

## Asientag 2023: Gemeinsam durch die Klimakrise?



Photo: Valentina Kiefer

### **Impacts of Climate Change in the Realization of Human Rights in the Philippines and Nepal**

Climate destruction leads to numerous human rights violations worldwide. In Asia, for example, the human rights to food, water, and health are under massive threat. Those who stand up for them are increasingly at risk. Taking the experiences from Nepal and the Philippines, the workshop discussion revolved around how the rights of affected people can be protected, respected, and fulfilled.

Vennel Chenfoo and Sabine Pabst started off the workshop by providing background knowledge on the prevailing situation of climate destruction in the Philippines and Nepal respectively.

#### **Philippines: Climate activists are under systematic attack**

In the Philippines, Mr. Chenfoo, who is a climate and human rights advocate and currently in exile in Germany underscored that, “the struggle for climate justice is the struggle for social justice”. He furthered that the effects of climate change, particularly in the Philippines, due to rising and warming of temperature threaten food security and led to water scarcity, health risks, and an energy crisis. Despite the Philippines being vulnerable in climate catastrophe with an annual record of almost 20 typhoons annually with an increasingly stronger intensity, “the government’s response is unsustainable and unresponsive to the needs of the communities”, Mr. Chenfoo remarked. “Response to calamities is merely dole outs and relief operations only”, he added.

Adding insult to the injury, climate activists are under systematic attack and threats by the government as they call for social justice and people-driven solutions to the climate destruction. Records provided by Mr. Chenfoo showed that 80% of the murdered environmental activities in the country are from Southern Philippines, where he hails from, and a large portion of the victims were indigenous leaders.

### **Nepal: The marginalized are most affected**

In Nepal, Ms. Pabst shared the staggering effects of the climate situation to the lives of many communities in the country. A video presentation by FIAN Nepal gave a short overview of the actual damage being faced by vulnerable communities in Nepal due to the alarming trend of rising global temperature. Ms. Pabst underscored that communities in Nepal have been experiencing incremental damages to the lives, livelihood, and even the future of residents as glacier-related flooding ravaged towns and villages. In her discussion she stressed that “most of the people that are affected [by the climate catastrophe] are the most marginalized.”

Furthermore, the discussion opened the important role of civil society organizations (CSOs) as a driving force in facilitating community people in the fight against the threats of climate crisis that have degraded and continually generate risks to human rights of many Nepali communities.

Breakout sessions with participants enabled deeper discussion and meaningful exchange of views about the intersectionality of climate justice and human rights together with the two resource persons and the moderator.

### **Activism becomes more dangerous**

Reflections from the discussion and breakout sessions shared the same view that activism has become more dangerous among advocates and activists, the intersectionality of climate crises with social and economic issues, and the need to hold big actors such as transnational companies and states accountable for their human rights abuses. One of the participants expressed the importance of making sure that development cooperation responds to the needs and the happenings on the ground “as Germans, we have [the responsibility] to monitor our own government and ensure that cooperation program[s] are responsive to human rights and climate-related issues.” Another participant emphasized the need in “strengthening diaspora’s awareness on the issues and the causes [of climate justice].”

*Report by Kevin Donaire*