



FOR YOUTH

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



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Job No: DEW/2218/BA

ISBN: 978-92-807-3734-9

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Suggested citation:

UNEP 2019. GEO for Youth, Asia-Pacific. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya.

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Cover Design: Tianling Deng, Greenment Environment Co. Ltd, China
Design and Layout: Zipei Liu, LaSalle College Vancouver, Canada

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FOREWORD



The future always belongs to the next generation. Without their engagement and leadership, that future cannot be sustainable. Fortunately, young people today are more passionate and involved in environmental issues than any who have come before them. Not only are they themselves taking action, they are mobilizing their families, communities and society at large to tackle the great environmental challenges of our time. Initiatives evolve into leadership. This is why youth empowerment is not just a slogan but a core tenet of environmental solutions.

In Asia and the Pacific particularly, we are all too familiar with the issues. Rapid economic growth, urbanization and lifestyle changes have been a boon to living standards. Yet this growth has been coupled with the unwise use of natural resources and a tendency to over consume. That means that environmental protection is not just the business of environmentalists, but everybody. Young people understand this intuitively more than most, and that is why, across the region, we see them disproportionately driving change.

UN Environment has recognized many of those young people working to make a difference. Through awards such as the Young Champions of the Earth and the Asia Pacific Low-Carbon Lifestyle Challenges, UN Environment is helping raise the profile and rights of youth to effect change. The stories of these winners reflect the creativity and lateral thinking that continue to inspire and influence others across the generations.

Knowledge, however, remains the prerequisite for solutions. That is the premise behind the *Global Environment Outlook for Youth : Asia and the Pacific*. This publication presents a clear and expansive picture of current environmental challenges for youth and young professionals with non-environmental backgrounds. It is a jumping-off point for those who want to do more for the planet and build their understanding of the environmental trends and challenges in Asia and the Pacific. Whereas conventional scientific publications can be technical and difficult to understand, this report is designed to be more interesting and accessible to a wider, younger audience.

I hope that this publication gives young people the chance to engage with environmental topics in a substantive way, build their knowledge and help spread an understanding of challenges that face us all. I also hope it encourages decision makers throughout Asia and the Pacific to support and empower young people. Ultimately, it is only with young people's efforts that we will deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

Dechen Tsering

Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Environment Programme

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding and in-kind support provided by:



同濟大學
TONGJI UNIVERSITY

Tongji University



Elion Foundation



Ministry of the Environment and Water Resource of Singapore



한국환경정책·평가연구원
Korea Environment Institute

Korea Environment Institute



Korea University



Institute for Global
Environmental Strategies

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

Authors Teams

Coordinating Lead Author: Ying Wang (Tongji University, China)

Chapter 1:

Lead Author: Aruna Dias (Cardinia Shire Council, Australia), Mei Lin Neo (National University of Singapore, Singapore), Jiyeon Song (Korea Environment Institute, Republic of Korea)

Contributing Authors: Kavinda D. Ratnapala (Monash University, Australia), Ronghan Xu (National Satellite Meteorological Center, China)

Chapter 2:

Lead Author: Christmas Baduria de Guzman (Asia Pacific Network, Japan), Mei Lin Neo (National University of Singapore, Singapore), Jieun Ryu (Korea University, Republic of Korea)

Contributing Authors: Tai Chong Toh (National University of Singapore, Singapore)

Chapter 3:

Lead Author: Hezron Gibe (University of the Philippines, Philippines), Akshay Jain (Centre of Innovation, Singapore), Jose Isagani B. Janairo (De La Salle University, Philippines), Tomoko Takeda (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan)

Contributing Authors: Aruna Dias (Cardinia Shire Council, Australia), Tomoko Hasegawa (National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan), Mei Lin Neo (National University of Singapore, Singapore), Everlyn Tamayo (University of the Philippines, Philippines), Hyeonju Ryu (United Nations University, Japan), Sheryl Rose Reyes (United Nations University - Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Japan)

Chapter 4:

Lead Authors: Aruna Dias (Cardinia Shire Council, Australia), Brian Johnson (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan), Neil Stephen A. Lopez (De La Salle University, Philippines), Jiyeon Song (Korea Environment Institute, Republic of Korea), Yuta Uchiyama (Tohoku University, Japan)

