

Asia Regional Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development

Kathmandu, Nepal

24 – 26 September 2019

Day 1:

24 September 2019

#Summary

Policy Forum on Development (PFD) held its Asia Regional Meeting from 24 - 26 September 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Around 80 representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), local authorities (LAs) and EU institutions gathered to discuss progress made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The meeting was particularly relevant with CSO-LA cooperation increasing at local levels and increased commitment to the attainment of SDGs within deadline. Additionally, participants were updated on the joint Communication (European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) 'Connecting Europe and Asia- Building blocks for an EU Strategy' (19.09.18) and how it provides the basis for an EU strategy on connecting Europe and Asia. Areas for cooperation with the EU to support the global agenda and further promote an enabling environment for the achievement of the SDGs were explored. The meeting demonstrated regional commitment to the global agenda, highlighted regional and national level progress toward SDG achievement, looked specifically at local level implementation of SDGs and highlighted concrete measures taken to address structural barriers to SDG commitment. The meeting discussed architecture for SDG implementation, highlighted key challenges faced in the region, and focused on solutions for just and sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

#Welcome remarks

Introduction and the PFD

Antonio Fernandez de Velasco, European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development started the meeting.

Bernadia Tjandradewi, Secretary General of United Cities and Local Government Asia welcomed all participants to Kathmandu. She said Nepal had shown good progress in terms of local governance, advocacy by civil society groups and associations and said that the country had made powerful and key governmental changes. Speaking of the Asian region, she said that there were challenges and there was need to accelerate the work towards SDG goals through CSOs, local governments and local actions. She called for the region to move forward, formulate ambitious plans and actions and complete them for the happiness and well-being of the society.

Aaron Ceradoy, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, welcomed the various opportunities that the PFD gives to CSOs and called for the sharing of work and issues in ways that are truly responsive. Economic, political, social problems had created vulnerabilities, he said and that the trampling of rights and plundering of resources were evident challenges that had to be faced.

Global to regional practices needed to commit towards the achievement of development goals, he said. He said that he had immigration related background and stated that migration and forced displacement are development concerns. He asked CSO and LA representatives to stand up. Together they chanted “development justice, now.” He cited the knowledge and experience on the ground that could lead to a “Future that our people want” through enhanced partnerships that forge just and equal societies. “Hear us, speak with us, work with us,” he said.

HE Veronica Cody, Ambassador, European Union Delegation to Nepal, was invited to speak next. She welcomed participants to the Asia Regional Meeting. Citing huge strides towards the millennium goals and Sustainable Development Goals, Her Excellency said that in Nepal the, “SDGs are part of the DNA of national systems; in fact, they are now integrated into the national planning, budgeting and costing processes.” She pointed out that Nepal had elected 42% women representatives at the local level and 32% women representatives in the parliament. “The PFD is a unique space to discuss EU development policy and progress toward the global agenda and sustainable development goals,” she said. There was wide representation of the civil society, local government, European Union member states, national governments from the region, the European External Action Service and European Commission at the Asia regional meeting, therefore, “This dialogue and partnership could help improve our work to leave no one behind as we advance toward our shared development goals,” Her Excellency said. According to Ambassador Cody, key issues and debates in Europe – climate change, migration, youth unemployment and opportunities, human rights and the struggle for gender equality also resonated in Asia and partnerships were necessary as responses and actions were interlinked. Referring to the 2030 Agenda, she said that Europe had elaborated its understanding of and commitment toward strengthened partnership in its global strategy, in its plan for implementation of the SDGs – through the EU Consensus – and in its guidance to staff. She referred to the ongoing UN meeting in New York that is setting a vision for the next 10 years, the contexts of EU policy agenda, and the result of the elections in Europe. Saying that the problems are shared responsibility again she said that they can be addressed only in partnership. “Strengthen partnership and share solutions and coping mechanisms as local implementation is taking place in fragile contexts that need to overcome structural barriers” she ended, calling for a focus on working together for equal opportunities.

#Session 1: Understanding the Policy Forum on Development

Claire Frost, Program Manager, Commonwealth Local Government Forum and PFD Task Team Member, provided an overview of the PFD and how it works after a video “PFD: Seeking Solutions for the 2030 Agenda” was shown. She called for better understanding of what is happening at the grassroots, dialogue and trust building between different partners. Established in 2013 by the European Commission, The Policy Forum on Development (PFD) follows structured dialogue involving more than 700 civil society organizations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) with the aim to improve the effectiveness of EU development cooperation. Maintaining an open and regular dialogue with civil society, the idea is to create a trust-building mechanism and to provide a permanent space for multi-stakeholder dialogue on development policies. The 2030 Agenda and the new European Consensus on Development underline the need to strengthen partnership, uphold the principles of aid effectiveness, recognize both civil society, and associations of local authorities as essential development actors to achieve shared development goals. Co-chaired by the Director General of the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development at the European Commission together with one civil society and one local government representative, PFD includes associations of local authorities and civil society organizations (NGOs, trade unions, cooperatives, and professional and business associations) at the global and European Union level as well as from the four main EU cooperation areas; representatives of EU Member States; and EU institutions (the European Commission; European Parliament, European External Action Service; European Economic

and Social Committee; European Committee of the Regions; and the European Investment Bank). Members debate development issues and how the EU is responding to them. Members meet at least twice a year – one global meeting takes place in Brussels and a regional meeting outside the European Union. The PFD is conceived as a continuous dialogue to bring the realities on the ground to the policymakers. Members collect positions from their constituents and discuss these during the sessions and the results are reported back. The PFD's added value is undoubtedly the vast knowledge, reach and complementarities of its different members. Through the exchanges, members are able to engage in collective learning; influence policy outcomes; share, develop and exchange good practices; reach out to their own constituencies; and network with other organizations worldwide. Fifteen PFD members are nominated for two-year renewable mandates from each region plus representatives of the EC. Members are a CSO or LA regional or global network working on international cooperation and development registered in the EU Transparency Register; they are accountable to their constituents and capable of collecting their viewpoints; representative of a wide membership; experienced in policy areas relevant to the PFD and implementation of current EU policies and able to disseminate PFD communications via established feedback mechanisms.

After the introduction to the PFD, its task team was introduced and **Antonio Fernandez de Velasco**, European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, said that “the PFD is a gold mine and together we can do much more.” PFD is not only about meetings but also policy briefs and other outputs, he added. “Findings show that 49% of the partnerships formed here are long standing and 95% are expected to remain relevant, fostering dialogue and influencing policies,” he said.

The European Union and Asia

#Session 2: The EU Communication “Connecting Europe and Asia”

Peter Frisch, Senior Political Analyst, European External Action Service, Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst, presented the new EU Communication. “Connectivity is a new approach that brings together different sectors and improves our capacity to react,” he said. Think out of the box, in the Agenda 2030 way that is interconnected and takes on a new dimension of relationship, he said. Historical ties, core foreign policy objectives, trade and commercial interests, fundamental values, and living up to global commitments drive the EU foreign policy and international cooperation, he said. The world is changing and the environment has become radically different, and there was need to think global, multilateral, and sustainable. Interests and values influenced relations and a new or updated EU global strategy has been formed. Connection applies to everybody, he stressed. With domestic drivers of foreign policy and bilateralism becoming stronger, collective action seemed more necessary from EU institutions and member states. Mr. Frisch added that it is a more contested world where geopolitics is back and there are different governance and socioeconomic models. Fake news is diminishing democratic accountability and multilateralism is facing more challenges, he said. He briefed the meeting on the new EU global and regional policy frameworks that provide inspiration, guidance and political/policy direction for European External Relations. The Global Goals and Agenda 2030 had gone “well beyond poverty to peace/justice. They are also about prosperity and an environment structured around the 5 P’s: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace & Partnership,” he said. Promoting mutual interests in relation to the SDGs, the universal agenda, multilateralism, partnerships are applicable to all countries. EUGS was an innovation that recognized an existential crisis and Union under threat; principled pragmatism that reconciles both values and interests; calls for a more comprehensive approach to external action; forms stronger links between diplomatic, trade, development and security policies; and financing instruments are “an important element in

the toolbox the EU has at its disposal for external action to be mobilized in line with agreed political priorities,” he said. EUGS was created when under stress and needed updating and there had been change in consensus from a poverty to global approach. Europe and Asia have 70% of the world population and together contribute 60% of the world GDP, so there can be ambition in the relationship, he said, with the relationship needing to be more strategic while creating a level playing field. “We need to build trust and understanding and respect is very important. We need to learn from each other, be united and strong,” he said concluding that the connectivity strategy could have a huge impact in the world. After the presentation, comments were made and questions were asked from the floor.

Claire Frost of Commonwealth Local Government Forum said that there should be due recognition of local governments and recognition also that CSOs are going to be of special importance while achieving the SDGs.

Mahendra Prasad Yadav, Nepal Trade Union Congress, said that local governments would have to be very active. Everything had to be mainstreamed and there was need to look at national development capacities that can contribute to the 2030 Agenda. There were strong potentials for very active cooperation such as through this forum, he said.

Harutyunyan Haykuhi of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum commented on the need for the human rights approach, elaboration of the new agenda, equality and justice.

Peter Frisch responded that human values crossed borders: national, regional, and all others. Therefore, bilateral agreements were taking place, such as that with Japan, and cross border agreements were taking place, such as that with ASEAN to promote the values imbedded in the European DNA. Efforts were undertaken in ways that are sensitive to social norms. Prevention of war was important: he shared his personal experience “on what it means not to respect human rights,” talking about his own grandfather who died in a concentration camp. Core things such as human values, human rights strategies and forums, mainstreaming of human rights is a part of all EU efforts, he said. Especially working with the civil society, strong attention needs to be provided to human rights. With other ways of thinking coming up, these factors must continue to be a part of the discussions, he said.

Marlene Simeon, European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development, asked about the mechanisms that consult with local and regional governments and plans for making roadmaps. “How will you work with national associations in the region?” she asked and if decentralization would be at the core of these efforts.

Govind Kelkar, Senior Advisor, The Landesa Center for Women’s Land Rights, said that there are negative social norms that need to be addressed and said that development had remained aloof from these norms. If social norms such as the treating people as Dalit are not conducive to social rights, they need to be addressed, she said, and 100% invalidated through the human rights approach.

HE Veronica Cody, Ambassador, European Union Delegation to Nepal, asked about the next steps of the strategy.

Peter Frisch, said decentralization and subsidiarity were important. The national level alone cannot do what can be done at the local level and then at the national and at the European level, he said. Work was needed towards understanding how we can work together. Addressing social norms in connection to human rights, he said that every EU trade agreement had a human rights clause and

that agreements could be suspended if there was a lack of respect for human rights. On the other hand, the African Union had been addressing EU member states' treatment of migrants. "We have to face these situations and address them very openly," he said. There is need to be very attentive as to how the new communication would evolve with Asia, US and other partners. The meeting in Brussels would launch the new EU strategy with Japan as the first country to go forward with this approach. The special ambassador would be following developments on a day to day basis, he said. Dialogue with ASEAN, US, and others were taking place with proposals on the table and a lively exchange with China which has alternative ideas. There would have to be a joint strategy, he said.

Dhabal SJB Rana, Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub Metropolitan City, said that while he saw a lot of policies related to connectivity he asked how disparities between nations would be addressed. He said many problems faced were related to very big gaps among people as well as among states.

Peter Frisch agreed. He said that disparities between nations and people were related to basic human rights. He said that Asia had the right partner in Europe. With 350 billion (1/3) of the EU budget going towards integration of poor regions and efforts aiming to bring the poorest segments up to rich segments. A people to people approach had to be taken and human capital upgraded, he said. He had never seen as much poverty as in terrorist influenced countries in North Africa and that addressing disparities was at the heart of the EU neighborhood policy.

#Session 4: Update on EU Regional Programs in Asia

After the keynote presentation, an update was provided on the EU regional programs in Asia. **Paolo Ciccarelli**, Head of Unit, Local Authorities, Digitalisation, Infrastructures, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission (DEVCO) and **Renato Mele**, Team Leader, Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia Unit, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission, joined the Asian Regional Meeting through video conferencing.

