



# Local and Regional Government Assembly

Associated Event of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

24 February 2025, 9:00-17:00

Meeting Room A, United Nations Conference Centre  
Bangkok, Thailand

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## Background

Local authorities is one of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) of the APFSD. Since 2019, the participation of local authorities has been facilitated by the Asia-Pacific Local Government Coordinating Body (APLG) through the United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC). In 2024, the first Local and Regional Government Assembly (LRGA) at the APFSD was organised by APLG and hosted by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

In line with the theme and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review in 2025 at the 12<sup>th</sup> APFSD, this associated event was organised for local authorities as a platform for dialogue on local actions and commitment to achieve Goal 3 (good health and well-being); Goal 5 (gender equality); Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth); Goal 14 (life below water); and Goal 17 (partnership for the Goals). The LRGA adopted the Joint Statement of Local and Regional Governments to the 12<sup>th</sup> APFSD which was submitted to the APFSD Secretariat and presented in plenary.

In collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the LRGA was jointly organised with the Regional Workshop on the Voluntary National Review featuring a dedicated session on the Voluntary National Review-Voluntary Local Review Dialogue. Through these efforts, the event aimed to strengthen multilevel collaboration, amplify the voice of local authorities, and enhance the integration of local priorities into broader development strategies.

## Opening Remarks

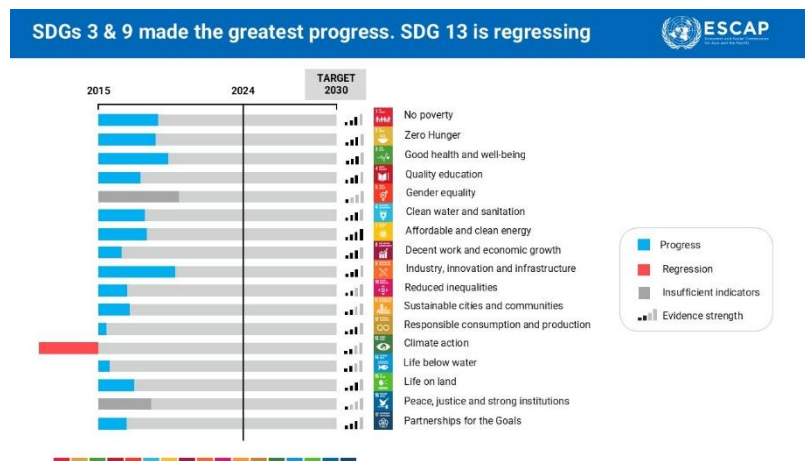


“This is why the *Future is Local*. It is in our cities, municipalities, and provinces where policies take shape, where innovation thrives, and where real change happens.”

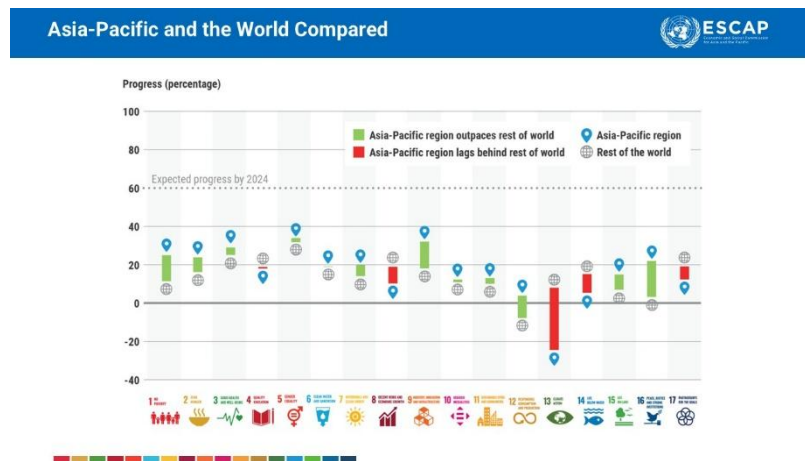
Mr. Dakila Carlo Cua, President of UCLG ASPAC, President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), and Governor of Quirino Province, underscored in his video message the critical role of local and regional governments ensuring that the SDGs are not just policies on paper but tangible, transformative realities for the people. The principle that no one is left behind is at the heart of sustainable development and this requires strong national leadership and empowered and engaged local governments. The success of the SDGs depends not only on global and national commitments but, more importantly, on how effectively they are implemented on the ground. He also highlighted that collaboration is key and that fostering dialogue between national governments, local and regional governments, civil society, and development partners can build a stronger, more coordinated approach to SDG implementation.

