

Asia-Pacific Local Leaders Summit Banda Aceh Declaration 2024

Our Covenant

We have gathered at the Asia-Pacific Local Leaders Summit 2024 as we commemorate World Humanitarian Day at ground zero of the Indian Ocean tsunami - to reaffirm our commitment to the localisation agenda, based on humanitarian principles, for effective response and for building the resilience of at-risk and crisis-affected communities.

Led by the Indonesian Development-Humanitarian Alliance, the Pujiono Centre, and Human Initiative, and hosted by Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR), the Summit brought together the local leaders from nine Asia-Pacific countries, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Myanmar, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines and the Pacific a movement that represent over 15,290 local and national organisations. It is also an avenue for dialogue with donors and partners for sharing perspectives, knowledge, expertise and experience.

We recognise and celebrate our diversity as a source of strength that enriches our perspectives, unites us around core values and focuses us on shared goals with one another and those around us.

Guided by the vision of the Asia Pacific Localisation Lab 2030, we reviewed the progress and priorities of the Asia Pacific Localisation Lab as a locally led initiative and safe space for innovation. We agreed on the Asia-Pacific regional localisation strategy, which outlines the governance structure, engagement, resource mobilisation and influence, financial and non-financial solutions, and sustainable mutual learning.

We are taking steps to move away from the traditional internationally led response with excessive financial oversight, patron-client dynamics and short-term objectives. Instead, we progress with Localisation, which is a locally-led system that involves effective transfer of resources, fundamental shifts in power dynamics and equitable partnership and decision-making.

We shall improve our services as catalysts and bridge builders to extend the Asia-Pacific regional platform to a wider range of local CSOs, which are increasingly involved in addressing a range of complex humanitarian challenges.

We encourage international actors to prioritise, support and trust voices of local actors to shape humanitarian narratives and responses that are appropriate to their respective contexts, and to refrain from interfering in local decision-making processes.

Inspired by the resilience of the people of Banda Aceh we commit, and in this regard welcome the participation of international donors and actors, to the followings:

1. To assert the role of local actors as decision makers in humanitarian efforts in the Asia-Pacific region, leveraging local knowledge and expertise to ensure culturally relevant humanitarian response and sustainable recovery towards long term resilience;
2. To leverage strategic dialogue opportunities to rebalance the power relations within the humanitarian system, prioritise equitable resource distribution and foster transparent partnerships that strengthen local CSOs;
3. To promote inclusive humanitarian approaches and actions that is guided by the perspectives, needs and voices of those most vulnerable and affected by crises;
4. To welcome and cultivate meaningful and equitable partnerships with governments, donors, UN agencies, international actors and other stakeholders based on mutual respect & accountability, shared goals, and transparent communication; and
5. To continually learning from experiences and innovations, sharing knowledge, and adapting our practices as we respond to evolving needs in our communities

We invite donors, UN agencies, international NGOs and nationalised international NGOs to follow up on this Summit by working with Asia-Pacific local leaders and their Localisation Lab to build deliberate and structured dialogue and engagement.

Side by side with the NEAR Global Summit and its 10th anniversary to be held in the vibrant and inspiring setting of Bali, Indonesia, in the first half of 2026, we recognise the invaluable contributions of global efforts, and, this spirit, we believe it would be beneficial for global initiatives platforms, and mechanisms to consider organising their meetings there and jointly with NEAR to converge into this unique opportunity to celebrate progress, foster meaningful dialogue and chart the way forward.

World Humanitarian Day, Banda Aceh, 19 August 2024

The Asia-Pacific Local Leaders