

Stand with people in Ukraine and Russia

Solidarity message from the North-East Asia sub-regional Civil Society Group of the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)

28 February 2022

We, civil society organizations in East Asia and Northeast Asian countries, express our deep concerns and distress caused by recent attacks by Russian military troops to cities in Ukraine, and urgently call for ceasefire and negotiations to tackle the situations for both governments and international organizations.

The government of Russian Federation once stated that "its policies are aimed at the creation of conditions for decent life and free development of a person¹", according to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, submitted at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in 2020. However, recent military attacks clearly violate rights to live peacefully and well-being of people in Ukraine, and are against International Humanitarian Law and International Bill of Human Rights.

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), unanimously agreed at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, is "a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity", and it "also seeks to strengthen universal peace in greater freedom²". All the United Nations' Member States, including the Russian Federation, are politically and morally obliged to achieve this by 2030.

People's lives and development of societies are only saved and achieved by mutual cooperation through multi-stakeholder partnership, not by war.

As SDGs Target 16.10 calls for ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, and raising concern against persecution and violence of journalists, trade unionists and human rights advocates, we call all the national governments concerned to ensure freedom of expression and stop persecution and violence against the people urging for peace.

We also urge the international community, including the United Nations and its Member States, especially in the East and Northeast Asian region, to use all diplomatic means to stop the war and military attacks, and start peace negotiations immediately, including reconsidering and reforming the current structure of the United Nations Security Council. Governments and international organizations, as well as civil society organizations, should provide necessary humanitarian aid to people who suffered most.

We call on the civil society groups in the region to strengthen efforts to help the vulnerable at this critical time.

In solidarity with people in Ukraine and Russia, who seek prosperity and peace in the region

¹ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26959VNR_2020_Russia_Report_English.pdf, p.18

² <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>