## Context Setting

Mr. Omar Siddique, Economic Affairs Officer of ESCAP, presented the key highlights of the [2025 Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report](#) – Engaging Communities to Close the Evidence Gap. He indicated that overall progress on the 17 SDGs is off track, with 16 of 177 targets on track and 18 targets deteriorating.



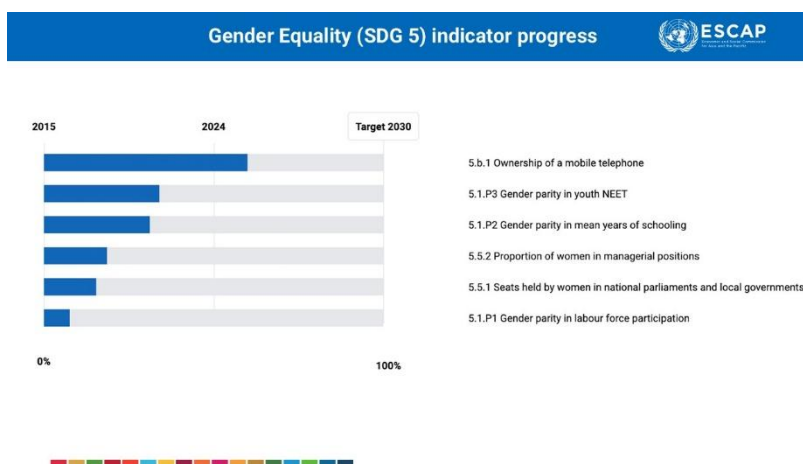
There is progress on Goal 3 on good health and well-being and Goal 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure but it is still moving too slowly to meet the targets by 2030. For Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions, there is not enough data to assess progress. He added that the region is regressing on Climate action (Goal 13).



For majority of the goals, the Asia-Pacific is outperforming the rest of the world. However, the region is behind the global pace on decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), climate action (Goal 13), life below water (Goal 14), and partnership for the goals (Goal 17).

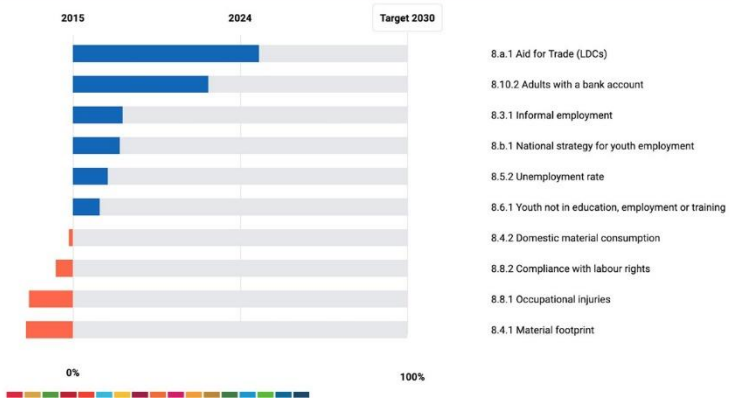


He also presented the progress of the SDGs under review in 2025. For Goal 3 on good health and well-being, the following indicators are on track: maternal and neonatal mortality; malaria; and births attended by skilled health personnel and under 5 mortality. The following indicators are off track: tobacco use; cardiovascular diseases and non-communicable diseases like diabetes; HIV infections; tuberculosis; family planning; health capacity and emergency preparedness. The following indicators are regressing: harmful use of alcohol and household expenditures on health.



