Introduction
It was a great opportunity to be able to participate in the APRRN’s 7th Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights (APCRR7) held in Bangkok, Thailand during 21 to 25 October 2018. COAST is a member of APRRN and that’s why we participate in it. Participants from all the member organizations in Asia Pacific countries as well as many refugee participants took part in this great assembly.

Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Summit of Refugees (APSOR)</td>
<td>22 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Regional Round Table: Protecting Rohingya Refugees in South Asia: Challenges, Opportunities and Ways forward</td>
<td>22 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Understanding APRRN’s New Constitution and Structure</td>
<td>23 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>APRRN’s theory of change and development of strategic plan</td>
<td>23 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Election of APRRN</td>
<td>23 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>10 years of APRRN: Plenary Session</td>
<td>24 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Breakout workshop: Developing an APRRN Strategy for Engagement with the Rohingya Refugee Crisis</td>
<td>24 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Thematic Working Group sessions</td>
<td>25 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Geographic Working Group Sessions</td>
<td>25 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Closing and Feedback</td>
<td>25 Oct 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asia Pacific Summit of Refugees (APSOR)
This whole day workshop was fully participated by the refugees themselves from different countries. Najeeba Wazefadost, a former refugee girl of Afghanistan and who is now the member of the Steering Committee of the Global Summit of Refugees (GSOR) facilitated the entire session and cooperated by Tin Ma Ma Oo, another member of GSOR and also a refugee from Myanmar.

This summit was facilitated from Bangkok with connected at the same time in different areas including Iran, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia. They were connected via online with the main summit in Bangkok.

It was a wonderful experience for me to learn so many things about the refugees and their situation in the global context right now. Najeeba was a little Afghan refugee girl when she was only 10 years old and she had to run towards Iranian border with whatever she could bear in her small hands. Now she is leading a global summit as a refugee leader. It was an wonderful opportunity to talk to her personally and share our thinking and work on refugees in Bangladesh.

Understanding APRRN’s New Constitution and Structure
As COAST is a member of APRRN, we need to understand the constitution and the structure of this umbrella network. the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) has actively participated in consultations with states, international organisations, civil society organisations, refugees, and other relevant actors to consider and comment on the development of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

It is discussed that APRRN is a network consisting of more than 340 civil society organisations and individuals from 28 countries for advancing the rights of refugees in the Asia Pacific region. APRRN aims to advance the rights of refugees and other people in need of protection through joint advocacy, capacity strengthening, resource sharing and outreach.

There are 4 geographical working groups, namely (1) South Asia, (2) South East Asia, (3) East Asia and (4) Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. And this network has 7 thematic working groups, namely: (1) Durable Solutions, (2) Gender, Women and Diversity, (3) Immigration Detention, (4)
Legal Aid and Advocacy, (5) Refugee Leadership and Participation, (6) Regional Protection, and (7) Youth.

There is a chair and co-chair of APRRN and also every geographic and thematic working group also has a chair and a co-chair to advance the programs of the network. Recently after the Rohingya refugee influx it has created a Task Force on the Rohingya refugees considering the intensity of the crisis and APRRN is actively working on this issue. As a local organization COAST and other members are cooperating.

**Election of APRRN**

After 2016 APCRR6, APRRN has the new election during the General Assembly and has new set of leaders. This time again Mr. Yiombi Thona has elected as the Chair of APRRN and Mr. Ashok is elected as the Deputy Chair of APRRN in place of Ms. Lillian Fan. 7 Thematic and 4 geographic working groups also have election and new set of chair and deputy chair. As the full member COAST has the right to vote and COAST exercised the right.

**Breakout workshop on Rohingya Refugee crisis and COAST Campaign**

There were quite a few parallel workshops held on different issues and thematic groups. I have focused on the Rohingya refugee crisis issue to participate and contribute. When I spoke in this session I emphasized on the necessity of the advocacy on the refugee issue overriding the need of the relief distribution and other services delivery. I have mentioned that COAST focused more on the localization to better address issue as well as promoting the Grand Bargain and Charter 4 Change issues in this regard.

Everyone appreciated the matter that COAST organized a campaign on holding the Myanmar Junta accountable for the genocide, rape and arson to the Rohingya people. I have also shared the success of this campaign that ICC (International Criminal Court) has got attention on it and took necessary actions on it. This is how we engage from the local to global arena.

**Conclusion**

During the election, the organizers ask the participants to share the news and posts regarding the event on twitter and facebook with the hashtag #apccrr7. As I didn’t have facebook ID, I shared a post on twitter about the assembly with the hashtag and it took the attention of the APRRN chair Mr. Yiombi Thona, who was not present in the event in Bangkok. He liked the twit, retweeted it and commented on it. I responded the comment and this is how we got personally introduced to each other. We shared a lot of ideas and had a good amount of conversation.

According to the COAST policy, when we participate in an international event we try to build communication and I took the opportunity. I hope I can carry this forward.

**Follow up: South Asia short course to organize in Bangladesh**

I have willingly taken the responsibility of organizing a short course on the refugee issues on behalf of APRRN under the South Asia geographic working group. It should be held between March to May in 2019 maybe in Dhaka or Cox’s Bazar. COAST will organize the event where participants from South Asian countries will participate. APRRN and the South Asia working group really appreciated the volunteering approach of COAST Trust.

**No photos for security**

Taking photos of this event and sharing in the social media was requested to be restricted. Because there were few activists participated in the assembly that were afraid of being identified in those photos and could have been harassed by their governments or security agencies afterwards. That’s why no photos are attached in this report as well.

**Learning and insights: “Nothing About Us Without Us”**

1. A slogan really inspired me on the very first day of the APSOR, where only the refugees participated and it is “Nothing About Us Without Us”. It is noticed that many activism and campaign is done for the refugees around the world without their participation and acknowledgement. So, my first and foremost learning is we should be able to include the
refugees’ voice in whatever we do for them. However, in Bangladesh, it is a bit challenging to invite the refugees to participate in public events. What we can do is to let them know what is going on and to take their consent about it.

2. Refugees should have their own dignity as an independent person and should not be confined in a camp like prisoners. They should have given legal identities and should be free to take part in every activity and necessity of life including education. For example, the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh could have been given ID as Rohingya refugee and are allowed to go everywhere in the country and take education, health, job and others as refugee. They have all human rights.

3. Refugees could have been turned into human resource from the burden, as they are being treated now. For this, they need education, life-skill training and opportunities to be able to realize other refugee rights. Neither they want to be a burden, nor it is expected. They have their ability to contribute.

Prepared by
Barkat Ullah Maruf
Assistant Director- Research, Social Media and ICT
COAST Trust