Contributing Authors: Michael Boyland (Stockholm Environment Institute-Asia Centre, Thailand), Karlee Johnson (Stockholm Environment Institute-Asia Centre, Thailand), Jinsun Lim (Korea Environment Institute, Republic of Korea), Jieun Ryu (Korea University, Republic of Korea), Jimwell Soliman (De La Salle University, Philippines), Ai Tashiro (Tohoku University, Japan), Le Thi Thanh Thuy (International Union for Conservation of Nature, Viet Nam)

Chapter 5:

Lead Authors: Christmas Baduria De Guzman (Asia Pacific Advanced Network, Japan), Akshay Jain (Centre of Innovation, Singapore), Neil Stephen A. Lopez (De La Salle University, Philippines), Tomoko Takeda (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan)

Contributing Authors: Jinsun Lim (Korea Environment Institute, Republic of Korea), Martina de Marcos (Edge Environment, Australia), Jae Sanjay Nikam (World Wide Fund For Nature, India), Kavinda D. Ratnapala (Monash University, Australia), Jimwell Soliman (De La Salle University, Philippines), Sanjana Singh (United Nations University, Japan)

Editor: Bartholomew Ullstein (Banson, United Kingdom)

Visual Authors: Tianlin Deng (Greenment Environment Co. Ltd, China), Zipei Liu (LaSalle College Vancouver, Canada), Huynh Thanh Hang (SNV Netherland Development Organisation, Vietnam)

Visual Art Advisor: Jim Toomey (Cartoonist, USA)

Media Advisor: David Paul Fogarty (The Straits Times, Singapore)

Special Support: Yupu Ding (EUQA, USA), Zilin Huang (EUQA, USA)

Reviewers: Jheel Bastia (United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Japan), Michael Boyland (Stockholm Environment Institute-Asia Centre, Thailand), Christina D. Cayamanda (De La Salle University, Philippines), Mylene G. Cayetano (University of the Philippines-Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology, Philippines), Dian Ekowati (Center for International Forestry Research, Indonesia), Akshay Jain (Centre for Innovation, Singapore), Karlee Johnson (Stockholm Environment Institute-Asia Centre, Thailand), Fikadu Degefa Kene (Tongji University, China), Md Iqbal Raja Khan (International Rice Research Institute, China), Peter King (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Thailand), Thomas Kennett (Monash University, Australia), Thuy Duong Khuu (University College London, Britain), Hyemin Ha (Korea Environment Institute, Korea), Nguyen Chu Hoi (Vietnam National University, Viet Nam), Youngran Hur (UN Environment Asia-Pacific Office, Thailand), Ashleigh Morris (The Circular Experiment, Australia), Justin McCann (University of New South Wales, Australia), Jaee Nikam (World Wide Fund for Nature, India), Lubelihle Marcia Nyathi (Tongji University, China), Mai Tra Ny (Center for Planning and Integrated Coastal Management, Viet Nam), Mei Lin Neo (National University of Singapore, Singapore), Kavinda Ratnapala (Monash University, Australia), Hyeonju Ryu (National Institute of Forest Science, Republic of Korea), Hana Shin (Korea Environment Institute, Republic of Korea), Marta Ruiz Salvago (Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand), Ying Su (Tongji University, China), Annette Wallgren (UN Environment Asia Pacific, Thailand), Poh Poh Wong (University of Adelaide, Australia), Takuya Wakimoto (IHI Corporation, Japan), Ronghan Xu (National Satellite Meteorological Center, China), Jian Zuo (The University of Adelaide, Australia)

UN Environment Team

Overall coordination: Jiaqi Shen, Panvirush Vittayapraphakul, Jinhua Zhang

Support: Pierre Boileau, Satwant Kaur (up to April 2018), Thomas Hodge, Youngran Hur, Isabelle Louis, Imae Mojado, Peerayot Sidonrusmee, Dechen Tsering, Annette Wallgren, Makiko Yashiro,

Partners' Support Team:

Tongji University, China: Fengting Li, Jiang Wu

Elion Foundation, China: Pengfei He, Jialin He, Zhimin Yan

Korea University: Seongwoo Jeon, Woo-Kyun Lee

Korea Environment Institute: Hoon Chang, Hyun-Woo Lee, Jun Hyun Park

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies: Hideyuki Mori

PREAMBLE

The environmental landscape is changing rapidly, and the youth of today face a suite of both challenges and opportunities. As the human population increases, the decline in natural resources is accelerating at an unsustainable rate. At the same time, new frontiers are being explored to improve people's relationship with the environment and ambitious goals have been developed for transforming the world into a better place.



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