

APEC Voices of the Future Youth Declaration 2024

Empower. Include. Grow.

Preamble

As youth delegates from across the APEC economies, we envision a future where every individual has equitable access to opportunities, is empowered to succeed, and contributes to sustainable growth. Through this declaration, we present recommendations for building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Asia-Pacific, aligned with the theme "Empower. Include. Growth." We encourage APEC Leaders and APEC Business Leaders to consider and support these actions that will uplift youth, people, and communities with untapped economic and social potential, including but not limited to Indigenous peoples and economies, fostering a collaborative, growth-oriented region to deepen the economic integration of the APEC economies.

EMPOWER

1. Empowering APEC Economies through Digital and Technological Literacy

Cross-APEC Digital Literacy Programs: Launch programs that target people and communities with untapped economic and social potential, MSMEs, and rural and remote areas, emphasizing skills in AI, cybersecurity, digital finance, and other essential technologies to drive equitable digital inclusion across the region.

Digital and AI Training for MSMEs: Establish AI training initiatives for MSMEs through public-private partnerships, providing access to AI tools that enhance productivity and competitiveness in an efficient manner, whilst promoting safety and privacy via regulation and sound governance.

2. Strengthening Youth and Women's Participation

Expanded Youth Mobility and Career Opportunities: Facilitate regional youth internships through career guidance, scholarships, working holiday programs, exchange visas, promoting skills development, resilience, and cultural exchange across APEC economies.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Implement policies to eliminate poverty, including but not limited to menstrual poverty. Additionally, promote women's participation in leadership roles by providing them with education and soft skills across political and business sectors, empowering women as equal contributors to economic and social growth.

3. Supporting Innovation and Resilience in Youth

Youth Innovation Incubator: Establish regional Youth Innovation Incubators and Hubs that provide mentorship, funding, and resources for youth-led initiatives addressing environmental and social challenges, fostering entrepreneurial spirit and resilience.

Youth-Driven Advisory Councils: Create advisory councils within government and corporate structures to amplify young voices, enabling youth to contribute to policy and community initiatives that shape APEC's regional growth in short-term, long-term and intergenerational strategies.

INCLUDE

1. Fostering Inclusive Education and Cultural Preservation

APEC Educational Exchange Network: Develop a mobility program between APEC economies, which will allow epistemic interconnectivity, in which representatives of academia can have an international experience while strengthening the Asia Pacific region, backed by scholarships and financial aid to support cross-border collaboration and contribute to the educational level of the people of the APEC economies. This initiative could be supported with the creation and endorsement of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

APEC Cultural Preservation Programs: Develop educational programs to support cross-border collaboration and the equitable preservation of indigenous languages and cultures relevant to each economy, enriching cultural heritage in the face of modernization.

Resource Allocation for People and Communities with Untapped Economic and Social Potential: Increase access to educational resources for people and communities with untapped economic and social potential, and rural communities, ensuring equal opportunities for quality education in remote and underserved areas. Ensure access to the necessary food requirements of children to enable full participation in education initiatives.

2. Promoting Equitable Trade and Employment Practices

Fair Employment Standards Across APEC: Enact regulations that encourage reciprocity and ensure fair wages, job access, and protection against discrimination, benefiting remote workers and fostering diversity in trade and economic sectors.

Multilateral and Community-Driven Trade Partnerships: Encourage the inclusion of people and communities with untapped economic and social potential, including indigenous people and economies, within regional supply chains, promoting sustainable economic development and community-driven partnerships.

3. Advancing Mental Health and Well-being

Accessible Mental Health Resources: By sharing best practices across economies, APEC can foster community-wide support for emotional and mental well-being to ensure mental health resources are accessible across all socio-economic and geographic boundaries.

GROWTH

1. Encouraging Sustainable Economic Models

Unified APEC Impact Reporting Framework: Establish a regional framework to encourage and support socially responsible enterprises with transparent sustainability metrics, allowing clear evaluation of climate, economic, and social impacts in line with global standards.

Green Economy Fund for MSMEs: Introduce a regional fund offering grants and low-interest loans to MSMEs for circular economy initiatives, including renewable energy adoption, waste reduction, and eco-friendly practices.

Formalization of Informal Enterprises: Encourage legal recognition of informal enterprises to facilitate their integration into regulated markets such as the APEC market and access to support services, such as digital payment systems, which enhance financial transactions for informal businesses transitioning to the formal economy.

2. Collaborative Climate Action and Energy Transition

Indigenous-Led Climate Resilience: Partner with and empower indigenous communities to integrate traditional ecological knowledge into climate strategies, enhancing resilience through stewardship of natural resources and promoting its application in local communities.

Upskilling for Sustainable Energy Transition: Exchange technical expertise and allocate resources towards upskilling in renewable energy, preparing economies for a clean, equitable, and sustainable energy transition process across the Asia-Pacific.

3. Supporting Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity

Digital Platform for Investment Simplification: Create a centralized platform providing standardized investment information across APEC, lowering entry barriers for MSMEs and supporting cross-border economic integration.

MSMEs Training for International Growth: Develop programs for MSMEs to enhance market entry and connectivity in the APEC region, providing them with open market information and advisory services, such as digital marketing and e-commerce workshops.

APEC Early Warning System: Establish a robust Early Warning Network to continuously monitor key trade routes, ports, warehouses, and transit hubs. This system would enable rapid response communication across APEC, allowing member economies to exchange real-time updates, share best practices, and coordinate resources for risk mitigation.

Conclusion

We, the youth of APEC, envision an empowered, inclusive, and growth-focused Asia-Pacific where every individual and community can thrive. Our call to APEC Leaders is to enact policies that uplift vulnerable communities, foster inclusivity, and drive sustainable development across the region. With unity and shared commitment, we can build a future where all voices are empowered, social and economic opportunities are inclusive, and all growth is sustainable.

Together, let us commit to building an equitable, resilient, and prosperous future for all in the Asia-Pacific.

Submitted by APEC Voices 2024 Youth Representatives, Lima, Peru



Australia



Canada



Chile



People's Republic of China



Hong Kong, China



Indonesia



Japan



Mexico



Aotearoa, New Zealand



Peru



Russia



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