Renato Mele commented that she wished she could be in Nepal but it was not to be and that she was represented by her colleagues physically present at the meeting. She said that in 2018, the EU approach was changed, urban issues were stressed and an integrated program support to Local Authorities in the EU and Around the World was formulated. A call for proposal was launched for joint action, she said. Though a large number of local authorities applied, 127 local authorities had applied from Africa, but there were only 19 concept notes from Asia with only four submitting full proposals and two being financed. She hoped that many more would participate in the Supporting Local Authorities in Asia call for proposal next time, she said.

Paolo Ciccarelli of Local Authorities, Digitalisation, Infrastructures, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission (DEVCO) which works in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and East Asia said that the 5 P's (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace & Partnership) were the focus areas of focus of EU. He shared a PowerPoint presentation on external financing instruments of the EU and pointed out that a sizeable share of resources was spent in Asia. The role of the DEVCO was to take responsibility and define development policy, implement external aid, translate policies into practical aid actions, aid delivery and external representation of the EU, he said. "Establishing cooperation frameworks, DEVCO works at the regional and national level, it seizes opportunities for growth and connectivity, supports environmental and social challenges, and deepens security cooperation," he said. Priorities now were investment; migration and forced displacement; policy dialogue; was supported; and forming closer partnerships seven. He said that there had been a 20% increase in financing with the bulk going to the poorest countries and 13 poor nations. Budget support, SDG contracts, sector reform

performance contracts, state and resilience building contracts were the criteria defined. Reform policy, stable macroeconomic framework, public financial management, transparency and oversight were other criteria involved, he said. He pointed out that investment has been blended and grants are used to attract investments allowing the EU development assistance to leverage impact, support policy reform, sustainably and affordably tap into additional financing, and mitigate risks. IFCA Investment Facility for Central Asia and Asia Investment Facility (AIF) for large-scale infrastructure acted as catalysts for projects that might otherwise not happen, he said.

The floor was then opened for comments and questions.

Abdul Wahab Abu Bakar of Malaysia Employers Federation, said that given the pace of development, there may be challenges replied meeting the single development standard that had been set.

Paolo Ciccarelli replied that the EU supports the policies of partner countries and wants to improve compliance with international standards. DEVCO would not force which standards would apply.

Marlene Simeon of European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development, Engagement of Policy Dialogue in Asia Region asked if a roadmap was being developed or discussed. **Renato Mele** answered that the development policy with Asia featured projects and bilateral development programs. In Cambodia the project modality was used due to structural difficulties and a different program budget line was used. On the other hand, in Afghanistan, Nepal, and Cambodia, the cooperation was integrated. In the future, with a new instrument in place, most probably there would not have to be a specific modality. Support to local authorities would be done through the government with a more important role for associations of local authorities, she said.

Anuya Kuwar of Commonwealth Local Government Forum said that structures and mechanisms of individual countries were different. Therefore, if asked for proposals separately, local authorities would have a difficult time accessing and responding to calls for proposals. He said that perhaps this was the reason only 19 proposals were submitted to the EU call. He asked that alternative approaches be considered.

Renato Mele responded that there had been difficulty in cooperation and that support could be given to local authorities through forums such as the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific, said that the role of national and regional associations had been highlighted and asked if decentralization could be encouraged. She said that Myanmar and Laos do not have such associations and that Cambodia was just setting up such an association. She asked if it would be possible to ask governments to apply through associations.

Renato Mele said that the EU could not impose such restrictions and pointed out the difference between bilateral and diplomatic programs. Human rights and the rule of law could be a reason not to support specific programs therefore bilateral cooperation was negotiated with different country. Saying that "We rely on the work of our colleagues." She added that partnership and policy dialogue in many instances were extended by partners.

Our Host Country Nepal

A closer look at work toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Ovidiu Mic, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Nepal moderated the session involving **Chakrapani Acharya** of the National Planning Commission; **Jitram Lama**, Chairperson of the NGO Federation of Nepal; **Dhawal SJB Rana**, Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub Metropolitan city; and **Maniram Singh Mahat** of the Town Development Fund. The objective of the session was to learn from the experience of Nepal, including past and current challenges and opportunities, and have a better understanding of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country, including priority areas with specific examples.

Ovidiu Mic introduced the session saying that enormous progress had been achieved and the progress sustained in Nepal. There had been positive change in economic development with Nepal being one of the first countries to prepare a baseline survey in the region. A new constitution had been promulgated in the country and a federal system brought into place.

Maniram Singh Mahat of the Town Development Fund said that Nepal had made commendable progress towards achieving SDG goals. It had come up with timely policy documents and stressed that significant financing was needed to achieve all the 17 goals. He pointed out that the Town Development Fund is the only organization to finance local authorities in Nepal. It responds to the huge rise in urban population from 17% of the national population eighteen years ago to 60% of the national population today. "What we do in urban centers decides what happens in the rest of the country," he said. He cited SDG 6, water and sanitation to all people, as an example of success. Only 30% of the population have safe water in Nepal and by 2030 87% will have safe water, he said. He talked about innovations in financing water and sanitation efforts through contribution from the people, local budgets, national budget, and international ADB and World Bank loans and grants. He said that the Town Development Fund, when it was created 30 years back, spent most of its budget completing previous commitments. It created 1000 projects through grants which had no financial accountability. Municipalities now get loans as opposed to grants and this increases their accountability. He thanked the EU for its contributions to Nepal.

Dhawal SJB Rana, Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub Metropolitan City, talked about the roles of central, provincial, and local governments in Nepal. He said responsibility had been transferred to local governments as regards the implementation of SDGs. Altogether 756 local governments and 293 municipalities were acting on them, he said. It is now compulsory to have women representatives in local, provincial and national governments and according to the new constitution of Nepal marginalized such as the Dalits are also a part of the local authorities. Standards of living and health had improved in Nepal and there was a big leap in public accountability, he said with right to information being legalized and budgets earmarking certain percentages to SDG related causes. He added that internal and external audit systems were in place and that the system had evolved to help assist the achievement the SDGs. There are still problems he said, such as that of unemployment, with millions going to the Gulf States, India and other places due to poverty, lack of training, disparity, and lack of opportunity. He said that Nepal had focused on infrastructure development at the present time as the people wanted to see immediate development. Development requires large capital which Nepal lacks, he said. Therefore, infrastructure was the focus so people do not become disenchanted, he said.

Chakrapani Acharya of the National Planning Commission of Nepal commented on financial requirements and said that resources for the Agenda 2030 could come from the government, private

sector, and civil society. He spoke of the formation of a roadmap in Nepal that has incorporated global SDG indicators. He said that they had been linked to Nepal's 5 year, 10 year, and 15 year plans. Nepal hoped to work towards the SDGs by 2025 using the next five years (until 2030) to balance achievements and put in extra effort into areas that needed further work, he said. Different committees are working on governance, agriculture, employment and other issues while implementing, monitoring and evaluating SDG progress, he said. Economic prosperity, universal health coverage, and social security were a part of Nepal's vision and Agenda 2030. 32 major goals were targeted by the national development framework using SDG related indicators stated with national budgeting incorporating SDGs. He pointed towards game changer projects that have large impact, model guidelines, and grants targeting provinces and municipalities lagging far behind among other efforts going on to achieve the SDGs.

Jitram Lama, Chairperson, NGO Federation of Nepal, said that the federation was active at the local, provincial, and national levels in all 77 districts of the country. "Nepal is home to a vibrant civil society organization," he said. Different development organizations in Nepal work with the civil society and civil society networks are active in agriculture, Dalit, economic, labor, and other sectors, he said. He added that civil society is represented at the local to national levels as members of committees within local authorities working on different issues including politics, human rights, and peace. He said 61% of elected representatives had civil society backgrounds and that the civil society in Nepal worked very closely with the government of Nepal. He said the PFD could help Nepal achieve the SDGs by working with the civil society in the country. He pointed out that all seven provinces in the country have provincial level SDG forums. At the end, he shared publications, translations and other material that the NGO Federation had published.

After their sharing, panelists responded to comments and questions from the floor:

Wazed Feroj, Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum, said that Bangladesh issued loans, not grants to municipalities. He wanted to know about the practice in Nepal.

Kedar Bhattarai of Environmental Services Nepal said that Nepal government has to improve inclusive implementation with better engagement with the civil society. Transparency and consultation was limited to a few civil society groups that had access. He raised concern as only nice things had been said. He asked if the government would take into matter the information and data provided by civil society organizations when forming policies and taking action.

Meena Pokharel, Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Limited, said that the cooperative sector also contributed to wards the achievement of SDGs in Nepal and that the government had not recognized the financial contributions of the cooperative sector adequately.

Hansong Liu of China Enterprise Confederation said that the National Planning Commission could take a leading role in rural development and SME development. New technologies like Artificial Intelligence could be looked at. "Do you have a 5-year, 7-year, or a long term plan to ensure SME development?" she asked.

Sudarshan Subedi, Koshish National Mental Health Self Help Organization, Nepal, said that he was proud of the psychosocial coverage provided by the new constitution of Nepal. He said 12 acts had been passed to address the psychosocial sector and policy guidelines put in place. However, while 4322 people died by suicide in 2016, the number rose to 5360 in 2018. "16 people are dying each day in Nepal by suicide and in 10 years, 100,000 lives will have been lost," he said. He asked was being done to address this. He also pointed out that there was no awareness related to the SDGs at

the local level and roads and infrastructure were being invested in with very little being done in terms of human development. “How will you address this situation?” he asked.

Esther Penunia, Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development, talked about the Nepal agriculture coalition and the nation’s agriculture development strategy. She said the farming sector needed to be addressed more prominently. Even in agriculture based countries, “farmers are the poorest and the hungriest,” she said and that farmer women and farmer youth had to be more involved. 2014 to 2023 had been declared the Family Farming Decade, she said, and wanted Nepal to continue its work and commitment to this sector.

Chakrapani Acharya, National Planning Commission, said Nepal Vision 2043 specifically addressed the SME sector. Periodic plans related to SMEs had been formulated and separate chapters formed for SMEs, industry, agriculture, and tourism. The 25 year plan aimed to generate more employment from SMEs and guidelines for localized capacity development had been formed.

Dhabal SJB Rana, Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub Metropolitan city, said that Nepal came out of insecurity and conflict recently and that it did not even have local governments. A new constitution has been promulgated, elections have taken place, and the aspiration of the people was very high. Infrastructure development, roads, drains, bus terminals were expected by the people and local governments had prioritized infrastructure accordingly. However social inclusion, needs of the disabled are not sidelined even though local governments are found lacking. He said that all local government buildings are required to be disabled friendly. The budgetary process makes sure that there is inclusion of such diverse issues through a 7-step process.

After the comments and questions, the panelists were asked if they had recommendations to make to the EU.

- **Dhawal S.J.B. Rana**, Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub Metropolitan City, said most INGOs and governments support human resource development in Nepal. He asked that Nepal also be supported through micro development projects that increase employment and economic development. He appealed for direct implementation of game changing projects.
- **Maniram Singh Mahat** of the Town Development Fund said that municipalities were in transition. Central government secretaries were being asked to go to the provinces under the new decentralized structure. He hoped that qualified human resource would be available also at the local level such as engineers, health workers and educators. Qualified human resource is a basic need, he said.
- **Jitram Lama**, Chairperson, NGO Federation of Nepal, said the SDGs are necessary to achieve a peaceful and sustainable world. He asked for the localization of aid in manners that respond to local cultures, norms and values. Economic, social, and other development is also necessary while we concentrate on infrastructure development, he said.
- **Chakrapani Acharya** of the National Planning Commission called for the enhancement of the private sector, growth of capacity, economic progress, more employment and sustainability of efforts.

The session was concluded with **Antonio Fernandez de Velasco**, European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, pointing out and regretting that there were no women on the panel due to an unexpected circumstance.

How Asia is Faring

Regional Progress towards the Global Development Agenda

The session “How Asia is faring” was moderated by **Mags Catindig**, Program Manager, Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas. **Katinka Weinberger**, Chief, Environment and Development Policy, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; **Wardarina**, Programme Officer, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development; **Bernadia Tjandradewi**, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific; and **Sita Sumrit**, Assistant Director and Head of Poverty Eradication and Gender, Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were on the all women panel.

Katinka Weinberger said that the current rate of progress none of the goals would be achieved and there would be regression in some SDGs areas. There is lack of progress despite national structures being built and in one way or another most countries setting up separate bodies to monitor SDGs with follow-up and review being made stronger. Eight more countries were doing Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) with the quality of reviews improving. However, participation and inclusion of voices was going down with civil society participation in four countries closed and narrowed in four more. 70% of women and girls still faced gender based violence and extreme levels of inequality and land rights of indigenous communities were not looked at. She ended in a more hopeful tone pointing out that while there were challenges, there are also positives. She said that a process of identifying nuggets of success – and who, what, and why these case studies were doing so well – was going on so they could set examples for others to follow.

Sita Sumrit, Assistant Director and Head of Poverty Eradication and Gender, Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that there was a clear convergence between SDGs and ASEAN. Clear efforts had been made to ally the region’s development plans with the SDGs, she said. While ASEAN doesn’t have the mandate to implement at national or local levels, she said the region is doing well in many areas and that poverty eradication had been achieved with full access to basic education and health services. In terms of equality, however, the region lagged behind, she said, within the country and amongst member countries. The region was also struggling with concentrated efforts to mitigate climate change and disaster actions. Altogether five areas had been identified for focus and global mandates were being translated into local mandates to complement poverty eradication, connectivity and infrastructure. She noted that ASEAN had worked with the EU, including in areas of collaboration and dialogue. Capacity building – related to achievement of SDGs – was required at the local level so that CSOs and LAs did not feel that the goals are being parachuted on them. Inclusive innovation is the new way of partnering and doing things, sharing data and learning.

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific, commented on how CSOs and LAs are coping with the SDGs. She said that the relationship between governments and civil societies needed review. Governments can be strategic, she said, and take the bottom up or the top down approach. Local governments could listen to citizens and feed the information to the national level. A framework could be prepared so that everyone works together whether at the global, regional, or national level. She talked about economic, social, and government pillars of ASEAN and how United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific had become the first association to be aggregated by ASEAN. She pointed to the need for associations and similar organizations to consolidate among themselves and said that United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific was working with associations in the region. She said the reason why local governments

do not work together is because there are no mechanisms in place or such mechanisms are not structured. She stressed the need for local governments to work together and for the quality of such interactions to improve. She talked about voluntary reviews of cities and that three cities had been developing such reviews in Japan. Successes like this would inspire other local governments and help them understand improved status and challenges. Despite being very committed, she said, the challenges were huge.

Wardarina, Programme Officer, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, spoke on the need to show actual realities in relation to SDG progress and issues. She said that the economic model of governance is not working for women, indigenous people and the marginalized. She presented Development Gestures in the Asia Pacific and said that it shows equality of power and wealth between rich and poor, women and children. The Asia Pacific Regional Society has 17 constituencies working on nine major issues as well as on social and community enterprise, she said. She wanted grassroots communities to engage. She believes that program is a success as others are replicating its processes around the world including in Africa and the US.

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi elaborated financing and ability to access funds. She said local authorities needed more power to generate funds. Local governments have lack of capacity in generating funds though, in Indonesia, there are many opportunities to do so. Local governments need to understand mechanisms such as government bonds and they should compare themselves to the stock exchange. Speaking of challenges, she pointed out that Cambodia had allocated very little money to manage solid waste. In the mean, in Pakistan, while only a fraction of necessary data was available. She said that management reform is required and though achievements like decrease in turnaround time had been achieved for investors, much more needed to be done.

Wardarina said the “Leave no one behind,” slogan of SDG needs to be looked at as the present system excludes people. Systemic barriers need to be identified and brought down. She said among systemic barriers that had to be addressed were patriarchy and authoritarian approaches. The present system shows off power while normalizing the use of fear she said and expressed concern at the growing attacks on human rights activists over the recent past. She raised the issue of the rising wealth and equality gaps. “Bangladeshi women who make clothes all their lives earn less what a CEO earns in 4 days,” she said with the world’s richest 26 individuals owning as much as the world’s poorest 50%. Something is wrong with the economic model, she stated. She talked about climate change and said that action was urgent as it is believed that there is less than a decade to sort out the situation.

After commentaries by the individual panelists, there were comments from the floor as well as a discussion among the panelists.

Mags Catindig, moderator, said that Wardarina was scratching the surface of issues facing the world.

Katinka Weinberger said a consolidated perspective of what the region thinks needs to be presented at a high level political forum. 2030 Agenda focuses on the national level but the regional level brings information to the global level, she said. Regional gatherings provide a safe space for sharing and discussion and help identify areas for cooperation and participation allowing what happens at the regional level to be taken back to the national level, she said.

Sita Sumrit concluded that more resources were needed. However, financing did not only mean needing more money: there was need to know where the money was going, she said.

Anna Lixi of the European Union delegation said that sessions 8.1a “Sharing pilot initiatives/experiences in the region around CSO-LA cooperation” and 8.1b “SDG implementation in

fragile contexts (including coastal communities)” would be very interesting. We must add fragile countries to the discussion, she said.

Francis Uppi Kim of International Trade Union Confederation – Asia Pacific said that governments lack processes on serious SDGs because they do not have inclusive mechanisms that enable trade unions and civil society organizations to engage in the planning and monitoring implementation of the goals. He said three principles should characterize the VNR process: Transparency, Consultation and Social Dialogue. Too little consultation with too few groups is never enough, he said. Governments cannot choose the few who says only nice and rosy things to talk to. He said trade unions have been left behind and outside of the VNR process in Nepal. He asked if the government was ready to put in place an inclusive and multi-actor body which would include trade unions and civil society organizations to monitor and make an impact assessment of the implementation of the SDGs. He also asked if the government would take into account facts and figures that trade union and civil society organizations are providing, as well as invest in trade unions’ and civil society organizations’ capacities to collect alternative data and take inclusive decisions.

Suphakit Nuntavorakarn of the Healthy Public Policy Foundation, Thailand, said gender equality in Thailand and many countries is not adequate. With no power to implement change or the SDGs, the question was how CSOs could make a difference to gender balance.

A comment was made regarding ASEAN. In many stakeholder engagements, the private sector was missing even as it was seen as a key player. It is not only large industries that contribute to progress. 96% of companies in the region are small so a systematic way of engaging them was important.

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi said that there was a gender goal file in Thailand and that it was cross-cutting. She said a lot of women’s rights organizations can work with the national commission.

Katinka Weinberger said that many efforts are concentrated in one place therefore different levels of governments and constituents need to be integrated and this effort mainstreamed.

Sita Sumrit said there was need to work with the private sector on good governance. The labor sector, the committee on women and others had to be integrated into the ASEAN system.

During the concluding conversation, **Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi** said there was need to compare economic policy vs. human rights to understand SDG progress. **Katinka Weinberger** wanted to have a more positive approach to achieving the SDGs. **Sita Sumrit** said that there had to be a single direction and a yoga like approach. **Wardarina** said that they themselves had to set good examples.

Mags Catindig concluded the session by saying that the region was lagging behind but that they were positive. Systemic barriers exist, she said, and that there were 10 years remaining. “We need to collaborate more and share experiences, financing, and data,” she said.

#Session 6: Interactive session on national progress toward SDGs

An interactive session on national progress towards SDGs took place to engage participants in commenting on challenges, solutions and overall national progress toward the 2030 Agenda and to compare past regional and global PFD meetings in which participants had summarized main challenges, solutions and next steps toward SDG achievement and leaving no one behind. The themes under discussion were:

1. Is there still political commitment to support the 2030 Agenda at national level?

In the survey that was shared before the PFD (approx 35 participants responded to the survey), 40% felt that political commitment to SDG implementation remains strong or very strong in their country. 71% of the respondents said that political support is there. However, there were also many BUTs (attention to SDGs was not high, implementation was not adequate, there was no real budget...). The fading of political support was attributed to:

- contradictions within policy commitments,
- institutions working in silos, and
- political commitments that do not translate into real action.

2. Are SDGs integrated at the national level?

86% of respondents said that SDGs are integrated into national planning and strategies in a number of ways such as national development strategies followed by the uptake of voluntary national reports. Comments were made on the “integration” of the strategy in real policy. Many SDGs have been mentioned, they said, and the SDGs prioritized the most are gender equality, decent work, and climate action. Relatively high use, despite limitations and need for improvement, of voluntary national processes of oversight and reporting on the SDGs was mentioned.

3. Are there effective channels for participation of different actors?

65% felt that there were effective channels for participation, which was inconsistent with the debates where only 40% believed that CSOs advocacy was taken into consideration. 27% said that inclusive partnerships are installed so no one is left behind. 100% considered LAs as not adequately resourced and coordinated to implement the SDGs. 47% said that multi-stakeholders platforms necessary to support SDGs exist.

4. Financial instruments available to support the implementation of the SDGs.

A most challenging aspect for progression and effective implementation of Agenda 2030 is financing. 75% of respondents said there are financial instruments available to support implementation. Most agreed that despite the availability they are not easy to access. In terms of actual sources for funds, national programs, government funding (which is even harder to access), international funding, and regional and local banks were mentioned.

Recommendations were made on how the EU could support the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Asia. Some actions that could be taken were:

- Further support to dialogue between CSOs, LAs and the government.
- Simplification of procedures.
- Empowerment and capacity building of constituencies, particularly local organizations.
- Support the monitoring of implementation of the SDGs at the national level.
- Focus on resilient communities.

- Become more of an equal partner to Asia.
- Give more attention to women and youth.
- Stronger support to EE.

#Conclusion of the day

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific, summarized the day by concluding that the SDGs were behind schedule. However progress was being made. Contributions by CSOs and LAs were shared during the day as well as EU financing mechanisms and insight into the PFD. She looked forward, in particular, to learning more about SDG localization the next day.

Day 2

25 September 2019

#Welcome and recap of day 1

Antonio Fernandez de Velasco, Team leader, Dialogue and Policy, Civil Society, Foundations Unit, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission, briefed the participants on the flow of the program: regional, national, to local and walked the participants through what was to happen on the day. He invited **Aaron Ceradoy** of CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness to review day 1 of the meeting.

A recap of Day 1

Aaron Ceradoy invited the steering group to introduce themselves and the group collectively discussed the drafting of the meeting communique. **Hemanthi Goonasekera** of the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities said that she had learned more about the challenges faced by governments, CSOs, and LAs. The sessions allowed her to think out of the box on partnerships and related issues. **Handika Puteri** of the Communication of Community with Special Needs in Aceh – Young Women Unit spoke about the progress of SDGs saying that all government have shown strong commitment towards achieving the goals. She said that more than 25 countries have reached at least one goal even though challenges are being faced by CSOs and governments in relation to quality, patriarchy, and systematic barriers. She believed that these challenges can be solved by LAs, CSOs and governments by looking at best practices from around the region. **Hemanthi Goonasekera** said that local authorities lacked skills and technical knowhow and said that these were problems that they cannot solve on their own. Many countries required monitoring of the progress being made towards the SDGs, she said. **Julius Cainglet** of the Federation of Free Workers said that PFD is a space where goals, effectiveness, and other issues could be discussed and cross border connections could be made. The Asia Pacific region has a dynamic process to achieve the SDGs, he said, and shared a slide show on the data from by a survey taken with the participants the day before. 71% of participants agreed that there was commitment from governments to implement the 2030 Agenda. 76% said that SDGs are integrated into national development planning and strategies. **Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi**, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific, reported that 40% of participants did not feel that there are effective channels for participation for CSOs in Agenda 2030 in their countries and only 60% felt that CSO and LA advocacy efforts are taken into consideration by their respective nations. She went on to recommend to the EU to support dialogue at the national level to help correct the situation. Comment was made by the steering panel

on the need for the EU to simplify aid application procedures and support to progress monitoring at the national level. There was need to assure that data is reliable, they said, and called for the EU to be an equal partner to Asia.