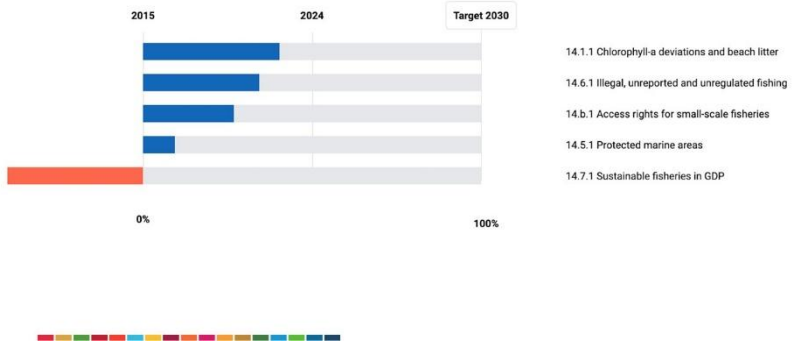
For Goal 5 on gender equality, the indicator on women’s ownership of mobile phones is on track. However, the indicators on gender parity in mean years of schooling; proportion of women in managerial positions; seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments; and gender parity in labour force participation are off track. While there are no indicators that are regressing, there is a lot of data gap in Goal 5. Having sex-segregated data was also highlighted as a challenge.

**Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) indicator progress** 



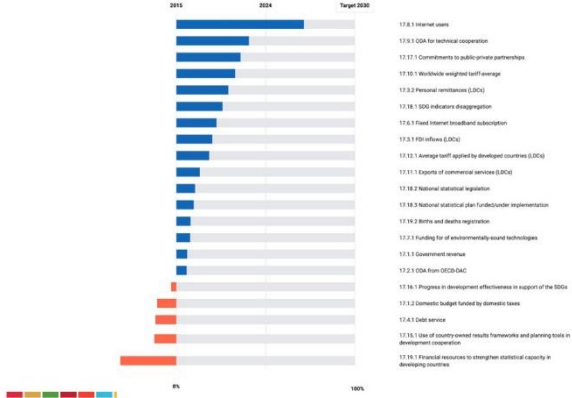
For Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, the indicator on financing least developed countries (LDCs) is on track. The following indicators are off track: informal employment; youth education, employment and training; and unemployment in general. The following indicators are regressing: domestic material consumption and material footprint of economic growth; compliance with labour rights; and occupational health and safety.

**Life Below Water (SDG 14) indicator progress** 



For Goal 14 on life below water, there is no indicator on track. The following indicators are off track: marine litter; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; access rights for small-scale fisheries; and protected marine areas. The indicator on financing sustainable fisheries is regressing.

**Partnerships (SDG 17) indicator progress** 



For Goal 17 on partnerships for the Goals, only one indicator is on track which is on internet users. The following indicators are off track: remittances for LDCs; commitments for public-private

partnerships; official development assistance (ODA) for technical cooperation; foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to LDCs; funding of environmentally sound technologies and many more. The following indicators are regressing: debt servicing; financial resources to strengthen statistical capacities in developing countries and others.

Mr. Siddique also shared that using the Leaving No One Behind Tool, data showed that poverty, measured by household wealth index, and education level are the most significant factors driving inequality of opportunity. These two factors intersect with location, sex, and age which exacerbate disparities and make it harder for the most vulnerable to access equal opportunities. While the survey data provides critical insights, they remain limited in coverage and frequency. To meet the data gaps, Mr. Siddique mentioned that the Power of Data, the High Impact Initiative launched at the 2023 SDG Summit, outlined 3 key elements needed to transform statistical systems: build strong political leadership, mobilise resources, and strengthen partnerships. He also welcomed local and regional governments to collaborate with ESCAP on deploying the SDG tracker in the [Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway](#).

Ms. Anfaal Saari, Executive Councilor of Family and Women Development, Welfare and Care Economy of the State of Selangor, asked about the obstacles and framework in getting data for the Asia-Pacific SDG Report. Mr. Siddique responded that every country has its own circumstances and data is provided by the national statistics organisations. He observed an issue of fragmentation in the data collection at different levels of government and a lack of mechanisms for local and regional governments to contribute data that are only available at the local level.



# Local Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The session was chaired by Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC. The session deliberated the SDGs under review at the APFSD including SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17.



## SDG 3 (Good health and well-being)

“Health is not a privilege; it is a fundamental right. The role of local and regional governments in achieving SDG 3 is indispensable.”

Mr. Baikuntha Neupane, Mayor of Vyas Municipality, discussed proactive measures taken to promote SDG 3 including strengthening healthcare infrastructure, maternal and child health programmes, nutrition and health interventions, preventive healthcare initiatives, and health awareness and digital health integration. He proposed the following actions to accelerate



progress on SDG 3: increased investments in local health facilities, medical professionals, and technology-driven healthcare services; ensuring affordable healthcare access for all, particularly marginalised communities; partnering with governments, NGOs, and the private sector to share best practices and resources; providing local governments with the funding and expertise needed to implement evidence-based healthcare solutions effectively; shifting focus from treatment-based approaches to preventive care, fostering a culture of well-being; and enhancing the skills of healthcare workers, local government officials, and community leaders to better serve their populations.



Mr. Ashok Kumar Byanju Shrestha, Immediate Past President of UCLG ASPAC and Mayor of Dhulikhel Municipality, reported that the World Health Organization declared Dhulikhel Municipality as the first “healthy city” in Nepal. He also stated that Dhulikhel was the first to complete its first VLR in South Asia.

Dr. Rosanna Cunanan, City Health Officer of Santa Rosa City, shared how the city is intensifying their preventive and promotive programmes, and working with various institutions such as schools and non-government organisations.

Ms. Noraini Roslan, Chair of Sustainability Committee of the State of Selangor, explained the initiative on preventive care for the elderly involving low-impact exercises and the importance of early detection of non-communicable diseases.

Mr. Jeonghun Byeon, Assistant Director for International Affairs of Gumi City, introduced their initiative on establishing tailored health care services for vulnerable groups through the emergency medical centres for infant and children.



#### SDG 5 (Gender equality)

“Let’s work together to make gender equality a reality. The future of Malaysia depends on the full participation of all its citizens. Let us build that future together, an equal future.”

Ms. Anfaal Saari, Executive Councilor of Family and Women Development, Welfare and Care Economy of the State of Selangor, indicated that there is gap in the political representation of women in Malaysia. Women make up only 13.5% of Members of Parliament, 18% of senators and 12% of State Assemblies while national target is 30% women in decision-making positions. Challenges and barriers encountered by women include family care responsibilities, childcare accessibility issues, and workplace discrimination. She showcased Selangor’s initiatives to advance gender equality. The State Gender Action Council was established and chaired by the Chief Minister of Selangor. The Gender Mainstreaming Project focused on building the capacity of



government officials to integrate a gender lens into all facets of planning, program development, and initiative implementation. The cornerstone of this project was the rigorous collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data which allowed them to move beyond anecdotal evidence and establish a concrete understanding of the diverse needs and experiences of Selangor's population. The Sidang Wanita Selangor programme focused on empowering women in Selangor with the necessary skills and knowledge to actively participate in political leadership. To further address the lack of women representation in politics in Selangor, she proposed the political parties to implement voluntary gender quota for candidate selection, the creation of an accessible fund where government incentivises political parties that achieve 30% women candidates, and the active promotion of mentorship programme that pair aspiring women politicians with experienced leaders.

To address the gap in labour force participation of rate between men and women, they launched the Selangor Care Economy policy which aims to recognise the care sector as contributor to the state economy. She noted the need to take on the responsibility for finding an end-to-end solution and sustainable ecosystem in line with SDG 8 where responsibilities between men and women are redistributed within family institutions, between family and community, and between public and private sectors.

To achieve gender equality, she called for stronger policies to protect women's rights, promotion of equal opportunities, and increased funding for women-focused programmes. She also emphasised the importance of education to change mindsets by promoting gender equality in schools, launching public awareness campaigns, and including gender equality training in workplace development programmes.



“As Baguio City moves forward with its sustainable development initiatives, its structured approach anchored in national and global frameworks, reinforces its commitment to fostering an inclusive, resilient, and prosperous community where gender equality remains a top priority.”

Atty. Elmer Datuin, National Chairman for Advocacy of the Philippine Councilors League and Councilor of Baguio City, presented Baguio City's initiatives on

gender equality and empowerment. The city localised the Manga Carta of Women and adopted a Gender Equality and Development Code to ensure that gender and development (GAD) is integrated into local policymaking, planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Specific programmes such as capacity building, budget appropriation, establishment of monitoring and evaluation system, and active participation of key stakeholders were laid down to integrate the GAD initiative into local governance. The city conducted gender analysis using tools across two areas – gender mainstreaming and gender responsiveness. Baguio attained level 2 in gender mainstreaming meaning GAD programmes have not been fully mainstreamed in departmental programmes, plans, and activities (PPAs), and attained a score of 3 in gender responsiveness indicating that while the city demonstrates awareness of gender responsiveness, it does not actively tackle gender-related issues. Strategies to address gender mainstreaming and responsiveness gaps include strengthening and reconstitution of GAD focal points in all departments of the city; monitoring the implementation of the annual GAD plan and budget; assessing performance against targets of different offices; and

gender mainstreaming in the barangay level. Key initiatives of Baguio City include the establishment of a GAD section in the Baguio City Public Library to promote public awareness of gender issues, set-up of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) desks in all 128 barangays of the city to offer accessible support for gender-based violence, and the “Manang Pulis” programme which is a dedicated unit in the police for women and children. Other initiatives include the Baguio City Command Center, a street lighting project, product development for creatives, and improved market linkages for women entrepreneurs.

Baguio City’s challenges include the need to update gender data, weak vertical and horizontal collaboration among implementing agencies, lack of awareness and education, and the need to fully equip the women’s and children’s desk. Atty. Datuin proposed to pursue the Gender Responsive Integrated Database System (GRIDS) to aid in evidence-based decision-making, implement and monitor the GAD plan and budget, establish a hotline for gender-based violence, and popularise the Magna Carta of Women in all media platforms.

“True progress happens only when everyone, regardless of gender identity or expression, has the opportunity to thrive.”

Ms. Merlina Panganiban, Department Head of the Urban Development Department of Makati City, reaffirmed the city’s commitment to advancing gender equality through global advocacy and local action. Makati served in the UN Secretary General’s Advisory Group for Local and Regional Governments in 2023 and 2024 leading SDG 5, which amplified



the voices of women and local governments in global discussions and contributed to the Pact for the Future adopted at the 2024 Summit for the Future. Makati institutionalised gender equality by enacting the Makati GAD Code, establishing GAD Councils at the village level, and launching the Makati GAD Awards. She also highlighted how the city allocated 17.48% of its city budget to gender-responsive programmes, exceeding the 5% minimum requirement under the Philippines’ Magna Carta for Women. She also underscored Makati’s efforts to elevate the economic value of care work by recognising the social and economic contributions of caregivers. Through the Organisation and Development of Cooperatives and Savers Centers, caregivers are provided with financial literacy, savings opportunities, and collective investment options, empowering them to thrive and contribute to inclusive economic growth.

Ms. Panganiban reminded participants to prevent AI-driven gender bias to shape a smart city future that is fair, just, and inclusive. She also reported that the city created the Makati SDG Special Committee which is spearheading their first VLR together with UCLG ASPAC. Lastly, she called on governments, civil society, academe, and development partners to ensure gender equality is not just a goal—but a reality. As global gender policies face challenges, local governments must safeguard progress and champion rights-based approaches.



“Achieving SDG5 is our shared responsibility. Let us work to create a society where women thrive free from discrimination.”

In her video message, Ms. Zhang Yajie, Co-President of UCLG ASPAC and Vice Chair of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference Guangzhou, discussed the practices and insights in achieving gender equality in Guangzhou. Women Development Plans have been implemented which brought significant

progress in women's health, education, economic participation, and political engagement. Women are provided with quality health care services, including cervical and breast cancer prevention through free screenings and free vaccines. Smart healthcare innovations, such as big data applications, further enable precise medical services for women. Guangzhou guarantees women access to educational opportunities. The “Mom-Friendly Jobs” initiative helps women with children under 12 balance work and family responsibilities, with 150 companies offering such positions. Vast opportunities have been offered to female workers, and the gender pay gap narrowed. Women's leadership is high on the city’s agenda, with women accounting for 61.11% of management in municipal institutions. Gender equality education is promoted in schools, workplaces, and communities, creating an enabling environment for women.

To effectively implement SDG 5, Ms. Zhang Yajie called for strengthened international partnerships, increased support for local and regional governments through funding, technical assistance, research, and capacity building, and facilitation of education, economic, and decision-making engagement for women and girls.

Ms. Emy India, Social Welfare Officer of Santa Rosa City, highlighted the involvement of men in achieving gender equality in the Philippine context. The Men Opposed to Violence Everywhere (MOVE) organised men in every barangay to be part of the movement against violence. The city also has a highly functional local committee against trafficking and violence of women and children.

Mr. V.P. Kulshrestha, Secretary General of the Institute of Town Planners India, reported that Bhopal is the first VLR in India. He talked about the PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) scheme, a housing programme wherein registration of the houses will only be for the women in the family. Free higher education is also provided for women.



### SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)

Ms. Anfaal Saari, Executive Councilor of Family and Women Development, Welfare and Care Economy of the State of Selangor, discussed the grant provided for nannies to upgrade facilities at home and the grant provided for mothers. Another initiative is the Selangor Care Accelerator programme focused on operators of child and elderly care facilities which provides training and pitching clinics to support care economy industry players.

Mr. Ashok Kumar Byanju Shrestha, Co-President of UCLG ASPAC and Mayor of Dhulikhel Municipality shared how they are working on microeconomic analysis to identify the issues and mitigation efforts needed to foster economic growth for vulnerable groups.

Mr. V.P. Kulshrestha, Secretary General of the Institute of Town Planners India, talked about Bhopal's incubation center that provides co-working space with the internet for business start-ups.



### SDG 14 (Life below water)

Ms. Noraini Roslan, Chair of Sustainability Committee of the State of Selangor, noted the need for an integrated effort of land-based activities to address problems of environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Mr. Ismail Sobah, Chief Statistician of Male City, mentioned the dilemma on climate change and land reclamation, the latter affecting life below water.



### SDG 17 (Partnership for the goals)

“If we can engage everyone together, Bangkok will be a liveable city for all.”

Dr. Witoon Apisitpuvakul, Director-General of Strategy and Evaluation Department of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, explained Bangkok's vision for a more liveable city. This involves nine guiding policies aligned with the SDGs, including good mobility, good safety, good transparency, good environment, good health, good learning, good economy, good society, and good management. These guiding policies are aligned with Thailand's national strategy to achieve the SDGs. The BMA policy tagging platform was established to monitor the results of the guiding policies. He also showcased the Traffy Fondue application, an initiative allowing community participation in resolving urban issues in Bangkok.





“Partnership for the goal focuses not only on the international cooperation but also public-private partnership to effectively implement all the other 16 SDGs.”

Ms. Noraini Roslan, Chairperson of the Sustainability Committee of the State of Selangor, showcased Selangor’s commitment to sustainability aligned with four pillars on good governance, economy for the people, environmental protection, and social wellbeing. The local authorities, state-linked agencies and private sectors

shared the progress of their committed projects in a system that is monitored by the state secretariat. This data sharing enables the state to monitor and evaluate the impact of each initiative in achieving the target. She also mentioned that Selangor completed its Voluntary Subnational Review in 2023 which enabled the state to align its development agenda with global targets and national development goals. She noted that vertical integration among government agencies at different levels is crucial and that stronger collaboration is needed with the private sector in environment and social wellbeing.

