to their critical role in driving climate policy and championing sustainable practices.

Young individuals are at the forefront of climate action, catalyzing movements across the region and demonstrating a strong commitment to environmental stewardship through high rates of volunteerism and awareness. Their firsthand experiences with the adverse effects of climate change fuel their resolve and innovation.<sup>3</sup> As technical innovators and entrepreneurs, youth are bridging the gap between science and practical solutions, with initiatives highlighted by WeForum illustrating their capacity to drive meaningful change.<sup>4</sup> Their unique perspectives, informed by direct insights into local needs and contexts, enhance the efficiency and sustainability of climate policies and programs, ensuring that these initiatives are deeply rooted in the realities of those most affected.<sup>5</sup> This independence also empowers them to challenge existing norms and advocate for transformative policies, embodying a critical 'thinking and working politically' approach to climate action.<sup>6</sup> Through these efforts, the youth of the Asia and the Pacific region are not just participants in the fight against climate change but are leading the charge towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

<sup>1</sup> ESCAP. (2013). "Regional Overview: Youth in Asia and Pacific" <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-regional-escap.pdf>

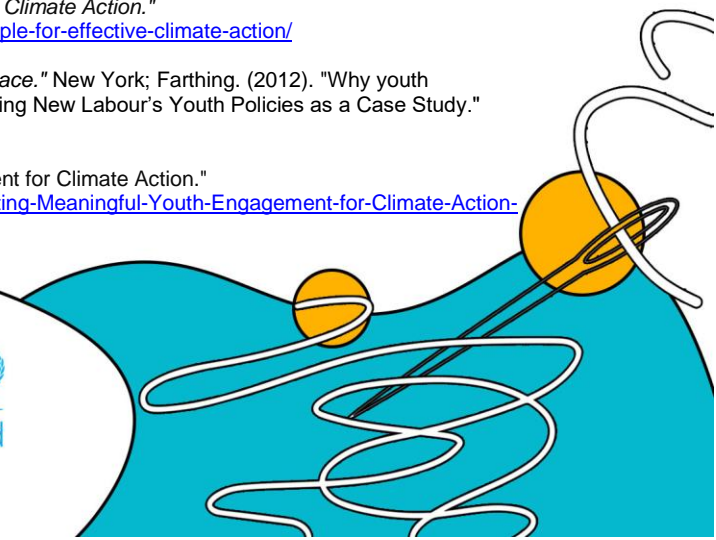
<sup>2</sup> See the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). Every person under the age of 18 has the right to participate in the decision-making processes that impact them, including through participation in public forums.

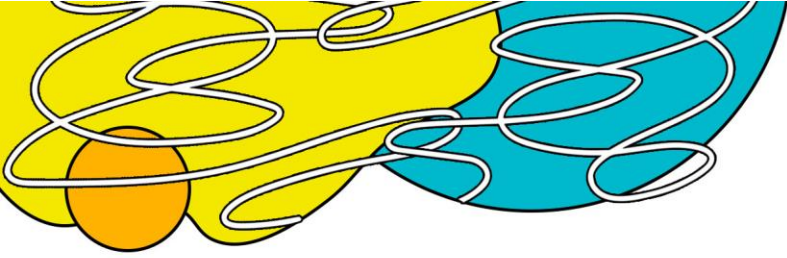
<sup>3</sup> Save the Children. (2020). "Guardians of the Planet: Asia Pacific Children and Youth Voices on Climate Crisis and Disaster Risk Reduction." <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/18248/pdf/w510-0012-015.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> WeForum. (2021). "Three Ways to Engage Young People for Effective Climate Action." <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/3-ways-to-engage-young-people-for-effective-climate-action/>

<sup>5</sup> UNDP. (2016). "Global Programme for Sustainable Development & Peace." New York; Farthing. (2012). "Why youth participation? Some justifications and critiques of youth participation. Using New Labour's Youth Policies as a Case Study." <http://www.participationworks.org.uk>

<sup>6</sup> UNDP. (2022). "Aiming Higher: Elevating Meaningful Youth Engagement for Climate Action." <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-05/UNDP-Elevating-Meaningful-Youth-Engagement-for-Climate-Action-2.pdf>

