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**ASIA DEMOCRACY
NETWORK (ADN)
STRATEGIC PLAN**

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2024-2028

ASIA DEMOCRACY NETWORK (ADN) STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2028

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From the Secretariat

The Asia Democracy Network Strategic Plan for 2024–2028 builds on a decade of action to strengthen democracy and protect civic space across Asia. The path we tread has been shaped by an evolving political landscape, where challenges to democracy—from shrinking civic spaces to the rise of populist authoritarianism—have intensified. Yet, through collaboration, and shared purpose, ADN has been able to support movements, amplify voices, and promote solidarity among diverse stakeholders across the region.

This strategic plan marks a significant moment in ADN's journey. It builds upon our foundational achievements, such as strengthening national and regional connections, fostering cross-movement collaboration, and nurturing the next generation of democracy advocates. At the same time, the plan addresses emerging challenges like digital authoritarianism, disinformation, and environmental vulnerabilities that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. These issues demand a collective response that prioritizes inclusion, accountability, and innovation.

Central to this vision are our four strategic programs: consolidating democracy, championing youth leadership, enabling global-local ecosystems, and exploring new frontiers in democracy. These initiatives underscore ADN's role in building a resilient, civil society-led network that promotes democratic ideals, safeguards civic spaces, and connects movements across Asia to inspire tangible change.

This document reflects the insights of countless stakeholders, members, and democracy advocates whose contributions have shaped this vision, grounded in the urgent need to address the pressing challenges facing democracy today. The development of this strategic plan involved a rigorous stock-taking process, including in-depth consultations and interviews with multiple experts, democracy advocates, and donors to ensure it remains relevant and impactful. We thank them for their trust, perseverance, and commitment to our shared cause. Together, we believe that democracy, no matter how contested, can offer pathways for justice, dignity, and progress for all.

The Beginning

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) is a multi-stakeholder platform led by Asian civil society to strengthen democracy and defend civic space in the Asian region. The incubation of an Asia-wide network of civil society came through the World Forum for Democratization in Asia (WFDA) which was set up in 2005. Its secretariat was based in Taipei, Taiwan at the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD). At its inception, WFDA convened several dialogues between civil society and other stakeholders to assess, reflect and strategize democracy strengthening in the region. The first biennial conference of WFDA was held in Taipei, Taiwan in 2005 and was designed to discuss and adopt guidelines to promote the solidarity of Asian democracies, support democracy activists who are opposed to authoritarian regimes, and solicit support from the international community on democratization in Asia. The second and third biennial conferences were held respectively in Manila, Philippines and Seoul, South Korea. However, for a variety of reasons WFDA could not be continued.

Realizing the void created by the discontinuation of WFDA, the need for a vibrant network of Asian civil society to strengthen democracy in Asia was first articulated at the Seventh Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy in Lima, Peru in October 2012. While the idea of a network was seeded in Lima, it was germinated in the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia held in April 2013. It was in this Ministerial meeting that the network became a reality and the participants acquiesced to form a working group and entrusted the responsibility to design and launch a network of civil society working across the region to promote democracy and defend human rights and civic space in the Asian region. Finally, the ADN was launched in the ADN Founding Assembly held in Seoul, South Korea in October 2013, to strengthen solidarity and a collective voice of Asian civil society engaged in democracy, human rights, and development at the global, regional, national, and local levels. At the launching of the ADN, the Seoul Democracy Declaration, and the ADN Charter of Principles were adopted. An 11-member steering committee was elected to lead the network.

Over the last 10 years, ADN's efforts have been guided by the belief that:

- participatory and inclusive democracy is critical to the promotion of social justice, reducing inequality, and preventing conflict
- active participation and empowerment of women, youth, and marginalized groups are vital in advancing inclusive democracy
- democracy should contribute to the protection of religious and ethnic minorities
- free, fair, and democratic elections are essential to development and good governance
- education for democracy ensures that citizens are aware of their rights and civic duties
- active civil society engagement contributes to the consolidation of democracy



Figure 1: Launch of ADN – A Timeline

The Journey Continues

The year 2023 was momentous in the journey of ADN when it celebrated its 10th Anniversary. ADN organized one of its flagship events, the Asia Democracy Assembly on 21-22 November in Bangkok, Thailand. The Assembly centered on the theme “Fostering Democracy Movements: Building Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Cooperation in Asia” which served as an influential platform for dialogue, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas for those dedicated to upholding democratic values and principles. The 2023 Assembly, attended by more than 250 democracy advocates across Asia, resoundingly endorsed the invaluable contributions that ADN made to support democracy and human rights, since its inception 10 years ago.

With a modest, yet aspirational beginning, over the last 10 years, ADN made considerable efforts to uphold and nurture its Mission to promote and advance the democratization of governance at all levels of society through solidarity and cooperation among civil society organizations and democracy advocates in Asia.

It is against this backdrop that ADN embarks on its future journey. This Strategic Plan outlines the Future Priorities of ADN over the next five years building on not only what it has achieved within the constraints imposed by the distorted democratic eco-system but also aspiring to what an authentic democracy can offer to the Asians. In the process of preparing this Strategic Plan, we consulted several supporters and stakeholders to understand their perceptions of the relevance of ADN and what value it can add to bolster and augment the democratic movements in the region. The conversations with the ADN members as well as the democracy advocates from the region highlight the following achievements of ADN.

**Amplifying
the Voices of
Marginalized**

ADN has been able to support the struggles of marginalized groups by amplifying their voices and interpreting their issues through the lens of democracy and freedom. The diversity in the Governing Council has enhanced the understanding of the intersectionality of issues and tapped into the connectivity among different sectors.

**Information
Sharing &
Awareness
Building**

One strength of ADN lies in providing updates on struggles and resistance movements as they happen. By informing people about the recent events ADN has generated tremendous awareness among social movements and civil society which eventually catalyzed solidarity actions.

**Connecting the
Movements**

Extending solidarity to various social and political movements and connecting these movements across the region is an important task. ADN in recent years has been able to connect many such movements. The support it has provided in Hongkong, Myanmar, Cambodia directly, and other places indirectly paves a future pathway to deepening democracy.

**National &
Sub-national
Convening**

The periodic convening at the national and subnational levels beyond the regional level is inspiring as these in-country events have brought democracy and human rights activists together, created spaces for reflection, and strategized future actions.

**Regional
Solidarity**

ADN has evolved as a regional support mechanism for solidarity among the civil society in the region. It has been able to bring together key stakeholders from different countries for meaningful conversations. Such convening has become a source of inspiration for others in difficult situations.

**Popular
Research &
Dissemination**

The Asia Democracy Chronicles (a flagship monthly publication of ADN) and the research work supported by ADN have showcased grassroots efforts and progressive thinking.

A Fresh Look at the Challenges of Democracy in Asia Today and the Task Ahead

The path to recovery and consolidation of democracy in Asia is going to be a long and winding one. The challenges that we experience today are indicative of a greater backsliding of democracy in the future. With the rise of populist-authoritarianism in Asia, illiberal actors have connived to seize the opportunity to encroach upon civic spaces and cultivate intolerance and divisiveness in our societies. Equipped with incessant propaganda machinery, the people are made to believe that the misogynistic, patronizing, super-nationalist, and inflated “strong men” would provide alternatives to democracy and redress the inequalities and underdevelopment. The incursion of such perceptions among people is becoming pervasive. In this context, the progressive civil society’s tasks have become daunting but indispensable.

Recession to Resilience: Road to Democracy Renewal in Asia
Asia Democracy Network, 2021

Democracy in Asia is at multiple crossroads. In this section, we highlight some of the pressing challenges democracy faces today in Asia. This analysis becomes the basis for ADN to define its strategic positioning and future programming.

DECLINING CIVIC SPACE

Civic space is the environment that enables civil society to play a role in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of our societies. Its quality depends on the freedom to express, assemble, associate, and participate. In other words, this is the space outside the government where citizens come together, organize, and engage in collective action for the well-being of their communities.

Today, this civic space is under seizure. The restriction of civic spaces undermines the very foundation of democracy. A thriving democracy requires active citizen participation, open dialogue, and the protection of fundamental rights. When these aspects are curtailed, the democratic fabric weakens. Repressive laws and actions by the state apparatus to restrict freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and participation are rampant. Too

many democracy and human rights defenders are being restricted, harassed, detained, tortured, subjected to forceful disappearances, and killed. The space for dissent is severely restricted.

Too many governments have changed legislation that affects civil society's work and access to resources. They find difficulties in accessing decision-makers to provide input to law- and policymaking. Dwindling civic spaces and freedoms, negative propaganda, and hostility by the state against the rights of activists and civil society have been extended to impose restrictions on digital spaces as well.

