

WORKSHOP CONCEPT NOTE

## YOUTH AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION:

### Designing activities to trigger change among young consumers in Thailand

3-5 April 2024 | United Nations Conference Centre – Meeting Room H

#### BACKGROUND

By 2025, Gen Zs – born in the late 1990s to early 2010s – are set to make up at least a quarter of Asia’s population. As the next generation of Asian consumers comes of age, the choices they make while shopping have the potential to drive sustainable consumption, shape fairer production patterns, and reduce the environmental impact of purchases. They have a critical role to play in achieving SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production and SDG 13 on climate action.

To identify ways to support and promote responsible consumption, UNDP’s B+HR Asia project conducted a study – with support from the Government of Sweden and in collaboration with BIAS Inc., a behavior change company – exploring how young consumers in Asia think about sustainability and what motivates their purchases.

Using behavioural science techniques, the study mapped the purchasing practices of 5,000 young people in Asia across three categories of recent purchases – fashion, cosmetics and technology. This research was complemented by qualitative behavioural science experiments with more than 1,900 young people in Bangladesh and India aimed at unpacking their knowledge and attitudes about sustainability, as well as their willingness to pay a premium for sustainable products.<sup>1</sup> The research points to three key gaps in that can be targeted to promote responsible consumption:

- **There is an intent-action gap among young consumers.** In the study, 67% of people indicated that sustainability was an important consideration when researching a purchase. It also influenced their satisfaction after purchasing an item and the likelihood they would recommend it to family and friends. However, concerns about sustainability fall from view when the purchase is made. While many young people aspire to be conscious consumers, price, popularity and potential discounts still drive decision making at the time of purchase.
- When it comes to responsible consumption and sustainability, **youth tend to consider environmental concerns while paying less attention to labour practices** and the ethical treatment of workers.
- Most **young people feel that producers bear the primary responsibility for making products sustainable.** On the whole, they do not recognize their potential power as consumers to affect change in business practices.

Key findings of the research are summarized in a [recently published issue brief](#). The resulting insights can inform action – by consumers, producers and governments – to shape more sustainable, conscious patterns of consumption.

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<sup>1</sup> Breakdown of youth involved in the study: Gender – 54% male, 46% female; Age – 59% 18-21 years old; 41% 22-25 years old

WITH SUPPORT FROM



In December 2023, UNDP and BIAS brought together representatives of youth organizations from four countries – Bangladesh, India, Thailand and Viet Nam – to explore strategies and future activities to push for more responsible consumption and production practices. It also introduced explored how behavioural science can be used in influencing change on SDG 12 and 13. Thai representative identifies potential solutions leveraging five perspectives – communication, celebrity, competition, cognitive bias and capacity building.

## ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Having identified clear gaps – as well as some initial solutions to build from – UNDP and BIAS aim to bring together representatives of youth organizations in Thailand in a workshop to further develop and co-design strategies and future activities to push for more responsible consumption and production practices. The workshop will be immersive and utilize a behavioural science approach to identify barriers to responsible purchasing practices and generate ideas and potential solutions.

The workshop aims to identify activities and potential avenues for action that can be undertaken by UNDP, youth organizations, and other partners that will:

- Raise awareness among young people about sustainability
- Influence changes in the practices of young consumers and/or brands and producers
- Contribute to greater understanding and research on how to more effectively communicate sustainability and responsible consumption to young people in Asia

Identified activities may be included and/or supported through future programming of UNDP's B+HR Asia project.

## LOGISTICS

The workshop will be held on 3-5 April at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and aims to include 15-20 participants from Thailand along with the UNDP and BIAS implementing teams.

Youth participants should be 18-25 years old, representing a diversity of backgrounds and interest/experience working on policy, advocacy/community mobilization, and with the private sector within the scope of responsible consumption, sustainability, labour rights, fast fashion, and behavior change.

## LANGUAGE

The workshop will be conducted in English with Thai interpretation.