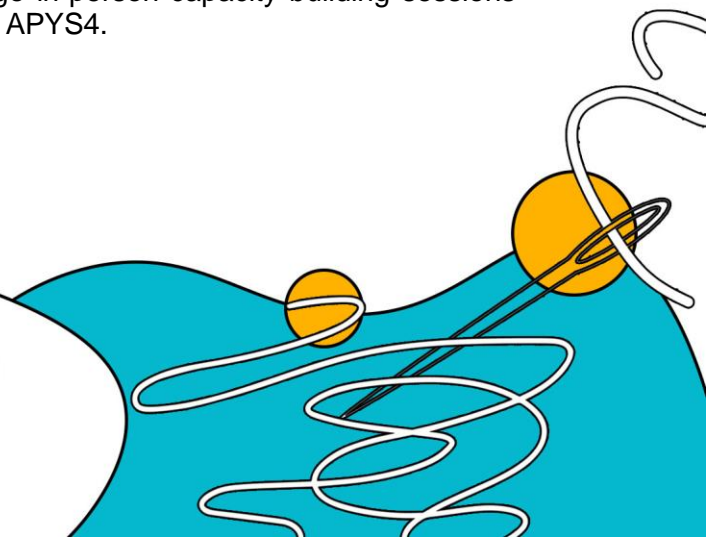


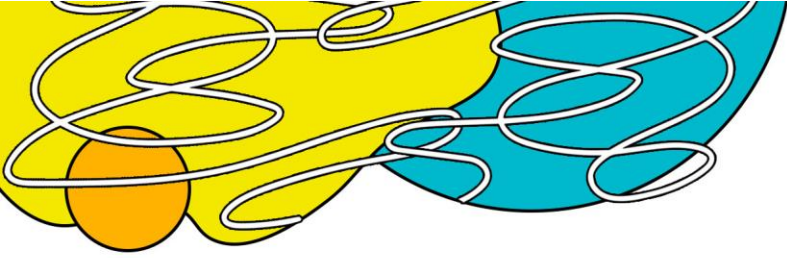


Recognizing the vital role of youth in climate action, it is crucial to engage them in developing policies for a sustainable future. Their deep understanding of community socioeconomics and technological prowess makes them key to climate resilience. As Asia and the Pacific faces the climate crisis, the fresh ideas and innovative approaches of young people are indispensable. This approach ensures inclusive climate action and empowers the generation that will bear the brunt of today's decisions. Through investments in renewable energy, sustainable transportation, and leveraging indigenous knowledge, youth initiatives are leading the shift towards a low-carbon economy. These efforts are pivotal in mitigating climate change and reshaping the economic landscape for a more equitable Asia-Pacific region. In this context, the ADB is tapping into youth innovation through its Strategy 2030, aiming for an inclusive society ready for climate challenges. As it nears its 60th anniversary, the ADB commits to making 75% of its operations climate-aligned by 2030 and plans to boost its funding by \$100 billion over the next decade to address the region's policy and development challenges.

#### IV. Activities

- **APYS Knowledge Workshops:** To showcase the development of youth-led initiatives in thematic areas, APYS will be conducting knowledge sessions to provide a better understanding of how youth are innovating around climate change.
- **Youth Agenda.** To provide recommendations to different stakeholders on what youth envisions as we fight climate change. Through insights gathered from these workshops, a youth agenda within three (3) topics related to the Role of Young Women in Just Transition, Climate Activism and Civic Spaces, and Green Skills will be developed to be shared with key actors in development (i.e., government, regional bodies, CSOs) during AM57.
- **Capacity building** To provide participants with an immersive platform for climate advocacy, offering avenues for acquiring expertise in policy formulation, strategic advocacy, community mobilization, entrepreneurial innovation in adaptation, collaborative networking, meticulous monitoring, and cultural sensitivity.
- **Youth Giving Back to Youth during the ADB Annual Meeting:** To provide a space for intergenerational dialogue, youth ambassadors are invited as resource speakers and correspondents in the digital space for other youth. Through their unique approach and command of the digital space, youth will utilize social media to streamline and share access to discussions on key development issues to foster a wider discussion across the region.
- **Participation Hubs:** To cater to a wider audience. APYS4 will be hosting two main participation hubs in Manila, Philippines and Kathmandu, Nepal. Young people engaged in the participation hubs will undergo in-person capacity building sessions and participate as live audience for the virtual APYS4.