#Session 7: National progress and voluntary national reporting processes

Progress at the National Level and Voluntary National Reporting

Arunsiri Phothong, Programme Officer, Cooperation Sector, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand, introduced the panel discussion on the national level mechanism for engagement and accountability: the Voluntary National Report (VNR). The session looked at recent SDG national reporting processes in the region as an entry point for multi stakeholder engagement. **Wahyuningsih Darajati**, Senior Planner, Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency, Republic of Indonesia; **Urantsooj Gombosuren**, Chairperson, Centre for Human Rights and Development, Mongolia; and **Cielelito V. Perez**, Center of Women's Resources, Philippines were on the panel.

Wahyuningsih Darajati, Senior Planner, Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency, Republic of Indonesia, gave a presentation on the National Progress and Voluntary Reporting Process in Indonesia. A strong framework is the key for SDG implementation, she said. The government of Indonesia had formed such a framework. SDGs implementation had been accepted as a movement and commitment had been gained from all stakeholders while moving forward. Political will had led to a strong legal basis for the implementation of the SDGs, including a presidential decree. Planning documents had set a clear strategy and included a participative process; set clear and measurable goals; identified funding; assigned responsibilities to ministries; assured monitoring and evaluation were transparent and accountable; and included a communication strategy. The presidential decree was exhaustive and specific and set hierarchies with well-defined roles. Four pillars: social, economic, environmental and governance were set and the SDGs integrated within them. Platforms were prepared so government bodies; the private sector; academia and experts; the civil society; and the media could all participate and contribute within clear partnership principles and a SDG center had been established. 15 private sector associations on different SDG related issues allowed for generation of resources through philanthropy. In order to be inclusive, meetings and consultations were held and data collected systematically. These consultations and gathering of data engaged all stakeholders and led to the preparation of the VNR (voluntary national review) report over a set timeframe of four months, she said.

Urantsooj Gombosuren, Chairperson, Centre for Human Rights and Development, Mongolia, said that Mongolia had put structures and policies in place to achieve the SDGs. Some of these structures were directly under the prime minister and the Mongolia SDG Committee with a variety of policies and strategies were active within narrowed settings and identified indicators. By 2018, 118 indicators had been identified and was being collected by the statistics organization. Civil society organizations were participating in the preparation of the VNR. However, despite all these efforts, SDGs were not included in the Mongolian Development Plan and work had not started in all areas. Therefore, the prime minister had set sub-working groups to define national targets related to the SDGs. Three pillars related to the SDGs had been set but there was progress to be made. While the national development agency had been assigned to work as necessary, there were significant challenges. The national development agency did not have the authority to implement actions; long-, mid-, and short-term policies were not balanced and coherent; there were conflicts in national and local policies such as those related to mining and environment and those related to livelihoods and the private sector. With consultation mechanisms not fine-tuned, Mongolia was unable to address

issues such as education in an inclusive manner because teachers, parents, sector specialists and other stakeholders could not be brought together. Similar problematic situation existed in health, nutrition and other sectors. Urantsooj Gombosuren further added that SDG packets were not yet a part of the work of ministries and their reports did not reflect the progress they had made in terms of SDGs. She said that CSOs did monitor the performance of state organizations, organize volunteer participation, and were involved in other manners but there were no mechanisms for them to be involved in the VNR systematically as meetings with the ministries were one off and called as required.

Cielelito V. Perez, Center of Women's Resources, Philippines, said the government is engaged in workshops and consultations with CSOs while designing and planning roadmaps and preparing reports. But much more needed to be done to make the process inclusive and transparent, she said, as there was a lack of participation by those who were most affected. Some of the challenges for CSOs was a lack of resources to participate in such forums and those critical of the government were not invited to participate even if they had knowledge on the SDGs. She said that it was the right of Filipino CSOs to participate in development planning. The VNR failed to reveal the actual realities of Filipinos in general, she said. The civil society, women, children, and other stakeholders needed a report that reflected ground actuality, she said. She pointed towards human rights violations which was very relevant at the time in the Philippines, as was political killing. "There is no justice and institutions that are supposed to protect the people are ineffective," she reported. Despite these challenges, CSOs were making shadow reports through a series of consultations and participation at the ground level and had submitted these reports to the government. It had to be seen how these reports are being taken by the government, she said pointing to the fact that the Philippine government had submitted VNRs even as democratic space for women, CSOs, human rights activists and organizations, and social connections were shrinking. She appealed for development justice and said that people were being harassed and threatened. "SDGs should allow us to meaningfully engage in development but we are the ones who have been left behind leading for the need to create and innovate our own spaces," she said. The civil society in the Philippines had created a national forum for engagement and held policy forum dialogue inviting governments and policy makers, she said.

Julius Cainglet of the Federation of Free Workers – International Trade Union Confederation, Philippines, said there need to assert what space there is available. He said that dialogue and consultations should lead to a joint trade union paper that had to be submitted to the highest bodies in the SDG process. He said that there were legislations and the questions were how to institutionalize them. Since the SDGs involve the UN and human rights situations in a country, he asked how governments could be serious when human rights were being denied.

Puteri Handika of Communication Forum of Community with Special Needs in Aoah – Young Woman Unit said that alternative methods of data collection were needed. She said that lack of data was a problem faced as a region.

From the floor, a comment was made that research on SDGs faced challenges. The national level report was only discussed in Jakarta and not at the local level and recommended to the Malaysian government to have local VNRs so their feedback can be listened to at the national and regional levels.

Wardarina of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development asked how far the VNR process could be made bottom up and asked how conflicting policies at the national level could be reviewed. She commented that at most indicators were collected voluntarily and weren't in-depth.

Savitri Singh of International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific said cooperatives serve 500 million people and there were 1038 cooperatives in Indonesia that contributed 4% of the national GDP. She said that cooperatives were never invited to VNR related events and they were not reported on by the VNR. She asked if a process was underway to identify the ministry that would give information on cooperatives to the report. She pointed out that there were focal points related to cooperatives in the Philippines, Nepal and Japan.

John Samuel of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia) said the SDG process looked very good. There are SDG plans, monitoring and participation but most of the participation was by government organizations. He mentioned that there is overall good quality in terms of SDG 10 but questioned the performance of SDG 16 and gender equality in the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Pem Tashi of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation commented that implementing the SDGs without the civil society was most challenging.

Wahyuningsih Darajati responded that SDG implementation is very complicated and no one is to be left behind. She said data was very important to achieve this. One part of data collection is professional expertise and that may be missing at the local level. Government aims to collect age, gender, disabilities and other information, she said, and local level capacity is one of the challenges faced. Consultation has not been started yet with local governments regarding VNR. The process requires resources and it is difficult to get a consensus. There is consultation at the national level as well as the regional level regarding a bottom up approach for the next VNR, she said. Structures are in place for national and sub-national processes and the concentration is on indicators with all SDGs not being covered yet. Of the 231 indicators, 86 are being collected in Indonesia. For this year's VNR, in order to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas, grants are being provided to quicken infrastructure, education and other sectors as a policy.

Cielesito V. Perez said that the Pilipino government had repeatedly ignored UN resolutions and the EU, too, had expressed alarm over human rights violations in the country. "We have to see seriousness and sincerity to address the SDGs and achieve development justice," she said. "We cannot talk about development without respect for human rights." She called for meaningful participation in the VNR process by all citizens, especially those marginalized at the local, national and regional levels. She called for engagement of CSOs throughout the process rather than two weeks before the VNR report release. She asked that the inputs provided by civil society be taken into consideration and again reiterated that it was the people's right to participate in public affairs. She objected to "being criminalized, threatened, and being killed."

Urantsooj Gombosuren said that the VNR process in Mongolia was participatory. A national working group, a political forum, and a civil society forum were involved. Meetings were held at the beginning of the VNR process and during the ending stages. There were 100 participants at the beginning representing LAs, CSOs, and six vulnerable groups. Once prepared, the report was presented by the national working group through a one-and-half-day workshop to the drafting group of experts. "It was an honest report," she said, "It was real report reflecting the challenges."

A question was asked as to whether the **HRPF** had fulfilled its role and if it was possible to see what the VNR was going to look like before it was submitted.

Aaron Cedaroy, Coordinator for Migrants and Diaspora Constituency, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, asked if governments were addressing the issues of migrants overseas through the SDGs and if there were plans or mechanisms to address them.

Suphakit Nuntavorakarn of Healthy Public Policy Foundation, Thailand, said that reaching SDG 16 is not only the responsibility of governments. He linked corruption and human rights to governance and said politicians and government officials need to work with anti-corruption mechanisms. He spoke of Vietnam and corruption in the energy and industrial sectors and said EU could support a constructive way of ending corruption such as through alternative reporting.

Kantika Weinberger of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific said there was need to look for opportunities for partnerships cross country and elements of the VNR that could be shared. She said there was an appetite for trade review as well.

Wahyuningsih Darajati said that there was opportunity for cooperation involving the private sector, CSOs, UNDP, government, and other bodies. She said that Indonesia has support from BMZ and GIZ in monitoring the progress of SDGs and the EU was facilitating local authorities in 14 provinces. Training, sharing of the learning process, special passports for SDGs were some ways partnerships operated and there was collaboration also through formal structures, she said.

Urantsooj Gombosuren said Mongolia was keen to participate in the SDGs. She said that the VNR had activated different structures in Mongolia and coalitions had been formed on environment and human rights. CSO positions and partnerships needed to be consolidated, she said, with a joint report to be prepared every year. The VNR will push the government to report and that the initiative was appreciated.

The panelists were invited to make recommendations after addressing comments and questions from the floor.

Urantsooj Gombosuren said that work towards SDGs need to be established soon and structures, mechanisms and policies put in place within each ministry. Consultations can be used to solve problems and ensure participation of all constituents, assure cross-sectoral issues are represented, and participation institutionalized.

Wahyuningsih Darajati said that participation of stakeholders needs to be strengthened and there has to be collaboration with the stakeholders. Partnerships have to be formed and capacity of local governments have to be built so they can contribute to the achievement of SDGs. Information campaigns need to be undertaken so the perspective of stakeholders reaches the people, she said. Subnational committees could submit their reports in manners that increase access to local data and the country needs to align non-state actions with government policy, she said.

Cielelito V. Perez of the Center for Women's Resources, Philippines, said that the civil society had been involved despite all challenges. Sets of guidelines need to be established and reports submitted by the government should be compared to that of previous years for authenticity of information. She asked that the VNR be prepared systematically and collectively.

#Session 8: SDG localization: parallel sessions looking at different aspects of 2030 Agenda implementation

#8.1 "Sharing pilot initiatives/experiences in the region around CSO-LA cooperation" was moderated by **Ziad Abdel Samad**, Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development, to identify existing practices and initiatives that implement SDGs at the local level, look at decentralization, including sharing pilot initiatives/experiences in the region around CSO-LA cooperation. **Govind Kelkar**, Senior Adviser, The Landesa Center for Women's Land Rights; **Gomer Padong**, Director, Philippine Social Enterprise Network; **Nelson Legacion**, City Mayor, City

Government of Naga, Philippines; **Arun Shrestha**, Technical Advisor, Capacity Development Support to Governance, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) were on the panel.

Govind Kelkar, Senior Adviser, The Landesa Center for Women's Land Rights, said that a clean energy effort led by the India's federal government involved state governments, local governments, CSOs, the private sector and Indian women had had resounding success. She said that subsidy had been provided to women to acquire liquid petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders because fuel wood, dung and other burning kept them away from opportunities, took up their time, and impacted their health. 30% of air pollution in India came from cooking, she said, with 86% of rural households relying on firewood for cooking resulting in 1.3 million deaths due to household air pollution. The subsidy was provided to all women irrespective of whether they were married, widowed, single, and otherwise. The scheme offered pregnant women in two districts an extra cylinder and those living near forests two cylinders to discourage wood cutting. The subsidy from the government was deposited in the bank so it could not be sold or otherwise misused. 1600 rupees was provided for each woman with the household having to contribute 1500. In case women did not have cash, 5-7 days of public work was allocated the income of which allowed women to get a cylinder. It has been popular for over three years and there has been no smoke in many kitchens, she said. The goal of 8 million connections was achieved. However, by estimate, while women need 8-9 cylinder refills in a year some were only getting 2-3 refills due to affordability issues, easy access to forest resources, difficult cylinder dispersal related issues, social norms wherein women's time has little value, clean LPG connections not being a priority, along with the belief that food cooked over the woodstove is tastier.

Gomer Padong, Director, Philippine Social Enterprise Network, said that small scale farmers, out of school youth, and women had now become involved in building the local economy. With a growth rate of 6.8%, the Philippines is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, he said. But it has problems related to inclusive growth. Southern Philippines has been lagging behind in the human development index with the area's figures being twice as low as the national average. Supported by the EU and the British Council, the project aimed to contribute a stronger civil society voice and SME development, conflict management, social innovation, and economic development. In the fourth year of implementation, it helped pass the first legislation featuring social entrepreneurship. Local social enterprises in six sectors received grants, four policy dialogues took place with government, CSO, LA, and private sector participation, he said.

Nelson Legacion, Mayor, City Government of Naga, Philippines, provided an example on how civil society organizations and local authorities could work together. The mayor had worked for nine years in the civil society and offered CSO-LA cooperation in Naga City as a good example for others to learn from. He shared a video of Naga City and said the city had a progressive development perspective, functional partnerships, and participation that had resulted in good governance. The bureaucracy, civil society and citizenry are all involved and the perceptions of the poor are also involved, he said. The city was trying to empower the people by continuing NGO accreditation, operating multi-level mechanisms for consultations, conducting referendums on development issues, implementing the empowerment ordinance, and actively engaging the Naga City People's Council. He said the city makes use of social media like Facebook so people can interact directly with the local government. With the Naga City People's Council selecting its own representatives, appointing NGO representatives, and proposing legislations, there was an important role for CSOs to play. People's Budget Ordinance links local plans-budgets to the annual budget he said. Guidelines on evidence-based policymaking and citizen feedback are in place and planning is linked to SDGs. Budgets and plans have to be presented to the people at the department level and the city level with Naga City People's Council calling officials to make presentations before the people. Budget

proposals cannot be passed without first being presented to the people and verified by the council, he said.

Arun Shrestha, Technical Advisor, Capacity Development Support to Governance, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), shared information on the Nepal's judicial committee at the local level. He said that Nepal had a mayor and deputy mayor system in which one had to be male and the other female. 92% deputy mayors are women, he said, and they lead the judicial committees in their local areas. Instead of taking small conflicts to courts, they are addressed by the judicial committee of local authorities. The constitution of Nepal gives local governments the right to make their own laws and regulations and allows LAs to address conflicts. When family or neighborhood disputes occur, CSOs can work as mediators in facilitating the local government judiciary committee, saving time and allowing people who may not have money to go to court to have justice. Deputy mayors sit at judicial committees more as mediators than judges, he said. This practice was particularly helpful for women who may not go to the police or the courts but now access deputy mayors who are nearer and perhaps more familiar. This practice has brought harmony to communities, helped establish peace, and made justice accessible, he said.

Moderator Ziad Abdel Samad asked about partnerships and challenges that were faced and how were these challenges were met. The mayor had shared a governance system with space for NGOs, he asked how civil society organizations could protect their independence during trying times.

Nelson Legacion responded that accreditation is a requirement to assure that organizations related to land, women, and other issues were legitimate. He said that the Naga City People's Council chose its own leaders with no impositions from the city government. He cited a former mayor of Naga who became a secretary of the government and then vice-president. He admitted that there was "a natural aversion" to CSOs but said that the city government considered them allies because eventually they are a major part of the decision making process and they help us get elected.

Govind Kelkar said she doubted things had changed so much. She said women were demanding safety and security and that shrinkage of space for CSOs had become a large issue. This had been going on over the last 2-3 years and the government was not listening to the people, she said. Since the government is following the growth model, inequalities are not being addressed even as economic growth is slowing down. The overall partnership is now challenged, she said, with only knowledge partnership still remaining healthy.

Gomer Padong said that a social enterprise division had been set up within the relevant ministry. After the peace agreement, new leaders were appointed and capacity building of many who had been former rebels was required. That was a key challenge as they were setting up new government and understanding social enterprises. They were taken to different cities and connected to partners in Indonesia, Thailand and other places. This could lead to policies that are needed by the southern region, he said.

Ramesh Shrestha said that in the past CSOs used to have mediators in the community to solve local conflict. As local representatives have come in with tenures of five years and after 2-3 years of training, they may be replaced, it had become a challenge to retain the judicial capacity within local authorities. CSOs have been providing a helping hand and continuity because most political representatives do not have legal backgrounds, he said.

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi said that CSOs operate on a project base and face challenges when it comes to institutionalization. They also are insecure as to continuity of policies and partnerships when there is a political or personnel change in local authority.

Pem Tashi of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation asked how the local level could be further integrated into the national level.

Tanya Cox of European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development was interested in the people. “How do you ensure voices of women and the marginalized are heard? How has growth helped the local economy? And how are the benefits of growth spread?” she asked.

Mohit Dave of International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific wanted to know more about enterprise incubation periods and social enterprise networks as they worked locally with cooperatives, cooperative entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs.

Esther Penunia of Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development asked about CSO and LA cooperation in relation to farmers. She said that it was individuals who work as producers or distributors, therefore, how were farmers’ organizations involved as a social enterprise and what were the effective factors of CSO-LA partnership? She asked.

Wardarina said that she wanted to know more about public-public socio economic partnership as public-private partnership was not working.

Kanwal Shauzab from the National Assembly of Pakistan said that there are seats reserved for youth in Pakistan and wanted to know if there were seats reserved for youth, women and the minority in Nepal.

Kshitij Wagle of Enablement Nepal commented that access to justice was difficult in Nepal with only 15% registered court cases being processed and more than 100,000 stalled. He questioned the use of deputy mayors as heads of judiciary committees by Nepalese local authorities because barely anyone of them had any legal background. The speed of the law was slow as was case registration and collection of evidence.

Shiva Datta Bhandari, Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, said that the judicial committees were very good and that participation of older experienced CSOs was required and capacity building was needed in terms of SDG awareness, monitoring, and reporting.

A participant asked that if capacity building of deputy mayors was required and they headed the judicial committee, what was the validity of their judgments since they had no legal backgrounds. He asked if judicial training was being institutionalized as existing deputy mayors would come to the end of their terms at the end of five years.

Moderator **Ziad Abdel Samad** summarized the questions and invited answers.

Gomer Padong said that a platform had been institutionalized and, even if the project ended, the private sector, CSOs, government platform would drive engagement. With social enterprises being considered private, multi-stakeholder partnerships redistributed the power and wealth being generated, he said. “The poor and the marginalized own the enterprise.” NGO, CSO, incubator, multi-stakeholders were the enterprise with benefits reaching the local level, he said. Social enterprises had grown significantly over the last decade, they were productive, and most were profitable. At the macro level 26% of GDP was achieved by social enterprises with increase in turnover and staff expansion. With cooperatives, private enterprises, partnerships involved and farmers’ groups being an important part of social enterprise, there was need to incorporate, he said.

Govind Kelkar said that multi-pronged sustainability efforts have to be made by the more powerful and the government is more powerful. CSOs and women need to have a voice in these efforts, she said. The clean cooking effort had been effective yet much work remained: women's demand for land and housing rights, to be free from violence, enabling of voices of the marginalized were some areas that she pointed out. India had invoked the death sentence for rapists which mainly feminist groups were against but they had been left out of the conversation as mostly traditionalist voices were being heard. The EU needed to talk about mindsets and attitudes that are against the marginalized, she said.

Nelson Legacion said that an ordinance had been passed in 1995 for sustainable people's empowerment. The City Council was formed and the people's budget embodied the concerns of the ordinary and the marginalized. The city government encourages the people to participate. An ordinance encourages women's participation and the Naga City Council membership features all groups and persuasions. It helps implement women related projects and all its 30 standing committees have women's representation, he said. CSOs had asked for an office and funding to further advocacy and the city government had given them an office and funding, he said. The housing board is in charge of social housing which gives most of the housing to the urban poor. Youth representation in the council was mandated by the national government.

Ramesh Shrestha said that sustainability can still be questioned when it comes to LA's judiciary committees. If the people accepted this model, CSOs could give continuity to them when there was a change of politically appointed deputy mayors. The main thrust at present has been for judiciary committees to act as negotiators and mediators. Questions of validity would arise if they acted as judges while they find more acceptance if they act as a negotiation team. There was need to build the capacity of deputy mayors through training, peer learning, and sharing of good practices. Even though the new structure was just two years old, a tremendous number (30-34 average) of local conflicts that would have ended up in courts were resolved at the locally. Localization of SDGs was very challenging as a new provincial level has been created in Nepal and even at the National Planning Committee level the SDGs are still new. LAs and CSOs have been contributing to all 17 SDGs knowingly or unknowingly, however, he said.

The moderator **Ziad Abdel Samad** thanked everyone and brought the session to an end.

Jazminda Lumang, Secretary General, Asia Pacific Research Network, moderated the session on SDG implementation in fragile contexts. The objective of the session was to identify existing practices and initiatives for implementation of the SDGs at the local level, look at decentralization, including SDG implementation in fragile contexts. **Aaron Cedaroy**, Coordinator for Migrants and Diaspora Constituency, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness; **Maalini Ramalo**, Director, Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas; and **Margarita de la Cruz**, Executive Director, Guiuan Development Foundation were on the panel.

#8.1 The second part of the parallel session, "SDG implementation in fragile contexts," was moderated by **Jazminda Lumang**, Secretary General, Asia Pacific Research Network. **Aaron Cedaroy**, Coordinator for Migrants and Diaspora Constituency, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness; **Maalini Ramalo**, Director, Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas and **Margarita de la Cruz**, Executive Director, Guiuan Development Foundation were the panelists.

Marlene Simeon of European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development said that more than two million people live in fragile countries where armed conflicts were taking place or political situations were volatile.

Aaron Cedaroy, Coordinator for Migrants and Diaspora Constituency, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, shared a migrants' perspective. Most migrants come from Asia and the continent hosts the most migrants as well, he said. Migrants come as refugees, climate refugees, labor migrants, and victims of forced displacement. He said that Asia does not face a crisis of migration like Europe, but migration itself was a crisis in the continent. Lack of human rights and cultural rights have helped create this situation he added with migrants always being in crisis. It appears the end objective of the current system is to maintain migrants as a cheap source of labor, he said.

Maalini Ramalo, Director, Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas, addressed statelessness and human rights in rural areas. She talked about Malaysia and the situation of vulnerable stateless people there. These stateless people came across the border with different or no identification cards and were treated differently. They started to engage with the ministry, shared ideas and sought assistance and now 12,300 stateless people who belong to the Indian community have been placed in a database, she said. While the nationality law has a lot of gaps, being particularly unequal in terms of gender, they have been documented.

Margarita de la Cruz, Executive Director, Guiuan Development Foundation, talked about empowering fishermen in the Philippines and building resilient LAs. She talked about a small island where storm and other natural disasters could impacted fishing families which were very poor and vulnerable. The fragile community is engaged in conserving ocean resources and works to integrate disaster risk management in their local system, she said. Even though LAs did not have enough funds for resilience and disaster reduction it had increased capacities related to resilience the achievement of the SDGs, she said.

Marlene Simeon asked how it was possible to overcome challenges with the help if the Agenda 2030.

Aaron Cedaroy responded that the main concern was that the development agenda consultation on migration appeared to make use of migration as a tool for development. This would lead to systematic transportation of migrant labor and greater fragility, he said. Migrants could be mobilized to bring resources back to the country of their origin and called for their sustainable return. He asked for EE for migrants which, he said, was a concern for host as well as home countries. Migrant workers had to be involved in development discussions, he said, pointing out that they could not vote in their host countries and it was difficult to register them in host countries so they could work legally. In 2016, CSOs of migrants from around the world participated in the UN Summit for migrant worker. Migrants had mobilized and were vocal in policy discussions, he said.

Margarita de la Cruz said that since those involved in fishing were poorer, LAs had allowed exclusive use of municipal waters for fishing families. When natural disasters effect the ecosystem, it is easier for them to recover if they are more diverse. Therefore the fishing families had established marine protected areas and managed them. The effort was project based and depended on the support of other organizations and LAs. However, this effort had made women in fishing communities more independent and there was need for economic opportunities, she said.

Maalini Ramalo said that bureaucratic procedures had to be overcome. Local volunteers were involved and they needed training as a part of the sustainability plan. It is not true that the stateless people are foreigners. With children of the stateless to get citizenships, the use of community based approach, inclusion of statelessness in the election manifesto, linkage to education and economics,

and inter-linkage to SDGs based on the would be really useful, she said, though the government could work on men's inequalities leading to discrimination against men.

Marlene Simeon said that the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda opened some doors that could overcome the challenges.

From the floor it was suggested that global citizenship could help solve the migration challenge. Migration was a development, economic, and social challenge, especially in the case of migration as a forced displacement. However, there was need to identify if the migrant was truly stateless, it was said. Governments sensitive to the human needs of the people would help when there were disasters. An example of Singapore was provided where a migrant center had been established with the help of the government. It contributed to the education of the younger generation with schools being linked to the center. Local social enterprises need to be established to create jobs and migrant workers had to be integrated within the society or returned safely to their homes, it was said.

Chandra Goodrich of ICIMOD said that the people who are left behind are also a part of the migration issue as these are usually women, children and the elderly. Women face more gender based violence and struggle to gain economic independence and skills as they are on their own and often further burdened. She also raised the issue of returnee migrants who face stigma (especially if they were involved in the sex trade).

Aaron Cerody said that migration as an opportunity was very limited though expatriates had better opportunities. He said that migration was a development problem and the issues were common. Even if host countries masked migration with openness, the decision could be made to take advantage of the cheaper labor that they provided.

Impact on the healthcare industry was cited with some overseas workers returning to the Philippines in their 80s or 90s. Economic opportunities and the issues of those left behind also needed to be addressed, it was said.

Margarita de la Cruz said families could be relocated to a safer area and building people's skills and capacity would require funding.

Hansong Liu of China Enterprise Confederation said that there was no licensing of migrant workers.

There were no formal jobs or social security for migrants, it was said, and there was need to ensure that the labor market is truly inclusive.

Maalini Ramalo pointed towards the lack of data and need for discussion by national governments to amend policies which were troublesome. She said learning, identification of best practices, and knowledge sharing were required.

Maalini Ramalo said building resilient communities and integrating the SDGs in policies would help address hunger, poverty, life on land and under water. National governments had to continue engaging with the local level, she said.

Aaron Cerody said there was a data related problem. Host governments and local authorities needed to engage and promote the social involvement of migrants, non-discrimination, and increase access to local services. Home countries had to work with migrant communities and gather good practices. Migration in the European region and how migrants are treated also needed to be looked at. The EU could set an example to the Asian region by promoting migrants' rights, he said.

#8.2 SDG Localization plenary session

Marlene Simeon of European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development and **Ziad Abdel Samad**, Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development, moderated the review of the parallel sessions on SDG localization. Marlene Simeon said that the discussion on fragile contexts had focused on policy making and tackling of challenges such as the migration crisis, environmental hazards, data collection, social inclusion, and CSOs' dependence on external resources leading to difficulty in long term planning and institutionalization. In the end all the SDGs were related, it was said, and questions asked about how to work with those left behind.

According to **Ziad Abdel Samad**, the discussion on sharing pilot solutions highlighted the importance of localization, partnership and the role of local authorities. Perspectives of the civil society, government, CSO and private sector were shared on health, gender, economics, social enterprise, poverty, employment, civil society participation, budgeting and judicial initiatives that address local conflicts through mediation. Success stories that served as good examples of partnerships were shared and their sustainability and ownership discussed, he said. Dependence of civil society on others also came up along with questions on how these success stories can be taken to other places, countries, regions.

Marlene Simeon of European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development said that going level by level – local, national, regional, and to the EU – civil society is pushing and engaging with local governments. Civil society organizations are open to dialogue and national governments involve communities and collaborate with civil society organizations, she said. The civil society is also promoting integration of migrants in local communities, providing them services and non-discriminatory situations while empowering local communities so they can raise their voices. People should be able raise issues in their own lives so they can also solve their own issues and CSOs support that, she said. The EU could help CSOs by keeping open the spaces where exchange of knowledge and best practices take place and that the EU should look at its own migration policy and keep it human rights based, she said.

Abdul Wahab Abu Bakar of Malaysian Employers Federation, asked what could be done better going forward. “We have been hearing what we would like EU and government to do, what can we do as CSOs despite the barriers?” He asked.

Pem Tashi of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation said that one of the things missing in the discussion was the right of children to participate. Child rights education and their meaningful participation is important, she said, citing the Greta Thunberg climate strike and the influence of children. She called for local councils to protect and encourage the participation of children.

Maria Amihan Abueva of Child Rights Coalition Asia raised the issue of undocumented migrants in Thailand. They risk their lives, some may have been forced to migrate, and may do not have documentation making them illegal or refugees. They want to work and destination countries benefit from the cheap labor they provide, she said.

Nelson Legacion said that Naga City had a number of programs for children. Children are directly involved in what the city is doing through the Children's Council, he said. “Welfare and protection of children is addressed on a regular basis and children join city councils and city government though they are still shy in sharing and deliberating with us,” he said.

Savitri Singh said that youth had not been mentioned. She pointed out the needs of women in Nepal left behind by husbands who migrate outside the country for work. She said children and youth cooperatives could be promoted in schools and universities and cited examples in Malaysia and Japan where youth and children earn money to buy books and uniforms and also learn to save.

Antonio Fernandez de Velasco, European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development addressed Mayor **Nelson Legacion** and asked about the possibility of doing the next PFD meeting in Naga city. "Let's go and check Naga City," he said, "The role of citizens in budget monitoring is close to our hearts."

Nelson Legacion replied that the proposal was welcome. "I say yes," he said.

Ziad Abdel Samad, Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development, commented on the budget vision, strategy, and the whole process as well as monitoring.

Susana ErosteGUI Revilla of Union Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Accion Social said participation and structures had been discussed but practice also needed to be addressed. Without accountability and transparency, the picture is not complete, she said.

Cielesito V. Perez of Center of Women's Resources, Philip, gave an example of shrinking spaces for action in the Philippines. Indigenous communities build their own schools because education does not reach their areas and they are facing the closure of such schools, she said. "We are not in competition with governments, we are partners," she stressed.

#9.1 notes [missing/unavailable](#)

#9.2 **Enabling environment plenary**

Update on the situation since the last PFD regional Asia meeting

Based on feedback from pervious PFD meetings, the interactive session attempted to validate what EE factors are current in Asia and discussed mechanisms to create an enabling environment that promotes just, productive, sustainable, and inclusive development. Table participants focused on challenges such as structural barriers, opportunities and concrete ways forward. Outcomes included a list or relevant factors and points on changes needed to enhance the working context to reach the SDGs. The themes addressed were:

- 1) Do CSOs and LAs have the right to undertake their activity free from intrusion or interference to accomplish their proposed objectives?
- 2) Do they have access to funding from national and international sources?
- 3) Are there laws that respect and encourage freedom of association and freedom of expression?

Tanya Cox, Director, European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), moderated the plenary session that reported back from the working groups to clarify challenges and potential concrete solutions for promoting a more enabling environment. On the first question, "Do CSOs and LAs have the right to undertake their activity, free from intrusion or interference, to accomplish their proposed objectives?" She summarized that only nine countries had conducive environments for CSOs to work.

Wardarina of Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development said that there was a concerning situation for CSOs when undertaking activities with ongoing attacks on democratic rights. Threats, imprisonment, killing, using laws to harass (in the case of Thailand the use of the defamation law),

fabricated cases, financial coercion, restrictive laws, limited access to foreign funding, limited government permission for activities were being used. Those who face these threats directly have to learn coping mechanisms, obtain security training, document the situation, lobby, conduct solidarity work with UN agencies and other movements, and support each other, she said. Making a case and filing a complaint with coalitions and learning how grassroots movements are built could help, she said. However, there had been some opening up of governments in some places. Governments are recognizing the role of the CSOs depending on capacity, the issues involved, and the level of access. Working with surface issues was easy, but if governments had to be criticized, there were a lot of problems, she said. Credibility at national and international forums determined the space given to CSOs. The recommendation to the EU was to continue support to CSOs, simplify funding regulations, target human rights offenders, and encourage governments to work with the civil society.

Julius Cainglet of the Federation of Free Workers – International Trade Union Confederation presented data from a survey of participants during the session. 99% of participants said they had access to international funding most of which came in US dollars. Among the challenges faced were changes in governing political parties, leaders such as mayors or governors, and bureaucracy that could impede ongoing work with some new officials even try to stop funding; lack of trust by local authorities when it comes to managing large projects and funds; lack of support to those critical of the government; and corruption. Within CSOs challenges were limited resources; pre-financing problems if there was need bank roll a project; lack of ambition in case of large funds being made available; and difficulty with documentation due to lack of qualified human resource were challenges. Related to donors, the issues faced were donor preference to service related contracts; dependence on international donor funds; donors leading the civil society to do what the donor wants rather than what the community needs; donor preference to hardware over software; use of a few donor “preferred” NGOs and leading to missed opportunities for other CSOs. Some of the solutions suggested were institutional capacity building of CSOs; encouragement of national governments to plan and budget according to the SDGs goals; decentralization and local participation; increase value of collaboration with CSOs; and projects that are need driven rather than donor driven.

Govind Kelkar commented that governments prefer the charity approach rather than the rights approach to CSO work. “Governments have an ‘allergy’ to human rights,” and a defensive attitude, she said. In Thailand, a petition with 50,000 signatures must be submitted to be heard and still it does not mean the government will take action. There was need for dialogue and negotiation between government and the civil society. Taxation had led to people committing suicide, she said, and it is affecting business. Compulsory audits, equality, gender budgeting, maintaining proportion of women in the parliament are talked about but that can still be nominal, she said, with Nepal being presented in positive light in terms of gender rights achievement but women still not being seen. Privacy of human rights defendants needs to be protected, a campaign is required against corruption, there has to be international recognition for human rights defenders, private sector and government need to collaborate particularly on environmental issues she added. Open space has to be created for civil society intervention and the EU could develop a workshop on how to deal with the shrinking space, she said. Inter-country collaboration can help learning from each other and from successes she concluded.

Claire Frost said that while talking about engaging in dialogue, “How much dialogue and where” should be clarified, “nationally or internationally” and how much more at the national level than at the international level. Ministries, civil society, public councils at the local level should be involved. LA and CSO dialogues were taking place at the international level and a culture of collaboration was being established. There is grouping but things are getting better, she said, pointing out that technology is helping conducive dialogue as well as tripartite involvement. Platforms are available

for sharing knowledge and experience while changing perspectives in governments is having an impact on policy and implementation. She pointed out challenges such as lack of capacity for meaningful dialogue, lack of clarity of roles of stakeholders, lack of data, issues chosen selectively based on who is at the table, and feeling that dialogue is not going to help. Her recommendations were to invest in capacity building, create clarity of roles, increase parity of roles, and institutionalize dialogue.

Shiva Dutta Bhandari of the Delegation of European Union to Nepal said that the matter of service delivery contracts or alternatives was a question for EU and general donors to address. The focus of funding has been on advocacy rather than intervention, he said, and explained that the EU sometimes supports hardware projects as requested by CSOs. He asked how collaboration could be enhanced between the civil society and governments. The example of Naga City is interesting, he said, as there were concrete examples.

Suphakit Nuntavorakarn of Healthy Public Policy Foundation said that his work focused on the grassroots level and appreciated the opportunity to be at the meeting. He said no one was behind in terms of SDGs. Despite Agenda 2030, the marginalized would still remain marginalized and he did not find concrete solutions or direct interventions. He asked how these issues could be raised in the declaration, particularly those related to disability and marginalization.

Mian Rajan Sultan Pirzada of Association for Development of Local Governance, Pakistan said the discussions had been productive. SDGs could be achieved and would update the whole system. Achievement of SDG 1 could solve so many problems, he said. Investment in education could do so much good in general and help with economies, understanding of the marginalized, cross cultural differences, religion and so on.

Govind Kelkar responded that there had been critical comments and appreciation too. The meeting repeatedly talked about women and the marginalized and the communique would be mindful of this.

Julius Cainglet said that preference of service delivery over advocacy resulted because it is easier to count the number of condoms delivered rather than measure the effectiveness of political interventions. Collaboration should be important, he said, and pointed out that Naga City may be an exception rather than the rule. He said hardware vs. software, requirements, procedures, reporting are easier with quantifiable outputs.

Wardarina thanked everyone for their effort and consultation and said that that service delivery was easier quantified than advocacy. She wondered how this concern could be put in the draft declaration.

Aaron Ceradoy, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, pointed out that services and advocacy are not at odds with each other and services, too, were required.

Antonio Fernandez de Velasco, European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, said besides recommendations for the EU, recommendations should also address the forum.

#Conclusion of the day

Wardarina summarized the key highlights and takeaways of the day. She said CSO space is shrinking not only in the Philippines, but in other places as well. She said, it was a sad thing to happen when CSOs are making so much progress. There is need for more and stronger collaboration with local governments with local actions needing to be strengthened. Local governments are key to work at the grassroots level and they and the stakeholders know how best to work with them. The government has resources and needs to mobilize the private sector which can come up with schools, colleges, good facilities, airports, roads, and much more. Continuous advocacy and passion to work for the people is the key, she said.

#Session 10: Tackling the climate crisis: advancing environmental justice

Tackling the climate crisis

Advancing Environmental Justice

Antonio Fernandez de Velasco of the European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development began the day by pointing to the screen where frequently used words of days 1 and 2 of the meeting were represented. He walked the participants through the last day of the Asia Regional Meeting.

Tashi Pem, Country Director, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Bhutan, moderated the session on “Tackling the Climate Crisis.” The objective of the session was to look at the impact of climate crisis in the region and how it affects the implementation of global commitments for just, equitable and sustainable development including the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. **Wanun Permpibul**, Executive Director, Climate Watch Thailand; **Ghanshyam Pandey**, Mayor, Tulsipur Sub Metropolitan City, Nepal; **Chuthatip Maneepog**, Project Manager, Earth Foundation; and **David Molden**, Director General, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development were on the panel.

Tashi Pem welcomed the participants, summarized the topics to be discussed and introduced the panelists.

Wanun Permpibul, Executive Director, Climate Watch Thailand, said the current temperature increase of 1 degree Celsius had resulted in typhoons, droughts, floods and other disasters. Rising sea levels, melting glaciers were slower processes, she said. The temperature is set to rise to 2 degrees soon, and “How do we plan for what will happen?” she asked. The biggest challenge of the century were both the slow and the fast changes. The Asia Pacific Region is very vulnerable. She said that it was the rich countries that were causing the climate change with those that are contributing the least to climate change are being impacted the most. “The world is really unfair,” she said. There was a wrong approach to policies and finances with fossil fuels and coal production still being supported and coal fire plants scheduled to increase by the end of Agenda 2030. “Is that sustainable?” she asked as governments and financial institutions of China and Europe continue to invest in coal and other fossil fuels, Adani being one of such investors. Established and new companies are also investing in this sector such as TexHong from Hong Kong investing in Vietnam. Those who were investing in fossil fuels were being looked at closely. But with governments welcoming these investments and supporting infrastructure that transport these fuels, they don’t feel the urgency, she said.

David Molden, Director General, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), said that his organization serves mountains and people in eight countries. 240 million

people live in the region and this vulnerable area is home to 1000 indigenous groups and many fragile environments, he said. Called the Third Pole because of the snow and ice deposit, the area is an asset for Asia as well as the globe. He called the region a hotspot for SDGs as poverty in the hills was 33% higher than in the plains; malnutrition was higher and at 50%; 80% didn't have access to clean fuel for cooking; and the area saw high levels of migration. In a few areas the situation is improving, he said but political and economic power was limited and these isolated people did not have a voice even though what happens in places like Washington DC and Delhi impacted them. He pointed out that temperatures rise faster in the mountains than in the plains. A 1.5 degree change in temperature around the world would be amplified to 2.5 degrees in the mountains and a 2 degree temperature rise would mean a 5 degree rise in the mountains. Even if immediate change was made, the world would lose 80% of the glaciers in the area and the associated water resources. Monsoon patterns would change with intense rainfall and floods followed by droughts, farming systems would need to adapt, disease of lower altitudes would creep up into the mountains. Indigenous women left behind at home by migration would face a harder time. Communities in mountains of Pakistan waiting for water from melted glaciers are now in danger as the glaciers can collapse. They asked, "What can we do about it?" but on their own there's nothing they can do to stop the glaciers from melting. The question is what do we do about it and it's not just money that will help. There is need to work within contexts and countries need to come together to address these issues. Climate change has opened opportunities to collaborate, he said.

Ghanshyam Pandey, Mayor, Tulsipur Sub Metropolitan City, Nepal, said that the impacts of climate crisis has been seen on the ground. Many in the villages and cities face the impacts day by day, he said, with rain being intense with droughts setting in. There have been changes in cultures and economy at the local level. While Nepal does not have much of an impact on climate change, the cost of climate change is high, particularly for women, children, and the elderly. Many things need to be done and strong action taken. The 1.5 to 2 degree Celsius temperature change is taking place due to the actions of developed countries. Villages and towns have to tell the stories of what is happening to them. They also have to try to find solutions to the problems they are facing at the local level. They have to manage their natural resources. Nepal government has placed high priority on sustainable management of forest areas, conserving water and supporting farmers at the national and local levels. Local economies can replace industrial products by local products. Utilizing natural fibers and handmade products can help the local economy. Farmers are already facing scarcity of water therefore, building water reservoirs will result in additional saving of water. Nepal has signed the Paris agreement. The international commitment to raise 100 billion for the environment by 2020 has not happened even as impacts are being seen on the ground at the local level, he said.

Wanun Permpibul said that she had seen glaciers melting in Alaska and spoke of lack of reforestation and a timber industry that was not fully regulated. She called for a real concerted effort as climate change was impacting everybody.

Suphakit Nuntavorakarn of Healthy Public Policy Foundation pointed out that financial markets may be complex and not support institutions that want to divert from fossil fuels but cannot control their financing. He said there was need to understand loopholes and provide incentives to financial markets to make this change.

Ghanshyam Pandey said that reforestation efforts of Nepal show clear achievement. He pointed to the 6% forest land area increase in the country mostly due to community forestry. He called for recognition and reward for these local people who have made this change. He wanted fossil fuel vehicles to be substituted with electrical vehicles with financial investment going this way.

Wahyuningsih Darajati of the Ministry of National Development Planning Agency of the Republic of Indonesia said the indications at the ground level were already there with ice melting in the arctic and temperature increase. Policy had to respond to the situation. Thailand faced strong radiation from the sun and people had to be taught and consulted so they know what they need.

David Molden said that four trillion dollars' worth of wealth was in the rivers to deal with droughts and respond to competition for water.

Chuthatip Maneepog commented that there were many international migrant workers in Thailand employed by medium and small industries especially in coastal areas. She called for the protection of these migrant workers as they were vulnerable. When water levels rise, this will impact medium and small enterprises and unskilled migrant workers. She said that Thailand uses a lot of them and they keep working even if they are sick and don't report their illness as this may impact their short term benefit. "We have to talk about incentives for them though MSE won't benefit," she said. We have to give them e-commerce, technology, and innovation skills as they are insecure because of their lack of skills. New game changing, emerging skills and professions are necessary for these vulnerable workers, she said.

Julius Cainglet added that human rights, new professions, job transitions, and emission free jobs and livelihoods were needed. Sustainable consumption, union workers' rights, recycling of 800 million jobs that are most vulnerable were guarantees that governments should provide, he said.

Wahyuningsih Darajati said that climate change should be fair. With 87% of the people to be impacted in Indonesia, water resources, infrastructure in coastal areas, and other sectors should adapt to climate change.

Esther Penunia of Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development said that, family farmers would be seen as solution providers. Millions of small scale farmers practice climate resilient agriculture and fisheries, she said. Strengthening the family farm with a focus on women farmers will help self-determination.

Chandra Goodrich of ICIMOD commented that migration is increasing in India, Bangladesh and Nepal among women and women are entering new domains and markets dominated by men. They are involved in low paid construction work and now have more ability and skills. However, these women and children also face more violence and there are inadequate mechanisms that they seek help from with spaces still male dominated. There were new possibilities and also vulnerabilities.

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General of Untied Cities and Local Government Asia, called for a just transition for the labor sector, a shift to low carbon economies, and support for marginalized grassroots women who are paid very low.

Sotheara Yoeurng of Cooperation Committee for Cambodia asked how marginalized groups impacted by climate change would be defined. Climate change is local, national, regional, and global, she said. With greedy people, greedy countries, and lawmakers who lack the will or ability to implement the law, how would people gain their rights? She asked.

Chuthatip Maneepog responded by saying that governments use social economic parameters to define marginalized groups impacted by climate change. Their capability to gain assistance from governments and other stakeholders had to be enhanced.

Wanun Permpibul said that the Asia Pacific is not well planned to deal with these impacts and the impact on the marginalized and vulnerable. While it is trying to draw a lot of investment “we are gearing for a critical test and transition.” On the ground these transitions were already on the way, he said and though there are solutions in some of the countries they are not just. A solar farm in the Philippines evicted people from the forest area. Thailand is setting up a smart urban city by getting rid of street vendors who have now lost their livelihoods. The smart city was innovated at the cost of local people and women. Geothermal technologies in Indonesia is placed within a protected area. There is need to balance human rights with environmental rights and solutions have to be socially equitable, he said. Companies are looking for alternatives and new technologies. Geo-engineering like carbon capture, clean coal, capture of carbon di-oxide to store somewhere else may be false solutions and technologies. Solutions are already there, such as renewable energy and the Asia Pacific region has to be careful as climate change is also a human rights issue and it is the obligation of governments to assure these rights, he said.

David Molden said that a just transition was required and crisis could trigger different situations therefore, there was need to work together and form partnerships. “We have good innovative people, is there a way to connect innovation and share knowledge?” he asked saying that floods cross boundaries, as do forests and ecosystems even though countries are not very well integrated. Countries would have to work together on mountain issues such as they have done with ICIMOD’s Kailas project. Scientists of Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan are talking about climate change though it is difficult to work in the region. An arctic council or alpine partnership could be formed as the cost of not cooperating at the country level would be very high. Conventions or policies on mountains should be formed and voices of marginalized people represented at the global stage. Partnership could make the change, he said.

Mahendra Prasad Yadav of Nepal Trade Union Congress said climate change would impact economies and jobs and asked Ghanshyam Pandey, Mayor of Tulsipur, about the large number of factories being built in the valley and his plans for multi-stakeholder engagement.

Ghanshyam Pandey replied that Tulsipur was translating global SDGs at the local level by looking on climate change on a crisis footing and seeking alternatives. Local, provincial and federal governments of Nepal have link their project policies to the SDGs, he said. National Planning Commission classifies projects and their contribution to a specific SDGs. Rigorous participation of the people has to be sought and examples like improving health, reduced child mortality rate from 40 to 0, reduced maternity mortality showed that these effort works. Regarding the factories in the valley, provisions had been introduced to limit emission and dust. Local people had been mobilized, action committees formed, and investment in the cement factory discouraged.

Savitri Singh of International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific said that relationship between agriculture and climate change was complex with fertilizers, pesticides and waste creating carbon emissions. Representatives of farmers needed to promote ethical production and consumption. GIZ was working with agriculture and fishery in Thailand and awareness was very very important, she said. She asked for thoughts on population explosion as “it was a root cause for climate change.” Forests were being destroyed, especially in India to create farmland. There were no more fish in some rivers and lakes due to over fishing. There is need to control population growth, especially in Asia, she said.

