

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Fellow Advocates,

My name is Sita Shahi, I represent the CSO Steering Committee for the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference.

We wish to commend the ESCAP Commission on its adoption of the Report of the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference (7APPC), one which underscores the multiple challenges currently facing the region: low fertility, population ageing, increased gender based violence, and climate change, which particularly affect marginalized communities such as migrants, young people, women, ageing, gender diverse persons, people living with HIV, and all their intersectionalities.

Since the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action, which was truly remarkable in its shift to directly link human rights with sustainable development; governments, development partners, CSOs, and young people, have been working towards one common vision: to leave no one behind.

Thirty years later, we stand renewed to work in partnership in support of this transformative agenda, and reiterate the pivotal role that young people and diverse civil society from across the region play in achieving the fulfillment of SRHR for all. We urge for the creation and protection of space that is truly meaningful for civil society to participate in to enable this.

Over 120 diverse civil society representatives attended the 7APPC, and the resulting CSO Call to Action highlights our unity in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that act as barriers to just and sustainable development in the region. Until and unless we control and make decisions over our own bodies, and express our sexuality free from coercion, discrimination and violence, we cannot fully participate in life.

We close by looking towards the future, where ICPD will continue to play an integral role in achieving the ambitious new aims of the Summit of the Future.

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