## V. Event Format, Structure, and Inclusivity

APYS4 will follow a virtual format conducted over three (3) days via Zoom, an online conferencing platform. The symposium is co-convened by the ADB, Plan International, and UNICEF where each co-convenor will lead on facilitating specific topics per day taking a deeper dive into the following themes:

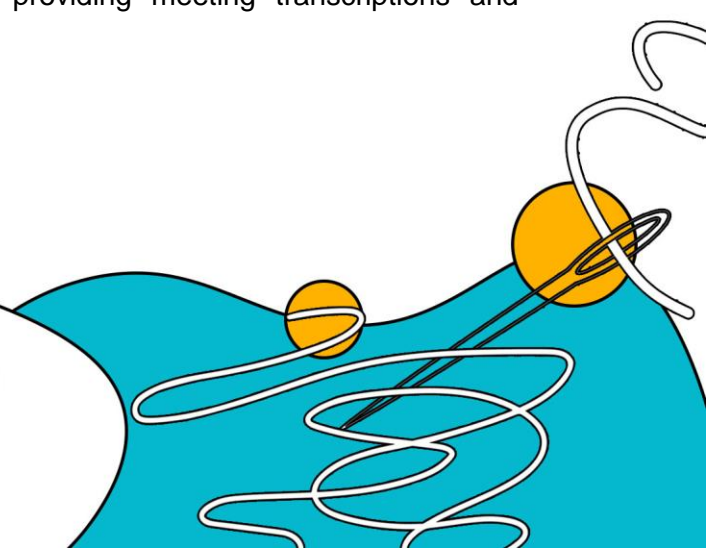
- **Green Skills and Green Jobs (UNICEF):** These workshops will explore innovative approaches to environmental stewardship and how young people shape the workforce of tomorrow. Participants will gain knowledge of the realm of eco-conscious professions, more sustainable career landscapes, and the latest green skills, unveiling opportunities for personal growth and positive global impact.
- **Climate Activism and Civic Spaces (Plan International):** These workshops will explore how youth lead in climate activism and shaping civic space. Delve into inspiring examples of youth-driven initiatives, discover effective strategies for grassroots activism, and explore avenues for civic engagement in the fight against climate change.
- **Gender Transformation: Young Women and Girls in a Just Transition (Asian Development Bank):** These workshops will explore the critical role of young women and girls in advocating for a fair and sustainable transition to a more just society. Delve into discussions on empowering young women and girls to lead environmental initiatives, promoting gender equality in climate action, and fostering inclusive policies for a brighter future.

APYS4 is a safe, conducive, and enabling space for everyone. The co-convenors are committed to making the event as inclusive and diverse as possible by ensuring the following measures are in place:

**Speaker and Participant Sensitization:** Ensuring that speakers and participants are sensitized to diverse perspectives and have a deeper understanding of how to strengthen and respect a safe space that fosters inclusive dialogue.

**Linguistic Inclusivity:** Providing simultaneous translation to multiple languages, accommodating diverse linguistic backgrounds, and enhancing accessibility for a wider audience. Watch parties are also to be organized in selected countries to cater to young people who have limited access to the internet.

**Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities:** Implementing measures to make the online event accessible for persons with disabilities by providing meeting transcriptions and simultaneous sign language interpretation.



## VI. Event Schedule

### Your APYS4 Journey

**Towards a Greener Tomorrow:  
Green Skills and Green Jobs with  
Young People in Asia and the Pacific**  
with UNICEF



**Wednesday, 17 April 2024**  
4:00–6:30 p.m GMT+8

**Youth Leadership  
in Climate Policy Advocacy:  
Local to Global level**  
with Plan International



**Thursday, 18 April 2024**  
4:00–6:00 p.m GMT+8

**Bridging the Gap: Young Women  
as Catalysts of Just Transition**  
with the ADB



**Friday, 19 April 2024**  
4:00–6:30 p.m. GMT+8

## VII. Knowledge Event Participants

APYS4 will convene key stakeholders working with and for young people in the region such as:

- Young people engaged in initiatives and policymaking, young professionals with expertise on the topic, and youth from different program areas related to meaningful youth engagement;
- Government representatives from ministries, departments, and local government units that work or have a stake in integrating youth and are interested to learn about youth insights and views on how to meaningfully engage youth in their field or initiatives; and
- Academia and think-tank researchers, policy writers, and thought leaders who are working on studies related to youth engagement, human capital development, resiliency, and/or inclusivity related to young people; and
- Representatives from multilateral organizations, intergovernmental organizations, CSOs, and the private sector with programs that contribute to a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific.