

APRRN DRAFT STRATEGY 2023 – 2027

VERSION II, 16 August 2023¹

What this strategy covers

This strategy sets out the overall strategic direction for APRRN from 2023-2027 by proposing four pillars which will guide the work of APRRN. It is a 5-pages document which includes background, current context and the four strategic pillars. The pillars contain key targets associated with each pillar that will be measured across the four-year period with measurable impact indicators

Background

APRRN is continuing to evolve and change in our pursuit of greater impact, inclusivity and capacity as a network with a vision for protecting and promoting the rights of refugees and other people in need of protection in the Asia Pacific region.² This includes transitioning to a new co-secretary general leadership model that seeks to place refugee leadership as a central value in our work. Meanwhile, APRRN is increasingly being called upon to represent refugee protection issues and actors in the region at multistakeholder and multilateral forums at national, regional and global levels.

According to the APRRN Statute, the Steering Committee is tasked with preparing a new strategic plan every 4-5 years in order to ensure that the work of APRRN remains strategic, relevant and focussed on core priorities. Therefore, the APRRN Strategy 2023 - 2027 will set the priorities of APRRN and define where and how the network can best achieve its vision and ensure its sustainability into the future. A key component of this next strategy is to help bring focus to the work of the secretariat and ensure that the value of APRRN as a network of members focussed on collective advocacy, is maintained, strengthened and innovated.

In early 2023, APRRN's Steering Committee engaged organisational development consultants to assist with the preparation of APRRN's new strategic plan 2023-2027 as well as considering the appropriateness and effectiveness of our current governance structure. Consultations were conducted with the Board, Steering Committee, secretariat and some key long-term members, in order to inform an initial draft of the strategic plan. Feedback from these consultations was overwhelmingly consistent and emphasised the need to establish a clearer advocacy focus, reduce the number of working groups, review organisational structure and governance, and enhance and diversify member capacity and connections. This feedback has informed the formulation of the initial strategy.

¹ This is a 2nd version, taking into consideration recommendations from membership consultations and questionnaires

² Including refugees, people seeking asylum, refugees and migrants in situations of vulnerability, torture survivors and complainants, trafficked persons, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), stateless persons and returnees.

From 8-10 May 2023, 6 Steering Committee members, 2 board members and 4 Secretariat staff, including the two newly appointed co-SGs, met in person in Bangkok to reflect on the issues arising from initial consultations to formulate the first draft of the strategic plan. The Steering Committee, Secretariat and Board reviewed the draft strategy and approved for it to go out to members for further consultation and refinement before being presented for approval to the 9th Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights (APCRR9) to be held in Bangkok (and hybrid) on 12-13 September 2023.

This version2 contains recommendations by members who took part in the consultations during July and those who filled out the questionnaire.

Current Context

The current human rights context and dynamics in most parts in the region is dire, including for refugees and other people on the move. They face multiple barriers which hinder access to full enjoyment of rights, access to services, and opportunities to reach their full potential. Those barriers have been reinforced and multiplied during the recent pandemic and in the current recovery-phase. The human rights framework, with some exceptions in Australia and New Zealand, is weak or non-existent, there are continuing patterns of inability and/or unwillingness by many states in the region to protect their most vulnerable populations, and the civil society space continues to be restricted in many corners in the region.

But there are also signs of nascent progress towards a human rights regime in some countries, for example with rapidly growing youth movements, calling for full democracies and respect for human rights and freedoms of all persons, regardless of their status. And there are signs of paradigm shifts in some countries, for example in Thailand where a new, more modern and pro-democracy government may be in office shortly.

Diversity and Inclusion as a central principle and cut-crossing theme

Meaningful participation and diversity is an integral part of the four strategic pillars. As a network, bridge-builder, and a trusted convenor, APRRN is uniquely placed and, indeed, has a responsibility, to catalyse the transformation of relationships between people and organisations who make up the human rights system in Asia and the Pacific, by creating new possibilities for allyship and solidarity in movements for change in our joints efforts to change policies, laws, practices, attitudes, behaviours and resource flows.

However, as human rights actors, our potential to contribute to systems change, and to be a trusted and effective ally and agenda-setter for refugee leaders and communities, is often constrained by our own entrenched mindsets, privileges, and relationships. In order to meaningfully contribute to transformative change, we - as APRRN - must also be brave enough to understand how our own ways of thinking and acting must change as well. The change in leadership structure signifies an exciting new chapter in APRRN's development as we work to more meaningfully include the participation and leadership of those with lived experience of forced displacement.

The Four Strategic Pillars

Four strategic pillars are proposed to guide our work over the next four years, namely:

1. An intentionally connected network
2. A coherent and agile advocacy strategy
3. An empowered and enabled network
4. A fit-for-future organisation

Each pillar has key targets associated with it that will be measured across the four-year period with measurable impact indicators.

Pillar 1 –An intentionally connected network.