David Molden said that mountains faced a different scenario in terms of population growth as people were migrating out of mountain areas. High value mountain products could serve the people and their economies better, he said.

Chuthatip Maneepog commented on the social value of vocational students who went for clean jobs. Parents expected something different from them and expected them to make a decent income. SMEs cannot afford high end technologies so affordable technology was required. Multi-stakeholder planning, processes, capacity, and leadership empowerment was needed for women too, she said.

Kshitij Wagle of Enablement Nepal said that there was great power in youth and children but youth and children are losing interest in nature and spending more time with technical devices such as smart phones and tablets. If they can engage with nature, they will protect what they love, he said. He also said that people in business feel being environmentally friendly is less profitable but the opposite is true so models were needed.

Govind Kelkar said institutional change was required for women and clean energy in mountain areas is required as wood is used as fuel. The Himalayan region had promoted clean cooking. Women had become more involved. But with migration, there were attacks on women also. Women are not considered farmers and they are not owners of land. Until this is changed, it is hard to talk about gender equality, she said.

Cielesito V. Perez of the Center for Women's Resources, Philippines, said that over population was not the problem, the problem was distribution of resources. Sustainable production and distribution was required as a very few control resources and cause climate change.

Ghanshyam Pandey said that the Alternative Energy Center in Nepal had seen the installation of solar power and biogas systems at the local level and improved cooking stoves. Though population had increased in Nepal, forest area had increased similarly. Similarly, the amount of unused arable land is increasing due to migration. He said that 30% of arable land in Nepal is not use therefore, plans were being made to encourage cooperatives and family farmers.

David Molden said that certain things are ingrained in our attitudes and that has to change. When working with women's groups, sometimes they don't listen to women. "We look at our own organization for gender change," gender policies, partnerships, training, and concerted effort could lead to change but it is not easy to take these steps, he said.

Govind Kelkar brought up the negative effects of tourism. In Himanchal Pradesh tourists were said to be responsible for water shortage and high amounts of waste.

Ghanshyam Pandey said that while there is negative impact, Nepal wanted more tourists to come to the country. The government is trying to foster eco-tourism, home stays and local cuisines so benefits could go to the local level.

David Molden spoke of the eco-tourist and more and more youth going to the mountains. "That will help us," he said. "Let's do it better."

Ghanshyam Pandey spoke of the youth parliament and youth participation in policy dialogue at school and ward levels. He cited the Clean Tulsipur Campaign as a successful example of how young people could make a tangible contribution.

Pem Tashi, moderator, called for greater human rights that ensured the participation rights of the marginalized.

Chuthatip Maneepog said that it is not just the large scale and the rich who need to take responsibility for the vulnerable. Vulnerable people need to participate in decision-making as they are not only victims but potential game changers as well.

Tran Thi Lan Anh of Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry raised concern over the number of coal mines in Vietnam and how it would affect many SDGs.

Pem Tashi said that the region was not going forward and it did not see the urgency. Different views of mountain communities, coastal communities and women's voices had to be heard. With more coal power being used by 2030, communities contributing to climate change the least would be suffering. She cautioned the meeting and said there was need to be careful of unforeseen consequences. "Justice and balance are needed," she said, "We have to learn from the incentive structures in financial markets as well as opportunities such as green jobs." She asked the panelists to conclude the session by making statements.

David Molden said that the climate process can be a trigger for change with everyone working together. Since the Himalayas are connected to the oceans there has to be an alliance with the oceans. "We all need to work together," he said.

Ghanshyam Pandey said that the climate crisis is a reality and climate justice is required from the local to the global level. Local farmers, women, Dalits, indigenous people are all contributing and this contribution has to be internalized. From forest to agriculture, finance is required for adaptation, mitigation, and investment. Therefore, the climate fund is important and there needs to build collective pressure so the fund is created.

Wanun Permpibul commented that when it comes to fossil fuels such as coal, root causes have to be addressed not just impacts. A political forum to talk about fossil fuels is needed. Adaptation to climate change may not be enough as loss and damage need to be discussed as well as compensation. Governments from local to federal levels need to think. Funding is an issue even as Green Climate Fund proposals are coming in therefore everyone needs to keep eyes and ears open for potential funding.

Chuthatip Maneepog said that different sectors such as farming, women, cooperative need to interlink and share intelligence as climate change is not about any particular group. Capacity building is very much needed, she said.

Presentation of outcomes and regional declaration

A four page draft communique on the outcomes of the meeting had been prepared by a drafting committee made up of representatives from LAs and CSOs. **Aaron Cedaroy, Wardarina, Julius Cainglet, Govind Kelkar, Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi,** and **others** were on the drafting committee. The drafting committee was introduced and thanked. Aaron Ceradoy and Wardarina walked the participants through the whole document and processed feedback.

The section on Introductory Material was presented. **Wardarina** talked about the introductory material and agenda 2030. The draft communique stated that the Asia Pacific would not reach the SDGs which were progressing at an inadequate pace. While important efforts were being made, systemic barriers still existed. **Claire Frost** pointed out that the meeting was on Asia and not the Asia Pacific. **Katinka Weinberger** commented that the situation was similar across all sub-regions of Asia. It was important to put the goals first, it was said, as some of the goals were heading in the wrong

directions with goal 5 remaining stagnant. **Aaron Cedaroy** referred to the parallel session on SGP implementation in fragile contexts.

The section on Climate emergency was presented and the following feedback received: **Chandra Goodrich** of ICIMOD pointed to the situation of mountain communities. **Peter Frisch** said that the urgency of the issue was being taught at university 40 years ago. He said regarding mountain emergencies that there are not so open and they are isolated. Solutions had to be taken from everywhere, young people have to be heard as they are impacted and education starts with young people and initiatives can also start from them, he said. A comment was made on climate change financing. **Chandra Goodrich** commented on the difference in political status of the mountains and the situation of crisis there. **Bernadia Tjandradewi** said that this was an emergency and **Savitri Singh** recommended that solutions, too, need to be mentioned. **Julius Cainglet** wanted to stress equitable transition. **Sotheara Yoeurng** said climate change was the responsibility of all governments (not just those in Europe), scientists and innovative people bound together by principles. It was said that a global effort for the global problem had to be emphasized and call for immediate action made. Discussion continued on whether emergency was preferred to the word crisis as immediate action was required. Crisis sounded more scary and we should be scared commented **Govind Kelkar**. **Tanya Cox** referred to the meanings in terms of English language use and said emergency means we need to act and while crisis refers to the situation. Therefore agreement was reached on using the word emergency.

The section on Systematic barriers was presented and the following feedback received: **Tanya Cox** said there was need to be careful when growing. It was fine to grow, she said but the growth needed to be equitable. She suggested mention of economic concentration of power and wealth and criticism and removal of inequities. **Wardarina** wanted to focus on GDP growth and power and wealth. **Tanya Cox** suggested the use of GDP growth. Fossil fuels and carbon intensive economy were the root causes of climate change, **Wardarina** said. **Savitri Singh** wanted a mention of climate change caused by natural disasters. Need for institutions of change, ending of corruption and democratic institutions were required it was said. There was a call for a mention of children and investment in early childhood development. **Aaron Ceradoy** said that children were mentioned further down in the document and that the drafting committee could develop on that part. **Wardarina** wanted to talk about generations including youth and others. There was call to talk about pairing human rights with SDGs and addition of the words Agenda 2030. **Anna Kirilenko** of Ecological Movement BIOM, Kyrgyzstan, said principles behind the SDGs and Agenda 2030 such as leave no one behind could be mentioned and public services added.

The section on VNR was presented and the following feedback received: **Chuthatip Maneepong** said that VNR needed to improve and lack of capacity when preparing VNRs had to be mentioned. **Wardarina** replied that this aspect was covered in the recommendations. **Wahyuningsih Darajati** wanted a mention of the coal projects. **Savitri Singh** said contribution was being made by the cooperative sector but this contribution was not being acknowledged. Governments should recognize us, she said, and wanted mention of cooperatives in VNRs. **Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi** said data collection, monitoring and review needed to be stressed and **Wardarina** said the roles of LAs and CSOs needed to be recognized. **Cielelito V. Perez** wanted to ensure that CSOs are involved as an equal partners in government planning. **Gomer Padong** wanted a paragraph on issues and separate recommendations for the EU, governments, and CSOs. A comment was made on the monitoring of the government. It was said that there was need to mention how and why the recommendations were taken and alternative submissions, shadow reports included in the recommendations. **Tanya Cox** wanted a mention of free media and investigative work. **Anna Kirilenko** wanted institutional development, budget support and resources for the local level to be included in the communique.

The section on **Localisation of SDGs** was presented and the following feedback received: **Chuthatip Maneepong** wanted the role of academia and scientists included. **Kedar Bhattarai** stressed knowledge sharing and capacity building. **Suphakit Nuntavorakarn** said innovation was not limited to scientists as the community and the private sector contributed significantly. **Gomer Padong** wanted a mention of LA and CSO partnership in the section.

The section on **Enabling environment** was presented and the following feedback provided: **Cannelle Gueguen** wanted a mention of elected representatives while **Tanya Cox** wanted a mention of the difficulty accessing funding and space shrinking in many parts of Asia for CSOs. **Wardarina** wanted to add that space was not only shrinking but closing. **Claire Frost** asked the EU to further its partnership with CSOs.

The section on **Recommendations** was presented and the following feedback provided:

On the recommendations for the **EU** **Savitri Singh** wanted CSO components discussed added to the document. **Sotheara Yoeurng** wanted the EU to encourage government officials and top decision makers.

On the recommendations for **local authorities** **Tanya Cox** wanted finances to be transparent, whether innovative or blended while **Marlene Simeon** wanted more dialogue with the EU, increased political dialogue and knowledge sharing between local governments so they could learn from each other. **Eloisa Astudillo Fernandez** wanted to highlight best practices.

On the recommendations for the **civil society** **Anna Kirilenko** wanted to include institutional support to CSOs while **Savitri Singh** wanted to stress recognition of cooperatives and partnerships with government. **Suphakit Nuntavorakarn** asked how lack of involvement of civil society in LA financing and civil societies' support for human rights could be highlighted. Protection of those fighting for human rights was mentioned and need for a quick response when something is happening to support justice.

On the recommendations for **other key stakeholders** **Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi** said CSOs were willing to support the government but they might not want the support. **Govind Kelkar** said there was need to press on and seek recognition for CSOs and wanted to donors to help in this matter. **Gomer Padong** suggested that points 1 & 2 be collapsed into one and wanted point number 5 removed or the point rephrased. **Wardarina** said that aid should be localized based on human rights. **Govind Kelkar** suggested that point number 5 be taken out altogether. **Wardarina** suggested an additional point on social norms. **Suphakit Nuntavorakarn** wanted the EU to partner with the work of LAs, CSOs and other stakeholders while **Claire Frost** pointed out that the EU is a partner of the ongoing PFD forum. **Sotheara Yoeurng** suggested the promotion of the CSR principles which **Wardarina** said had not been discussed before. **Antonio Fernandez de Velasco** commented that the EU was already doing this work and suggested that the word "further" promote be added. **Aaron Cedaroy** said the drafting committee would add the point in general recommendations section. **Eloisa Astudillo Fernandez** commented on other forums with **Govind Kelkar** suggesting the addition of SAARC as an example. **Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi** said SAARC had not responded to the invitation to participate. **Aaron Cedaroy** shared his opinion that the option was to add examples or not add them, addition of SAARC would lead to a better regional balance. **Sotheara Yoeurng** asked if CBOs were CSOs and if they were, a mention of them in the document could be warranted. A comment was made on the need to stress resource mobilization.

The session was concluded with **Wardarina** repeating that further feedback could be sent to the drafting committee until October 7.

Wrap up and final remarks

Antonio Fernandez de Velasco, European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, wrapped up the Asian Regional Meeting by saying that PFD Brief would be circulated soon and thanked everyone for coming so far away to participate. In particular, he thanked the steering group, the technical team, the EU delegation in Nepal, and EU colleagues.

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi thanked Antonio Fernandez de Velasco and **Anna Kirilenko** and concluded the meeting.