YOUNG AMBASSADORS OF PEACE IN ASIA (YAPA)–2022

DECLARATION

We, the 26 participants of Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia (YAPA) 2022, from 11 Asian countries belonging to different ethnicities, religions, races, organisations, and backgrounds, attended the YAPA–2022 training programme organised by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) at the CCA Headquarters at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 7 August to 14 August 2022. During this time, we were all trained to be catalysts for change and positive actors in the process of establishing peace. Our ability to recognise and speak out against conflict, violence, and human rights violations was strengthened; we learned how to promote interfaith collaboration, especially in circumstances where religious intolerance is likely to occur.

There is no single uniform context in the Asian region. Its cultural, religious, historical, and political systems are diverse, as are the foreign and domestic influences on legal systems in the region.

As Young Ambassadors of Peace in Asia in 2022, we are meeting at a crucial juncture. A time where cross-state tension among countries is high, a time where Indonesia has concerns with the system of indigenous customary law, which partially survives, and a time when Myanmar is facing threatening political stability and violence against ethnic groups. A time when Sri Lanka faces its worst economic crisis, a time when Bangladesh has a prominent distinction between the rich and poor, a time of strained cross-strait tensions, and a time when the rise of extremist groups is observant in many countries. Most of our Asian countries face such difficulties, and their citizens are finding ways to survive daily. We meet at a very significant point to converse about these issues and understand what it is that, as youth we can do.

We express our commitment to work for building and living in a peaceful, diverse, multilingual, and multi-religious Asia and the world. We resolve to:

1. educate ourselves with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to promote peace and be nonviolent in all approaches;
2. be active actors in peacebuilding in ways that prioritise community needs and perspectives and use 'do no harm' principles;
3. work for peace, justice, and inclusion of the many, rather than the short-term priorities of the few;
4. work towards the long-term process to eliminate structural violence;
5. promote equality and justice;
6. focus on education for peace to encourage independent thinking and its doors to new ideas for peace and justice; and,
7. holistically engage dignified human beings in all their local wisdom for global peace.

In order to support and build a more peaceful and just world, we call on all governments, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, and relevant stakeholders to:

Support the meaningful engagement of youth peacebuilders and youth-led organisations to provide the opportunity to engage them in peace-building activities, capacity-building programmes, policy-making and decision-making processes.

Call for Action

1. Acknowledge that youth peacebuilders and youth-led organisations are one of the major stakeholders in the peacebuilding processes, strategy development, policy-making, and implementation.
2. Collaborate with youth peacebuilders and youth-led organisations on the implementation of peacebuilding and interfaith initiatives, and involve them at all levels (international, national, and local).
3. Provide an enabling environment and capacity-building opportunities for innovations, policy dialogues, and networking with other stakeholders.
4. Allocate long-term sustainable funding to support youth-led organisation networks, individual youth initiatives, formal and informal youth groups
5. Ensure all the peacebuilding processes are gender sensitive and strive for inclusiveness [intersectionality, equity] in all aspects.

As youth peacebuilders being represented in this programme, we commit to working with all stakeholders to build peace in Asia and around the world. We commit to monitoring the implementation of this declaration.