The strength of APRRN is in its network of members. Together we are stronger and more effective. APRRN plays an important role in bringing RLOs, CSOs, NGOs and other stakeholders together around a common purpose and collective action. There are opportunities to do this within and across subregions and to enable likeminded groups and individuals to undertake joint advocacy.

APRRN requires dedicated resources to facilitate ‘weaving’ members together by fostering connections, collaborations and peer support networks. Regional Working Groups will support a greater focus on network building at local, provincial and national level.

Goal 1

In four years, APRRN will be intentional and proactive in creating relevant links between members to support collective action and impact.

We will do this by:

1. Mapping member capacities and needs and sharing in an accessible and real time format including via the online member portal
2. Facilitating opportunities for members to share information, ask for help and establish collaborations including via regional working groups
3. Creating dedicated resources and roles within the secretariat and governance to facilitate network weaving
4. Fostering member engagement with wider stakeholders, including RLOs and other global or regional advocacy networks

Pillar 2 – A focussed and agile advocacy approach.

Collective advocacy in relation to refugee rights and protection is core to our work as a network. APRRN does not have the resources to work directly on all advocacy needs in our region and therefore relies on the strength of members collectively. The role of APRRN is to mobilise and amplify member led advocacy. In some cases, APRRN will support this work through funded resources and in other cases members will organise and lead this work.

Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network

We have a Vision for Regional Protection³ which outlines our approach to human rights advocacy in the region. However, there is a need for APRRN to update the 2014 version and, importantly, establish clear criteria for determining which issues APRRN should be focusing on, how should we carry out advocacy, who should be our targets, and who should be our messengers. This requires an analysis of where APRRN can add most value, what are our strengths and weaknesses, while at the same time ensuring a geographical balance. Our current priorities are refugees and other displaced persons from Afghanistan and Myanmar with a particular focus on Rohingya; other vulnerable populations, and efforts to end detention of refugees and migrants. New areas of focus may include climate-induced displacement, urban refugees, rainbow refugees, and counter-narratives on refugees and migrants.

In order to be an agenda-setter, remain relevant and maximise our effectiveness as a network of advocates, we need to select strategic advocacy targets every 2 years through APCRR and establish clear processes for enabling collective member action that has measurable impact.

Goal 2

In four years, APRRN will have implemented a coherent and agile regional advocacy strategy that leverages APRRN's unique position and empowers collective action with members. An integral part of the strategy is a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to respond, on an on-going basis, to the varied and fast-changing political, economic and social context and policy environment across the region.

We will do this by:

1. Enhancing tools and resources to support members to lead advocacy at local, provincial and national levels
2. Identifying advocacy priorities every two years at APCRR and prepare an advocacy plan that outlines measurable targets, approaches and resources to support its implementation
3. Establishing an advocacy coordinator role within the secretariat to support achievement, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy priorities.

Pillar 3 - An Empowered and diverse network.

Our membership is diverse and includes funded and unfunded organisations, refugee-led organisations and individuals with a variety of specialist skills, experiences and approaches. APRRN has the opportunity to strengthen, further diversify and grow its impact by strengthening member capability and by ensuring that meaningful inclusion is central to our approach. To do this we need to support member participation and inclusion at all levels, as well as provide support to strengthen capability.

Goal 3

In four years, APRRN will be a network of empowered, enabled and diverse people from all parts of the region and working towards common goals with trust, confidence and safety to engage.

³ Please see the attached PDF file

We will do this by:

1. Enhancing our membership portal to include resources, tools, guides and training that support capacity building
2. Facilitating access to relevant, affordable and timely training that includes peer to peer, self-directed and instructional learning opportunities.
3. Allocating dedicated resources within the secretariat to facilitate member needs assessment and capacity building initiatives
4. Encouraging a culture of uncomfortable but safe conversations about power, privilege, inclusion and diversity within the network with a commitment to respond to issues as they arise
5. Ensure fair representation of our region and the intersectionality of displaced populations within our membership and leadership

Pillar 4 – A fit-for-Future Organisation.

APRRN has changed significantly since we began in 2008. We are now receiving project grants to work on specific advocacy issues and the network is increasingly being called to participate in national, regional and global forums. Similarly, the secretariat and the governance has evolved and it is time to review and adjust to ensure that our structure is fit for purpose and that we are able to continue to access funding to continue our work and increase our impact. As a network of members, we also need to ensure we have adequate member support resources and the right people to do this work, including effective communications and impact measurement.

Goal 4

In four years, APRRN will be a thriving, modern and agile organisation that is financially stable, inclusive, logically structured, accountable and with a unified and clearly communicated purpose and strategy

We will do this by:

1. Establishing diversified funding sources that are not as dependent on core funding
2. Implementing an M&E framework with linked data collection processes and opportunities for continuous learning
3. Reviewing and simplifying our governance structure to maximise focus on strategic advocacy and network capacity whilst also creating inclusive succession strategy and planning pathways
4. Establishing a communications strategy and resources that will support the enhancement of APRRN as a credible global advocacy network and attract the right partners

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