



Side-event to the  
UNESCAP Asia-  
Pacific Forum on  
Sustainable  
Development

**Informed Citizens, Societies and  
Governments for Sustainable and  
Resilient Recovery**

23 March, 2021

8:15pm - 9:45pm

Bangkok Time (UTC+7)

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# An informed society is an enabled society

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Governments, communities and individuals across the Asia-Pacific region will have many tough decisions to make if we are to achieve sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19. A precondition for doing this well will be to be well-informed.

Indeed, more than ever, people at all levels need to be able to rely on having access to the facts - and the skills to apply them - in order to make best use of the possibilities open to them. This access is emphasised across the SDGs, not least in SDG 16, but also in SDG 2 (agricultural market and research information), SDG 3 (public health information), SDG 8 (access to research and innovation), SDG 13 (awareness raising around climate change) and SDG 17 (access to science).

While access to information was all too often taken for granted before the pandemic, COVID-19 has underlined the need for more concerted action. Gaps in internet connectivity, in the availability of relevant content, and in skills have undermined resilience, and have meant that the pandemic (and the measures taken in response) has risked causing more harm than might have been the case.

This side event will draw on experience from civil society, government and the research field to explore the case for a holistic approach to promoting meaningful and equitable access to information, and the challenges to overcome. It will look, in particular, at the role that libraries of all types can play in helping the region, and the world, to build back better, and make recommendations on how governments can best unlock the potential of access to information as a driver of development across the Asia-Pacific region.

## Speakers

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Dilara Begum, East-West University, Bangladesh

Vicki McDonald, State Librarian of Queensland, Australia

Priyanka Mohan, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, India

## Moderator

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Stephen Wyber, Manager, Policy and Advocacy, IFLA