Ms. Noraini Roslan described her experience as Mayor of Klang. Partnership with the Korean government helped them prepare their smart city plan. Two mangrove sanctuaries were built and maintained with private companies. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) for SDG seminar was conducted to increase awareness and show best practices among local manufacturers and logistic companies in attaining sustainability. She also expounded on the smart city plan which focuses on six sectors: digitalisation of the economic sector, digital society and public engagement, talented and skilled human capital, smart solutions and innovation, sustainability and quality of life, and digital infrastructure. The city engaged with the public and industry players to identify smart solutions and come up with project proposals. She emphasised the need to benchmark and share data among local authorities and to align them with the SDGs for efficient monitoring within the state. She also mentioned Selangor’s collaboration with Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) which is related to SDG 14.

“It is incumbent for the League to offer what the cities need when they need it.”

Ms. Veronica Hitois, Executive Director of the League of Cities of the Philippines, discussed the role of local government associations (LGAs) in SDG 17. She stated that LGAs support local governments through capacity building, international cooperation, and research. She showcased their partnership with the UN Environment Programme to implement the Generation Restoration Project in Quezon City, and with UCLG to develop the first Voluntary Subnational Review in 2022 featured in the Philippine Voluntary National Review.

Mr. Ermin Lucino, City Planning and Development Coordinator of Santa Rosa City, shared that they are about to complete the city’s VLR, the core of which was SDG 17. As part of the process, multi-sectoral workshop and validation was conducted involving different barangays, civil society organisations, private sector and national government. Yokohama will also provide input towards the final document. The VLR will serve as input to the city’s land use plan and development plan.

## Joint Local and Regional Government Statement

Local and regional government leaders and representatives convened for the Local and Regional Government Assembly on 24 February 2025, which served as an associated event for the local authorities major group at the 12<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

Following the adoption of the Pact for the Future, we reaffirm our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and underscore the indispensable role of local and regional governments whose actions directly impact people and communities. We also note the launch of the Sendai Gender Action Plan (Sendai GAP) and the extension of the Lima Work Programme on Gender to ensure gender-responsiveness in disaster risk reduction and climate action. We acknowledge the necessity of mainstreaming gender in local policymaking processes.

We reiterate that localisation is crucial to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure that initiatives have a positive impact on the daily lives of the people. Interoperable data management systems and localised indicators are integral to evidence-based planning, monitoring, and evaluation of progress on the SDGs. Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) conducted by local and regional governments and their associations showcased the important role of monitoring SDGs progress in collaboration with stakeholders. Valuable insights from VSRs and VLRs can enrich the Voluntary National Reviews and strengthen multilevel governance. Providing technical assistance, capacity building, and funding support will encourage more local and regional governments to undertake VSRs and VLRs.

Within the diverse contexts of cities and regions in the Asia-Pacific, local and regional governments strive to deliver public services and align with the SDGs and national development frameworks. With only five years remaining until 2030, we emphasise the pressing need to support local and regional governments by strengthening multilevel partnerships that foster dialogue, coordination, and shared responsibility among all levels of government. Enhancing these partnerships is critical for reinforcing local capacities in the face of rapid urbanisation and climate change, ensuring policy coherence, and mobilizing resources more effectively to bridge financial gaps and accelerate sustainable development.

### **Goal 3: Good health and well-being**

Proactive measures are being undertaken by local and regional governments to decrease cases of communicable and non-communicable diseases and promote healthy lifestyles. An increase in elderly population has also been reported. Improving healthcare infrastructure will facilitate accessible and efficient delivery of health services particularly for vulnerable groups, including but not limited to women and children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and indigenous peoples. Preventive healthcare measures, such as vaccination, early screening, public health campaigns, and oral health care, need to be strengthened at the local level.