The rise of digital authoritarianism poses a significant threat to civic spaces in Asia. Governments employ sophisticated surveillance technologies to monitor and control online activities, curbing freedom of expression and limiting the ability of citizens to organize and mobilize through digital platforms.

Addressing the issue of shrinking civic spaces in Asia requires a concerted effort from both domestic and international actors. Governments must uphold democratic principles, protect human rights, and create an enabling environment for civic participation. Civil society organizations, activists, and citizens play a crucial role in advocating for their rights and holding governments accountable. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the protection of civic spaces in Asia is not just a regional concern but a global imperative for the promotion of democracy and human rights.

RISE OF POPULIST-AUTHORITARIANISM

Populist authoritarianism is increasingly becoming a global trend. Most of these populist authoritarian regimes in Asia are characterized by centralization of power and highly tailored democracy. Many of these populist authoritarian leaders have ascended to power using the democratic processes, however, once they are in power, they take all measures to subvert democracy including tampering with the constitution. Although not all populist leaders are authoritarians, nevertheless, many authoritarian leaders have captured power riding on populism. As they capture power, they start discrediting the institutions of checks and balances as well as dismantling any dissent against them.

A lot of these populist authoritarian regimes have strong right-wing political views. They capitalize on popular prejudices and create an 'othering' effect on people. In most countries where populist authoritarian regimes have taken over, the authoritarian leaders have successfully divided the people into the line of 'us - the pure' versus 'other - the enemy'. This 'othering' has been done based on ethnicity, religion, language, and other identities.

One of the common characteristics exhibited by most populist authoritarian leaders in Asia is their inherent loath toward pluralistic politics. They often claim that they only represent people. Often, they make all efforts not only to dismantle the old social order based on class, caste, or political thoughts (left and right) but to establish a social order in the name of 'The People' and their 'Voices' at the expense of liberal democratic values.

A lot of these populist-authoritarian leaders in Asia have successfully been able to garner support or coerced to take support from historically illiberal countries like China. China's influence on many of these countries through employing a unique set of tactics in the economic (unsustainable loan) and information (hostile takeover of media institutions) domains undermines many developing countries' democratic institutions and future prosperity as their dependence on China grows. The Chinese regime not only ensures that the current populist-authoritarian regime depends on them but also when they are replaced by popular movements, the new regime continues this dependence.

DISINFORMATION, FAKE NEWS, AND DIGITAL SPACE

Systematic dissemination of disinformation and fake news has always been a preferred weapon for illiberal forces posing grave challenges to inclusive democracy. False and hateful content has long been spread by governments, interest groups, individuals, and other entities through non-digital means. However, growing internet penetration, access to smart devices, and the sophistication of digital technology have enabled the anti-democratic illiberal forces to disseminate disinformation and fake news much faster and wider. In recent years, Asia has witnessed a growing debate about *information* disorder, a term including misinformation, disinformation, mal-information, and hate speech. This phenomenon has had a deeper impact on democracy in Asia much like any other part of the world, however, the Asian region is particularly vulnerable because of lower digital literacy. Many people in the region are avid social media users and passive consumers of the content pedaled on these platforms, making them more vulnerable to information manipulation. Authoritarian governments of all shades and colors across Asia have been using false propaganda, altering historical facts, and demonizing opponents rampantly. The influence of illiberal and undemocratic foreign forces in spreading disinformation is creating new vulnerabilities and instability in many domestic contexts.

While citizens and civil society expect their elected governments to formulate appropriate policies and regulations to check these unbridled disinformation campaigns, many governments in Asia are either contemplating or have introduced new legislation to check fake news. The recent trends suggest that in the pretext of checking disinformation and fake news many authoritarian states and leaders are advocating for legislation that curtails the freedom of expression, specifically targeting individual actors, dissenting views, and alternative news portals. Of late, efforts are on to impose control over the global technology and social media industries. While many such global companies have historically shrugged off their responsibilities for using their platforms to pedal disinformation to citizens, the rule of law and freedom of expression cannot be allowed to be victims of this emerging legislation spearheaded by undemocratic governments to combat fake news.

DIVISIVENESS, POLARIZATION, AND MAJORITARIANISM

Political polarization using ethnicity, language, religion, and ideology is on the rise in Asia. These polarization projects directed by many authoritarian leaders are leading many Asian countries toward a dysfunctional social order and erosion of democratic ideals, values, and institutions. Although political polarization runs deep in most Asian countries as many of them evolve as a nation-state, the phenomena of neo-polarization over the last two decades have reached a stage beyond any political settlement or any form of bridging. The political polarization, in several Asian countries with weaker democratic institutional bases, has penetrated the executive and military, thereby, undermining countries' electoral processes. This poses a grave threat to liberal democracy based on pluralistic values.

