

CONCEPT NOTE (DRAFT)
**Regional Workshop on Legal Empowerment and Access to Justice:
Advancing Goal 16 and the Work of Community Paralegals in Asia
(Yellow Pagoda Hotel, Kathmandu)**
11-12 September 2019

Background

In September 2015, UN members states collectively adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the accompanying 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs seek to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and reverse climate change by 2030. It is the first global agenda to recognize that sustainable development cannot be achieved without equal access to justice for all.

This year, 2019, is the year of justice! In July and September of this year, governments will be reporting, for the first time, their progress on SDG 16, the commitment to ensure that all people have equal access to justice by 2030. The reporting will be done at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). With the theme “**empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality,**” the HLPF will focus its attention on Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels), among others.

Four years from the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, a new report from the [Pathfinders Task Force on Justice](#), launched at the World Justice Forum early this year, calls the world’s attention to new research, which estimates that over 5 billion people – two thirds of the world’s population - live without access to justice, while justice systems fail to resolve problems of 1.5 billion people in rich and poor countries across the globe.

Indeed, this year provides a great opportunity to highlight the need to address the severe justice gap that adversely affects a large majority of the world’s population. It is important to bring together the conversations at the global, regional and national levels together to ensure peer learning, coordination, effective implementation and, ultimately, meaningful change.

Regional Efforts to Advance Access to Justice in Asia

Since the adoption of the 2030 agenda, regional conversations have been conducted to explore how regional, national and sub-national initiatives in Asia can contribute to the implementation of the SDGs, especially Goal 16. From the *ASEAN Regional*

Consultation on Sustainable Development Goals, Access to Justice and Legal Aid held in May 2016 in Jakarta, Indonesia, to last year's *Asia Regional Workshop on Access to Justice and Legal Empowerment* at the 2018 Asia Pro Bono Conference in Hong Kong, various legal empowerment groups in the region agreed that it was critical for legal empowerment organizations in Asia to meaningfully collaborate and contribute to each other's success and strengths, and engage in collective action in the region to advance national efforts. Identified areas of collaboration, cooperation and exchange include: increasing public financing and building civil society-state partnerships on access to justice, measuring progress on access to justice effectively, leveraging global momentum to ensure scaling up of basic justice services nationally, enhancing organizational sustainability and investing in legal empowerment innovations.

With the very rich interrelated conversations in these previous convenings, and in view of significant developments that have happened this year and will happen in the immediate future, it is imperative that legal empowerment groups must come together, review past discussions, and plan for strategic concrete actions that they can collaborate on to pursue SDG Goal 16. Specifically, there is a need to prepare for initiatives that will sustain the conversations around the review processes that will happen this year, with the main goal of focusing attention on Goal 16, and accelerating its implementation.

The upcoming Asia Pro-Bono Conference that will be convened on September 13-15, 2019, in Kathmandu, Nepal, provides an excellent opportunity to gather representatives from key legal empowerment groups in Asia. Thus, a two-day assessment and planning workshop on Legal Empowerment and Access to Justice shall be convened on September 11-12.

Objectives

By the end of the workshop, the participants would have accomplished the following:

- Discussed the main opportunities and challenges for implementation of Goal 16 in the region, in relation to the reports that had been presented at the July 2019 HLPF, and the continuing review processes (primarily through the Voluntary National Review processes) that will be conducted in the future.
- Identified key initiatives at the national and regional levels that can be implemented as part of a collaborative plan of action to promote access to justice and legal empowerment as essential components for the attainment of Goal 16 in the region.
- Identified major areas of regional cooperation in calling global attention to the importance of access to justice and legal empowerment in the attainment of Goal

16, and, more specifically, in the area of recognition, regulation and funding of community paralegals.

Participants

The planning workshop shall be attended by around thirty-five (35) participants representing key legal empowerment groups in Asia.

Organizing team

The planning workshop shall be organized and facilitated by OSJI, Namati, and BABSEA-CLE.

Agenda

<i>Day 1, Sept.11</i>	
9:00–9:30 am	Opening Program & Participant Introduction
9:30–10:30 am	Session 1: Setting the Stage: Emerging Trends on Access to Justice in Asia
10:30-11:30	Session 2: Tracking Progress on Access to Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results of the Voluntary National Reviews in Asia - General report from the HLPF - Report of the Task Force on Justice - Indicator on Civil Justice
11:30 am-12:15 pm	Discussion – global to regional to national
12:15-1:30 pm	LUNCH
1:30-3:00 pm	Session 3: (small group workshop) Initial identification of initiatives to promote access to justice and legal empowerment as key components for the attainment of Goal 16 in the region. Discussion of potential areas of cooperation for accelerating progress on Goal 16 implementation and the groups’ participation in the upcoming review processes.
3:00-5:00 pm (with tea break)	Session 4: Planning for next steps – identification of priority activities and assigned person/organization/s.
5:00-5:15 pm	Synthesis of the day’s discussion
<i>Day 2, Sept.12</i>	
9:00–9:30 am	Recap of Day 1 / Preliminaries
9:30–10:30 am	Session 1: Community Paralegals as Leading Justice Advocates in Asia - thematic areas (land/environment, prison, LGBTQ, statelessness, gender equality)
10:30-11:30	Session 2: Emerging Trends on Community Paralegals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Namati’s research on policies concerning paralegals - Indonesia

11:30 am-12:30 pm	Session 3: Initial identification of programs on community paralegals, opportunities and challenges - How to advocate for paralegal recognition, financing and protection
12:30-1:30 pm	LUNCH
1:30-5:00 pm	Simultaneous sessions focusing on specific paralegal networks and initiatives