Local initiatives represent an array of available development solutions to address existing and emerging environmental challenges as well as bear social and economic impacts. Yet, these successful initiatives are not strongly linked to institutional and policy mechanisms for sustainable development throughout the Global South. The reasons being low awareness of existing opportunities, inadequate mechanisms for community-level best practices to feed into sub-regional, regional and global institutions via knowledge and information sharing and technology transfer. The existence of such barriers/gaps has interrupted the organic flow of bottom-up approaches being incorporated into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) process. In part, such gaps are responsible for developing countries’ failure to meet many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is essential that sustainable development includes and integrates both top-down and bottom-up contrivances into the overall sustainable development governance architecture. Therefore, in order to realise sustainable development goals on a larger scale, community-level best practices should be contextualized and replicated across the Asia Pacific region and globally.

Having a variety of community-level best practices available for replication, the APFED Showcase Programme may be able to utilise South-South and Triangular Cooperation to more strongly integrate bottom-up initiatives into national, regional and global processes for sustainable development. From 2005-2010, the Programme provided solutions through pilot projects which aimed at inclusive innovations and green economy initiatives at the grassroots level, as well as, advocated stakeholder empowerment and access to information. The Programme has also acted as the mechanism through which interactive technical partnerships have formed between the APFED Showcase Programme Secretariat, regional research institutions and local project implementers. Community wisdom and involvement, optimisation of local resources, investment in alternative livelihoods and technologies are just several of the identified enabling conditions, making these pilot projects important to showcase for replication and/or scaling-up in other South Asian developing countries or regions that face similar development challenges.

This special session aims to:

- Provide an arena for various stakeholders to expand current dialogue on creating new partnerships and building upon existing partnerships for scaling-up and/or replicating successful initiatives that underpin the value of healthy environments and well-functioning human societies to transition toward sustainability.
- Act as an impetus to the discussions on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda by recognising the achievements of demand driven innovative community actions.
- Make a strong case for the criticality of grassroots projects for sustainable development in the region.

Answers to the following questions will be explored:

- How can local successes influence the sustainable development policy processes at national, regional and global levels, including the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda?
- Does South-South Cooperation provide a faster and reduced-cost opportunity to the global South to forge a new and more inclusive paradigm that secures sustainable development options for all citizens?
- How can the APFED Showcase Programme ensure transference of knowledge from successful local initiatives and sustainable regional partnerships throughout the global South and contribute to devising an inclusive development paradigm?
Various stakeholders will come together and engage in a vital dialogue, as a follow up to brief presentations of a few selected showcase projects. The exchange of information will provide a strategic direction for programmes like the APFED Showcase Programme, which can jumpstart the process of achieving well-being and sustainability by incubating local knowledge, linking it to macro-economic policy transformation and uniting local people and innovations.

Organisers:

Mr. Manesh Lacoul
United Nations Environmental Programme
Regional Office for Asia Pacific (ROAP)

Dr. M. A. Khwaja
Sustainable Development Policy Institute
Email: khwaja@sdpi.org