

# 2019 Asia-Pacific

## Regional High-Level Forum on Green Economy

10-12 June 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

### BANGKOK COMMUNIQUÉ

#### THE JOINT STATEMENT OF THE 2019 ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON GREEN ECONOMY

11 June 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

1. A clear priority for many developed and developing economies is the need for innovation, productivity, and secure jobs. While different stakeholders might have varying needs, there is an overall need for higher productivity and efficiency, stronger resilience and innovation.
2. Green economy approaches offer vast opportunities in eradicating poverty as well as sustaining economic growth, which is of particular concern for the countries in the Global South, as well as enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare, creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the Earth's ecosystems.
3. Failure to take timely action in walking away from unsustainable economic practices threatens to potentially lead to environmental degradation that can have serious negative implications on future human health and welfare, and our entire ecosystem. A number of environmental systems are being pushed beyond sustainable limits through, for example, loss of biodiversity, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, land use change, and climate change.
4. In order to drive sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and job creation, particularly for women, youth and the poor, it is important that implementation of green economy policies would adopt a holistic approach, by linking financing, technology, capacity development and other elements of the enabling environment for the green economy. Considerable advantages and synergies can be derived from enhancing cooperation between public and private sectors in the widespread and effective adoption of green economy principles and practices.
5. Overall, the decisions we make today will determine humanity's future. Our economic activity going forward will determine if we are able to mitigate the impacts of climate change and sustain stocks of natural capital.
6. The 2019 Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Forum on Green Economy, that took place during 10-12 June 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, was a result of the success of the annual, since 2014, World Green Economy Summit (WGES) model and a direct response to the requests of participating countries and institutional partners to bring green economy solutions closer to the regional contexts and to deepen the impact of transition to a green economy through scaling up and replication of successful practices at the regional level.
7. The Regional High-Level Forum on Green Economy was designed as an extension to WGES aiming to raise regional awareness by showcasing and scaling up the impact of successful evidence-based green economy solutions crafted and tested by countries in the Asia-Pacific Region in addressing sustainable development challenges pertinent to the needs and aspirations of the region.
8. The three thematic focus areas of the 2019 Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Forum on Green Economy were regulatory and policy frameworks for a green economy, promoting innovative green investment public-private partnerships, and advancing national-level capacities for a holistic green action.

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9. The 2019 Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Forum on Green Economy was organized by the World Green Economy Organization in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, as well as in partnership with the UN Climate Change, The Asia Foundation, and the International Solar Alliance.
10. It brought together high-level government representatives, representatives of international organizations, foundations, as well as relevant private sector players and civil society actors from the Asia-Pacific Region and beyond.
11. The participants of the Forum agreed to produce a joint statement intended to further promote the green economy agenda and to serve as a policy recommendation framework on the practical aspects related to advancing the transition to a green economy model.
12. More specifically, the participants agreed on the following recommendations:
  - A. While progress has been made on green economy policies, legislation, financing, technologies and action in many countries of Asia and the Pacific over the past two decades, it is now time to take a **truly integrated and holistic approach to transitioning to an inclusive and green economy**. This envisages the following actions:
    - a. To systematically embed inclusive green economy principles and practice in countries' overarching national visions or strategies;
    - b. To strengthen national and local institutions, their mandates and capacities (including financial and human ones) to formulate, implement and monitor vertical (i.e. global to local) and horizontal (i.e. sectoral and spatial) integration for a green economy transition;
    - c. To implement efficient economic measures that will drive national decision makers to pursue a green economy growth;
    - d. To ensure concerted effort and multi stakeholder participation in decision making, planning and implementation, meaningful participation of all sectors of society - including governments, and the increased involvement of the private sector and civil society through a 'whole of society' approach (e.g. through extra-Parliamentary mechanisms, such as social licenses);
    - e. To strengthen coordinated involvement of regional and international institutions aligned with country priorities and the objectives and implementation pathways of globally agreed development frameworks - given the global nature of economic and environmental challenges.
  - B. **Principles of sustainability, green practices and social inclusion** need to take a lead role in our thinking on economic development, **which implies**:
    - a. To ensure national ownership and localization as key to advocating and moving the green economy agenda;
    - b. To push for strong political will to support efforts to turn around current negative environmental and social trends and to achieve the SDGs by 2030, to transform our societies and economies to deliver the maximum economic, environmental, and social benefits of the inclusive green economy paradigm;
    - c. To use economic tools to change behaviors of consumers and producers; to help in achieving resource efficient and environmentally friendly Asia-Pacific region through innovative solutions (policies and regulatory frameworks, technical solutions, financing mechanisms, business models and behavioral changes) focused on sustainable consumption and production;