### **Goal 5: Gender equality**

Integrating gender-responsive policies in local planning and budgeting, and empowering women in local communities through leadership development and livelihood skills building are some of the key initiatives undertaken by local and regional governments. While underrepresentation of women in leadership roles remains to be a challenge, strengthening gender-inclusive decision-making processes at the local level can ensure that women's voices are actively considered. There is also a need to



address unpaid care work which is often performed by women. The formal recognition and compensation of care work would address gender inequality and promote economic fairness.

**Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth**

A high unemployment rate, the proliferation of jobs in the informal sector, and an increasing poverty rate are some of the challenges faced by local and regional governments. To address these, steps are being taken to facilitate the transition of the informal sector to the formal economy such as support to start-ups and provision of skills development. Local and regional governments are also making efforts to provide financial support for micro, small and medium enterprises, livelihood trainings for women and youth, and expand employment opportunities through tourism and creative industries development. Increasing job opportunities will spur local economic development. Local products are also being promoted through trade fairs and digital platforms. Public-private partnerships and investment incentives may strengthen local employment generation.

**Goal 14: Life below water**

With land reclamation and waste discharge threatening coastal areas and marine ecosystems, local and regional governments promote environmental conservation and protection through regulatory policies. Community engagement, and partnerships with environmental organizations also strengthen conservation efforts. Nature-based solutions are also employed to address environmental challenges. Microplastics pose a significant threat to marine life and human health. Local and regional governments must integrate efforts to reduce microplastic pollution through stricter waste management policies, public awareness campaigns, and technological innovations to monitor and mitigate microplastics in our waterways and oceans.

**Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals**

Local and regional governments recognise the importance of inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement in local planning and development processes. Local ownership of the SDGs can be promoted by encouraging rights-based, participatory, and community-based approaches. Providing training and support to local and regional governments and stakeholders on how to manage partnerships effectively can ensure long-term impact. Promoting the use of digital tools and data-sharing platforms across all levels of government and partners will improve transparency, enhance decision-making, and track progress towards SDGs implementation.

All the SDGs may be off track for the Asia-Pacific region, but we can still make a difference. Local and regional governments will push forward to create the future we want. We stand together with national governments, UN bodies, development partners, and civil society organizations, in advancing solutions and leaving no one behind.

## Closing Remarks



“By harmonising our efforts and leveraging each other’s strengths, we can unlock opportunities.”

Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC, reiterated three points in her closing message. First is that local and regional governments are the driving force for the SDGs whose actions have a direct impact on the people. It is imperative that these efforts are recognised and supported at the national and regional levels. The

second point is that empowering local and regional governments is essential. There are several challenges faced by local and regional governments and that requires a very good enabling environment, such as capacity building, legal framework, and financial support. Third collaboration is key to achieving a sustainable future. Local and regional governments welcome opportunities for cooperation to drive progress towards the SDGs.

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, acknowledged the timely discussions that reviewed the SDGs progress and the synergy in bringing together national and local governments for the VNR and VLR dialogue. She encouraged paying attention to the next generation of VNRs – how they align with priorities, and show impact and innovation. She mentioned the launch of the SDG Localisation Platform of UNESCAP which aims to support more local and regional governments in their VLR preparation. She invited participants to attend the 81<sup>st</sup> Commission Session with the theme of “Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific,” to be held in April 2025.



## Steps Taken After the Assembly

UCLG ASPAC requested two (2) speaking slots for the delivery of the Local Authorities statement in the plenary sessions of the APFSD.



Mr. Ashok Kumar Byanju Shrestha, Immediate Past President of UCLG ASPAC and Mayor of Dhulikhel Municipality, delivered the statement in Agenda Item 2 (Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence- based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind in Asia and the Pacific) on 25 February 2025. [APFSD video on UN Web TV](#) (2:07:23-2:10:13)

Mr. Baikuntha Neupane, Mayor of Vyas Municipality, delivered the statement in Agenda Item 4a (Review of regional progress and opportunities for achieving the SDGs - Progress towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 3, 5, 8, 14, 17 at the regional level) on 27 February 2025. [APFSD video on UN Web TV](#) (1:00:20-1:03:50)





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