Many authoritarian leaders in Asia have used ultra-nationalism as a plank to drive the country to become a theocratic or ethnocentric state. More importantly, polarized political conflicts often resounded throughout society, foddering intolerance, and severe violence against the ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. The right-wing political forces across Asia are the sole beneficiaries of such divisive polarization, however, examples are plenty where an erosion in democratic pluralism is apparent.

The consequences of polarization and majoritarianism are far-reaching. Social cohesion has been jeopardized as communities become more divided, fostering distrust and animosity among different groups. This often leads to social unrest, protests, and even violence, as witnessed in various parts of Asia. The erosion of social cohesion further hampers efforts to address common challenges, such as economic inequality, environmental issues, and public health crises.

Politically, majoritarianism has resulted in the concentration of power in the hands of a few, limiting the effectiveness of democratic institutions. The exclusion of minority voices from the decision-making process has led to policies that do not adequately address the needs and concerns of diverse populations. This, in turn, may contribute to political instability and hinder sustainable development.

Divisiveness, polarization, and majoritarianism in Asia pose significant challenges to the region's social fabric and democratic governance. Efforts to address these issues must involve promoting dialogue, fostering inclusivity, and strengthening institutions that safeguard minority rights. As Asia continues to grapple with these challenges, it is crucial for civil societies in the region must find balanced and inclusive approaches that respect diversity and uphold the principles of democracy. Only through such measures can Asia hope to build a future that embraces the richness of its diversity while ensuring the well-being of all its citizens.

Identity Revisited – Vision, Mission, and Goal

VISION

The founding and current **Vision** of ADN reads “ADN is committed to building a just, equitable, and sustainable community of democratic societies in Asia, where all human rights of all individuals, groups, and peoples are fully respected and realized”.

To acknowledge the expanding diversity across peoples’ identities and increasing obstacles to exercising citizenship in the Asian region, we propose to recalibrate the articulation of ADN’s **Vision** as follows, while keeping its founding spirit and philosophy intact.

All Asians, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, color, religion, age, language, territory, birth, and any other identities, enjoy freedoms and dignities, exercise choices and rights, and access full citizenship and justice.

MISSION

Similarly, the founding and current **Mission (raison d’être)** reads “ADN works to promote and progress democratization and democratic governance at all levels of society through effective solidarity and cooperation among civil society organizations and democracy advocates in Asia”.

In Asia, over the last few decades, democracy in its broadest sense has been losing its vitality and essence quite rapidly. This is happening despite so-called ‘free and fair’ elections being held almost regularly country by country. Representative democracy, despite being the necessary pre-condition for substantive democracy to flourish and thrive, is failing to uphold basic human rights and the participation of people in the key decision-making in societal matters that affect their quality of life and freedoms. In a way, democratic governance in Asia is at multiple crossroads. This necessitates ADN to revisit and rearticulate its **Mission** statement as follows.

ADN works to strengthen democracy movements in Asia by mobilizing progressive civil society and democracy advocates, on the one hand, and by engaging with resource organizations, states, and global governance institutions, on the other hand, to foster solidarity and cooperation sub-nationally, nationally, regionally, and globally.

GOAL

The current Goal of ADN emphasizes building a stronger regional democracy movement and network engaged effectively in international advocacy through collaboration with governments, inter-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders in Asia and beyond. Considering the proposed revisions in ADN's Vision and Mission statements, the revised Goal of ADN reads as follows.

Constructing a resilient civil society-led network with multi-stakeholder engagement that fosters democratic movements, promotes democratic institutions, ideals, and practices, and enhances civic spaces in Asian societies.

The Vision, Mission, and Goal become the fulcrum for defining ADN's future programmatic priorities as outlined in the following section.

Core Program Strategies

STRATEGIC PROGRAM 1 CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY

The unceasing backsliding of democracy in the Asian region necessitated ADN in the past decade to mobilize the democratic actors nationally and regionally through its strategic program – Building Democratic Unity and Solidarity. This effort needs to be deepened further and supported wider through the following strategic actions.

a. National and Subnational Convening and Consolidation

ADN mandates itself to build and nurture a civil society-led network that engages with multiple stakeholders in the region. Despite significant contributions made by civil society toward promoting democracy and defending human rights in most Asian countries, they have been working in their preferred silos. ADN will mobilize democracy activists and actors through a series of national and sub-national dialogues in priority countries (particularly in countries where democracy is receding). However, it will be important to tap the energy from countries with relatively consolidated democracies such as South Korea and Japan for solidarity and support. Opportunities will be explored to engage with the state and other actors to build stronger multi-stakeholder demands for deepening democratic values, practices, and institutions.

b. Regional Solidarity, Support, and Mobilizing People's Movements

In continuation with the efforts started in the last decade, ADN will continue to strengthen regional solidarity and support at the regional level. ADN's Asia Regional Assembly has evolved as one of the most valuable and trusted venues for dialogue, sharing, and strategizing supportive actions for deepening democracy. ADN will continue to nurture and expand this multi-stakeholder space involving national, regional, and global pro-democratic actors.

c. Decolonizing Asian Democracy Narratives

In the post-colonial era, democracy has evolved in diverse forms in various parts of Asia. The social contract between citizens and the state is rapidly changing in the region. The meaning and expression of citizenship and the way they experience the state's action or inaction varies across the region depending on the nature of democratic polity. In the absence of a stronger Asian democracy narrative, authoritarian forces are pushing

for narratives that are contradictory to universal democratic values. ADN in collaboration with other democratic actors will work towards developing and nurturing a popular narrative that conforms to Asian values and norms on one hand and counter the false and misleading campaigns by undemocratic and authoritarian actors.

d. Nurturing Media Networks, Nationally and Regionally

Many Asian countries are witnessing increasing suppression, harassment, and clampdowns on media and journalists who choose to speak the truth to the power. Many media houses are witnessing hostile takeovers by both domestic and foreign crony capitalists that are close to undemocratic regimes. The journalists who dare to bring out the truth to the public, are castigated, harassed, and incarcerated, often by using state apparatus. ADN will extend collaboration with the existing media networks, develop new networks where needed, and catalyze collaborative spaces between civil society, democracy advocates, and media. The commentaries, analyses, columns, and ground-up reports carried out by the flagship publication of ADN – [Democracy Chronicle](#) – will contribute to informing the media community about the reality of democracy across the region.

e. Protecting Democracy Champions

Many champions of democracy including media persons who advocate for freedom of information and free speeches are in danger today in several Asian countries. These champions are essential actors in promoting healthy civic space, protecting human rights, and nurturing democracy. They must be supported and protected. ADN will work towards creating a human and institutional safety net that could respond responsively, rapidly, and effectively. ADN will proactively nurture solidarity actions such as mass public awareness, digital and physical information campaigns, and press releases, among other actions through national and regional networking and convening.



STRATEGIC PROGRAM 2

INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY THROUGH YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Young people comprise approximately half of the Asian population. They represent a repository of democratic changes, creative solutions to public policies, and innovative approaches to decision-making. Yet, they are under-represented in most democratic governance institutions and decision-making. This exclusion of youth from formal political institutions and policy development perpetuates a sense of disillusionment among them, even as they remain politically active, particularly in universities. It is pivotal to bridge this gap and foster a sense of belonging and influence among the youth in political spheres to harness their potential for societal progress truly. Political parties and policymakers in democratic countries must chart ways to actively engage and motivate the youth to participate in the nation's democracy and development.

In recent times, Asian youth have been at the forefront of many democratic movements in the region, however, greater support for such democratic action is far from satisfactory. The integration of youth voices in modern-day democracy is not merely a matter of representation but a crucial step towards realizing a more inclusive, progressive, and thriving society. Young people's participation as active citizens is crucial to building and nurturing democracy movement in the region. Building on the earlier efforts toward this goal ADN will prioritize the following strategic actions.

a. Asian Youth Network

Over the years, ADN has consciously cultivated youth leadership and created opportunities for young people, in general, to learn about democracy and human rights, connect to other democracy champions, and participate in ADN's and its constituent members' programs. This requires further consolidation of the existing social capital as well as engaging with Gen Z and Gen Alpha to prepare them to become effective democracy advocates. This effort needs to be taken in multiple ways: forging an organic connection with activities related to the subnational, national, and regional democracy consolidation and solidarity actions, creating learning opportunities for youth political leaders from the progressive polity, and catalyzing national and regional networks of youth leadership across civil and political societies, business, and academic institutions. A special effort is required to foster

inter-generational dialogues to reduce the gulf between generations and their outlook toward democracy and governance. The recent launch of the South Asian Youth Network – SAYN at the 2023 ADN Assembly (in Bangkok) is an encouraging step toward the mobilization of youth at the sub-regional level. However, going forward, such a nascent network would require more support.

b. Asia Democracy Academy

In the past few years, ADN has conceptualized and implemented several flagship initiatives to create educational and learning opportunities for young people. Youth Assembly, Youth Leadership Development Program, and Democracy Academy have been some of ADN's leading efforts to inculcate democratic values in young people and encourage them to become democracy advocates. Many of the alumni of these programs have already evolved as significant democracy advocates in their respective contexts.

Building on the initial success of these initiatives, ADN will pursue [Asia Democracy Academy](#) as the flagship umbrella program under which several such educational opportunities will be nurtured. The efforts to build partnerships with academic institutions will be the mainstay toward this goal and the sustainability of the program. In many Asian countries, higher education institutions (HEIs) are making endeavors to deepen community-HEIs engagement that are socially responsible and responsive. ADN will map such initiatives, dovetail and mainstream democracy education across faculties and departments. This will entail not only organizing training, workshops, and seminars but also joint research with young students to immerse and expose them to relevant societal and political issues. As far as possible, the Democracy Academy will be contextualized (local language, appreciating local issues as well as democratic challenges) by catalyzing partnerships between civil society and HEIs.



STRATEGIC PROGRAM 3

ENABLING LOCAL-GLOBAL ECO-SYSTEM FOR DEMOCRACY

Global support for democracy and human rights is at a crossroads. Overall support for democratic decentralization, local democracy, and upholding human rights by the multilateral and bilateral official donors and global institutions has been continuously dwindling. However, a host of new global initiatives have also emerged to garner support for democracy and human rights. Over the decade, ADN has made considerable efforts to participate in and influence these initiatives. ADN commits itself to deepening direct engagement with the following notable initiatives in collaboration with other partner institutions.

- Summit for Democracy
- Communities of Democracy (CoD)
- World Human Rights Cities Forum
- Right to City
- Open Government Partnership
- European Union
- OECD
- Bali Democracy Forum / Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF)
- Other existing platforms and institutions

The engagements with such global institutions must be built on and informed by ADN's remarkable outreach to the national, sub-national, and local democracy actors. This will ensure that the policies formulated and propagated by these global institutions are more informed and relevant to the unique challenges at the local level.





STRATEGIC PROGRAM 4

EXPLORING THE NEW FRONTIERS IN DEMOCRACY

The interventions suggested in this strategic program category are indeed new frontiers for ADN, although, in the past years, it has touched upon these critical issues through its capable national and regional partners. Understandably, it is not expected that all these suggested interventions would be included in the 'main frame' of ADN's intervention strategies in the immediate future, however, these sets of issues cannot be ignored for long if nations, territories, and communities need to address them within a democratic framework. We understand that each of these issues would require substantive technical expertise. However, the good news is that such expertise exists in the broader spheres of ADN's institutional outreach, and several partners are willing to share this expertise with ADN. Over the next few years, ADN will reach out to several of its partners to offer its social capital on one hand and seek assistance to sharply define many of these issues that align with the vision of ADN.

a. Business, Human Rights and social responsibilities

Business activities affect not only the customers, employees, and suppliers along the supply chains but also the communities and the environment. Businesses must respect the established national and international laws and norms of human rights. This is a loud and clear message in the 21st century. However, the reality is far from ideal. A lot more industries and their associations are yet to demonstrate full commitment to respect for human rights and social responsibilities. Although it is comparatively a new area for ADN, it will endeavor to build a broader understanding of this issue by forging partnerships with other specialist organizations working in the civil society sphere.

b. Gender, Democracy, and Peace Movements

Achieving gender equality is a crucial goal of inclusive democracy. Establishing women's rights and those of gender minorities (individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, and/or intersex) must go hand in hand with the democratic movements. Women and LGBTQIA+ across Asia are

leading numerous struggles for gender equality, human rights, and peace in society. ADN must continue its commitment to extending solidarity and proactive support to these movements by forging partnerships with key actors in the region. It will highlight the struggles of these movements and key issues through convening, research, and analysis.

c. Harnessing Digital Technology for Democracy

Rapidly advancing digital technologies have had an intense impact on democracy. They have provided new platforms for civic engagement, dissemination of information beyond borders, and access to data unavailable hitherto to citizens. Digital transformation promises to improve efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and openness of governance, promote sustainability, and increase accountability and civic participation. However, these technologies have also been subjected to censorship, surveillance, risking privacy, data protection, and weaponization by anti-democratic forces. Citizens are at the receiving of the arbitrariness between the global tech firms and their government-sponsored scooping. ADN will act to address these unequal relations between citizens and other actors by collaborating with the pro-democracy tech actors. Most importantly, ADN will create educational opportunities for democracy advocates in the region to enhance their perspectives and build capacities to critically examine the role digital technology plays in promoting or undermining democratic governance and active citizenship.

d. Climate Change and Democracy

Asia's vulnerabilities to climate change are urgent and imminent. The intersectionality of the climate crisis and democracy is now gradually being appreciated. At the heart of democracy are citizens' well-being, safety, and sovereignty along with the accountability of the elected governments and democratic institutions. An authentic democracy has the potential to offer pathways for consensus building among governments, citizens, businesses, and civil society that are essential for addressing the climate crisis. ADN, in partnership with other existing initiatives, will deepen conversations across stakeholders to establish clear pathways for global and regional actions.

Theory of Change and Pathways to Change

GOAL	Constructing a resilient civil society-led network with multi-stakeholder engagement that fosters democratic movements, promotes democratic institutions, ideals, and practices, and enhances civic spaces in Asian societies.
CHANGE DOMAINS	Strategic Program 1 Democratic Consolidation
CHANGE PATHWAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National and Subnational Convening & Consolidation of multi-stakeholders• Regional Solidarity, Support & Convening• Elevating Asian Democracy Narratives• Nurturing Media Cooperation Nationally and Regionally• Protecting Democracy Champions
INDICATORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreement among multi-stakeholders to collectivize at the national level• The national civil society actors coalesce at the regional level• A pan-Asia media network is germinated• The democracy actors in distress feel supported• Growing agreement among democracy actors about Asian values of democracy

Strategic Program 2

Inclusive Democracy for and by the Youth

- Asian Youth Network
- Asia Democracy Academy

- Trained youth take proactive action to promote democracy nationally and regionally
- Trained youth collectivize nationally and regionally

Strategic Program 3

Enabling Local-Global Eco-System for Democracy

- Engaging with existing and emerging global networks & initiatives

- Global institutions expand support to national and regional democracy actors
- Enhanced pro-democracy civil society participation in the decision making of global institutions

Strategic Program 4

Exploring the New Frontiers in Democracy

- Business, Human Rights & social responsibilities
- Gender, Democracy, & Peace Movements
- Harnessing Digital Technology for Democracy
- Climate Change & Democracy

- Partnerships are developed with key expert institutions in these domains
- ADN partners include these domains in their respective work, breaking down silos

Governance and Management

The overall governance will be carried out through the following institutional structures as laid out in the ADN Constitution.

General Assembly (GA)

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making structure constituted by the members. The Governing Assembly will meet every two years to review and approve the Audited Statements of Accounts; Strategic Plan; Governance Policies; Amendment to the By-Laws; Approval of General Members; and Elect Governing Council.

Governing Council (GC)

The Governing Council will act as the executive of the General Assembly and will be constituted from among the representative members. The Governing Council will be composed of 5 to 11 members with a sound gender balance. The tenure of the Governing Council will be for two years and can be re-elected for one more term. The ADN Constitution allows for an Alternate Representative. Any Governing Council member may assign their alternate representatives to perform the duties and responsibilities on his/ her behalf. The Governing Council will normally meet at least once a year.

The Governing Council will elect the Chair and Vice-Chair from among the members to carry out its functions. The Governing Council will also appoint the Secretary-General and Treasurer who do not need to be a member of the Governing Council. The selection and appointment of these officials and their functioning will follow the procedures as laid out in the ADN Constitution.

Advisory Group (AG)

The Advisory Group is composed of internationally reputed individuals who are willing to provide advisory support in any way needed by the ADN including advancing its strategic objectives and positioning.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat shall be composed of professional staff that will implement the Strategic and Program Plans of ADN as well as provide services to the Members, Governing Council, Secretary General, and Treasurer.

ADN Milestones

Date/Year	Program
October 20-21, 2013	Asia Democracy Network Founding Assembly
July 17-18, 2014	Regional Conference on "Thailand: Human Rights and Democracy in Crisis" Quezon City, Philippines
October 10, 2014	Cambodia Solidarity Visit - Phnom Pehn, Cambodia
October 14, 2014	1st Global Solidarity Conference on Sri Lanka - Bangkok, Thailand
August 2-8, 2014	Glocal Advocacy Leadership in Asia (GALAA) "Mainstreaming Democracy and Human Rights" - Bangkok, Thailand
November 24-25, 2014	[EAI-ADN] Empowering Community of Democracies Conference - Seoul, Korea
January 31-Feb 1, 2015	International Solidarity Conference on Justice and Accountability in Sri Lanka - Bangkok, Thailand
March 23-24, 2015	Strengthening Democracy in Asia: Inclusion, Participation, and Rights - New Delhi, India
August 1-8, 2015	Glocal Advocacy Leadership in Asia (GALAA) "Mainstreaming Democracy and Human Rights" - Bangkok, Thailand
February 17-28, 2016	International Conference on Accountability and Justice in Sri Lanka: Moving forward for Transitional Justice Colombo, Sri Lanka
April 7-9, 2016	Network of Young Democratic Asians Conference Manila, Philippines
June 20, 2016	International Solidarity Conference on Cambodia Bangkok, Thailand
August 15-16, 2016	Asian Civil Society Forum on SDG 16
August 10-17, 2016	4th Glocal Advocacy Leadership in Asia Academy
August 20-21, 2016	Democratic Coalition Building in Asia (DCBA) Bali, Indonesia

Date/Year	Program
October 18-20, 2016	International Conference on the 25th Anniversary of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia Phnom Penh, Cambodia
2017	DCBA Follow up in Nepal, Japan, S. Korea, Indonesia
May 13-20, 2017	Asia Youth Leadership Forum for Democracy (AYLD) Seoul, Gwangju, Korea
August 21-22, 2017	Asia Democracy Conference 2017 "Culture and Democracy - Inclusive and Participatory Democracy for Sustainable Development" Jakarta, Indonesia
October 18-24, 2017	5th Glocal Advocacy Leadership in Asia Academy - East Asia. Phnom Penh, Cambodia
November 12-16, 2017	5th Glocal Advocacy Leadership in Asia Academy - South Asia Pokhara, Nepal
August 9, 2018	Roundtable Discussion on Cambodia's Democracy in Crisis Seoul, South Korea
February 26-28, 2019	Ulaanbaatar Democracy Forum 2019 – "Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, and Peace through SDG 16+"
April 1 -3, 2019	Democratic Consolidation in Asia: Renewing Commitment to Uphold and Promote Democracy Together - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
May 15-19, 2019	Cultivating Next Generation Democracy Advocates: Asia Democracy Youth Network Consultation, Gwanju, Korea
June 21,22, 2019	Towards Building Regional Solidarity to Reclaim Civic Space in Southeast Asia: Regional Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression - Jakarta, Indonesia
July 26-27, 2019	Hong Kong Public Discussion Salon: People's Movements in Asia, HK, SAR
Aug 23, 2019	Democratic Consolidation: Timor-Leste - Dili, Timor Leste
October 14-16, 2019	Busan Democracy Forum 2019 – "Transformative Global Citizenship Education for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies – Role of SDG Target 4.7 and Goal 16
July 2020	Blended Learning Course for Local Actors: Localizing Human Rights in the SDGs Processes: Jointly organized by RWI, UCLG-ASPAC, and ADN-JANIC

Date/Year	Program
December 15th and 17th, 2020	Global Youth Assembly: Building Democratic Resilience Across Generations and Border
Apr 23, 2021	Solidarity Night for Hong Kong Democracy Indonesia
May 18, 2021	Solidarity Night for Hong Kong Democracy Japan
Jul 31, 2021	Solidarity Night for Hong Kong Democracy - Korea
November 23-24, 2021	Asia Democracy Assembly (online)
February 22, 2022	China's Rise Under the Lens - Human Rights and Democracy Under Risk Research Released
May 18-20, 2022	Gwanju Youth Democracy Forum
June 11-12, 2022	Exhibition to Remember the 3rd Anniversary of the Hong Kong Movement London, United Kingdom
October 26-28, 2022	Asia-Africa Democracy Forum (AADF) Online
November 7-9, 2022	Asia Democracy Assembly - Bali, Indonesia
June, 2023	The China Gambit Research Released
September 2023	Activism in Asia: Elevating Social Impact and Sustaining Movements in Exile Tokyo, Japan
November 15-20, 2023	The Youth Democratic Solidarity and Leadership Training 2023
November 21-22, 2023	Asia Democracy Assembly, Bangkok