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- d. To reform legislative frameworks to provide incentives for an environmental focus, including through revision and alignment of existing legislation in order to ensure policy coherence, remove contradictions and mainstream green economy principles and instruments; to scrutinize/ evaluate budgetary allocations and national policies in line with the sustainable development goals and standards; to encourage participatory legislative process;
- e. To enhance effective disclosure of environmental, social and governance information on investments;
- f. To exchange successful experiences of other countries and share their own solutions for advancing inclusive green economy approaches and practice;
- g. To strengthen partnerships in advancing innovative solutions, including such forms of partnerships as public-private and South-South cooperation.

**C. The amount of currently available finance is far too small to cover the needs, especially of least developed and developing countries and small developing island states to build more resilient societies and inclusive, green economies. To direct and secure sufficient financing for advancing the transition to an inclusive, green economy it is recommended:**

- a. To undertake Green financing interventions by all concerned sectors - government agencies, private sector, and consumers; to re-align the financing procedures by lenders and investors for promoting and scaling up circular economy-based solutions; to de-risk and incentivize private investments in green economy, along with the public finance, thus unlocking private capital flows for climate and sustainability action;
- b. To adapt and refocus the mechanisms of accessing international finance for green economy projects; use blended financing schemes developed for banks and governments to de-risk and incentivize private capital for low carbon energy transition in the region;
- c. To develop national and regional climate finance strategies that contribute to establishing tools for green finance through giving clear signals from government on its needs and priorities so as to direct domestic and international finance and, where possible, to pursue public-private partnership;
- d. To harmonize sustainable finance regulations/guidelines in the region so as to ensure all financiers are adopting similar standards of green financing;
- e. To consider using smart tax incentives, rebates and subsidies to drive inclusive green economy and also support loans, green bonds, blended financing, green procurement and redirecting existing finance toward green initiatives;
- f. To apply green finance instruments monitoring and evaluation which is crucial to ensure that money is used for intended purposes and that the financing instruments are appropriate and effective in delivering inclusive green economy outcomes;
- g. To acknowledge the key role of NGOs as conveners and multi-stakeholder partnerships, including in bringing blended finance to project or community levels;
- h. To elaborate a reliable set of indicators to assess the level of sustainable development.

**D. National capacities need to be enhanced to serve as a foundation for transition to a green economy, which requires the following actions:**

- a. To undertake more effective capacity development at all levels and for all stakeholders, which envisages general public awareness raising, promotion and marketing of green economy projects and principles, integrating indigenous knowledge, teaching at academic institutions, as well as learning specific technical skills – be it for green technology or financing, green legislation, policies, management and evaluation;

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- b. To widen education on green action and amplify messages to more systematically push for a transition towards an inclusive green economy by sharing more success stories, pilot different green actions, and speaking the language of the general public;
- c. To ensure the role of education for all (both curriculum and extra curriculum practices) in preparing future leaders and managers for more sustainable business practices;
- d. To deepen and broaden networks between different stakeholder groups (including academia), and focusing on bringing citizens along the transition journey to accomplish a paradigm shift and mainstream transformational thinking;
- e. To ensure the role of academic institutions in Green Economy capacity development, expanding it to teaching and learning, research and intellectual contributions, service to community, serving as good pilot spaces for implementing green economy projects, and lead by example, e.g. “green campus”;
- f. To support platforms to encourage and facilitate capacity sharing in terms of expertise and technical knowhow on how to adopt practices that are green friendly;
- g. To develop and deploy alternative energy solutions in electricity generation, transport and industrial heat; to utilize solar, hydel, thermal, wind and other alternative energy resources;
- h. To invest in technical research - each country has to have their own research facilities - on green innovation and enhance national capacities for technology development and applications such as artificial intelligence; to replicate export-centric, smart factories program on bio-plastics/bio-degradable packaging products;
- i. To encourage volunteerism - driven by conviction it can accelerate the transition to a green economy by providing time and skills, building capacity at different levels from communities to government and linking green experiments and start-ups to viable, scalable solutions.

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