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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation

First session

Bangkok and online, 22–24 February 2023

Annotated provisional agenda*

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the first session of the Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation (section I) and the annotations thereto (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Making trade in Asia and the Pacific more competitive, sustainable and inclusive.
3. Advancing public-private partnerships and private sector networks to accelerate climate action and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. Mobilizing impact investment and foreign direct investment for sustainable development.
5. Enabling business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development.
6. Promoting regional cooperation in new and emerging technologies to achieve sustainable development.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its first session.

* The present document was submitted late owing to the need for the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission to consider it at its 403rd session, which was held on 8 December 2022.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening addresses

Opening addresses will be delivered by the Executive Secretary, other senior officials and government representatives.

The programme for the session will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/CTIEBI1-2023.

(b) Election of officers

The Committee will elect a Chair and Vice-Chairs for the session.

The list of participants for the session will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/CTIEBI1-2023.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Provisional agenda (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/1/Rev.1)

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/1/Add.1)

Annotation

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Committee, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

2. Making trade in Asia and the Pacific more competitive, sustainable and inclusive

Documentation

Making trade in Asia and the Pacific more competitive, sustainable and inclusive (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/2)

Towards a model chapter on trade in crisis situations in regional trade agreements (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/3)

Annotation

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other crises in recent years have revealed weaknesses in international trade as countries grappled with disruptions to supply chains, volatile transport costs and difficulties in securing essential supplies. Looking ahead, as countries in Asia and the Pacific recover, it will be vital to address the vulnerabilities laid bare by the pandemic, and to build preparedness against future crises, including rapidly rising inflation and the ongoing climate crisis.

Document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/2 contains an examination of how trade, as a key means of implementing sustainable development as recognized in Sustainable Development Goal 17, can be made more competitive, sustainable and inclusive as the Asia-Pacific region moves forward and faces future challenges. It includes an overview of how trade can be instrumental in

leveraging emerging opportunities in the digital economy to help diversify the trade basket of developing and least developed countries and countries with special needs through digital trade and integration. It contains a discussion on the opportunities and steps needed to make trade more climate-smart and sustainable, such as through the digitalization of trade and the removal of market access barriers to environmental goods and services. It also includes an exploration of how trade can be harnessed to benefit less-advantaged groups, such as women and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, by integrating them into global and regional value chains, including through regional cooperation.

The Committee may wish to consider the issues discussed in the document, share national experiences and priorities, and provide guidance to the secretariat for the future work of the subprogramme.

Document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/3 contains a model chapter on trade in crisis situations that may be included in existing and future regional and other trade agreements. The chapter establishes a mechanism to ensure a coordinated response to crises and promote cooperation on preparing for future crises, and it contains information on specific rights and obligations for trade in crisis situations, helping to reduce uncertainties and keep trade flowing during crises. The Committee may wish to provide its perspective on the potential application of the chapter and on the future work of the secretariat in support of trade negotiations.

The Committee may wish to encourage members to share their perspectives with respect to some of these policy issues.

3. Advancing public-private partnerships and private sector networks to accelerate climate action and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Documentation

Advancing public-private partnerships and private sector networks to accelerate climate action and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/4)

Strengthening infrastructure financing and public-private partnerships in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/INF/1)

Outcome of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2022 (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/INF/2)

Annotation

Building strong partnerships is essential for making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Governments continue to provide the impetus and important guidance on making such progress. Nevertheless, Governments, and the public sector more broadly, will only be able to achieve significant progress by enabling private sector actors to align themselves with sustainable development aims and to jointly deliver development objectives. Throughout the region, there are examples of public-private partnerships for building the infrastructure that is necessary for a green transformation of the economy. There are also examples of private sector networks and initiatives that are helping businesses to contribute to the achievement of the Goals, such as by committing to decarbonization and adopting environmental, social and governance principles, as well as sharing good practices, successful outcomes and knowledge across companies and countries.

Document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/4 contains an overview of the potential contributions of the private sector to better outcomes, both through private-private and public-private partnerships, and of the activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in this regard. While the fundamental purpose of business is to earn profits for the owners, in practice, business owners and managers are motivated by a range of factors, including contributing to better social outcomes. Providing the right incentives and building the right partnerships allows private enterprises to more fully contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Infrastructure partnerships are a prime example of this, where building capacity among the public and private sectors to understand the structure of risks, costs and benefits associated with major projects can be used to effectively mobilize resources towards more transformative and green projects.

In considering document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/4, the Committee may wish to provide guidance on what role members and associate members of ESCAP can play in harnessing the existing initiatives and projects of private sector enterprises in their economies and specific sectors or verticals, which ESCAP could prioritize for action through the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network, and in the implementation of the recently adopted Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business. The Committee may also wish to provide guidance on the aims and priorities of the Infrastructure Financing and Public-Private Partnership Network of Asia and the Pacific. In addition, it may wish to consider ways of using the network as a means of addressing selected Sustainable Development Goals and to align it with the activities of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network.

The Committee may wish to provide comments on the current work of the partnership networks supported by ESCAP: the Infrastructure Financing and Public-Private Partnership Network of Asia and the Pacific and the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network. Furthermore, the Committee may wish to indicate where the work of these networks can be strengthened and identify the particular needs of members with respect to infrastructure financing and private sector contributions to sustainable development.

The Committee will have before it information document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/INF/1 on strengthening infrastructure financing and public-private partnerships in Asia and the Pacific.

The Committee will also have before it information document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/INF/2 containing the outcome of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2022.

4. Mobilizing impact investment and foreign direct investment for sustainable development

Documentation

Mobilizing impact investment and foreign direct investment for sustainable development (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/5)

Annotation

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region would need an additional annual investment of \$1.5 trillion to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In a post-pandemic world, this figure is likely to be significantly higher, and private sector investors are key to bridging this gap. However, mobilizing

this investment will require a shift in investor practices from investing for profit to investing for impact.

Document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/5 contains an overview of emerging policy options to promote impact investing, drawing from policies and practices implemented by member States of ESCAP.

In particular, the specific focus of document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/5 is on foreign direct investment (FDI) for sustainable development, as it is one of the largest financial flows into developing countries. FDI offers promising, untapped potential for impacting and helping countries achieve their sustainable development priorities. However, FDI into key sustainable development sectors has yet to rebound from the pandemic and remains insufficient to meet the financing needs of most developing countries in Asia and the Pacific. Encouraging firms to direct their cross-border investments into priority sustainable development sectors of the region requires decisive policy action and measures from host countries in the region.

In addition, the document contains an overview of progress made in FDI flows in three areas relevant to sustainable development: gender, the digital economy and climate change. The document contains an outline of the key trends, opportunities and challenges for investment in each of these areas, before identifying the key actions that investment promotion agencies in the region can take to attract, promote and facilitate investment with sustainable development impacts in these three areas.

The Committee may wish to share national experiences, including effective practices and lessons learned, in order to mobilize impact investment and FDI for sustainable development.

The Committee may also wish to indicate the support required from the secretariat to promote impact investment and FDI for inclusive and sustainable development; make recommendations to the secretariat to advance these agendas, both nationally and regionally; and identify new and priority policy issues related to these agendas that the secretariat could address in greater detail.

5. Enabling business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development

Documentation

Enabling business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/6)

Annotation

The Sustainable Development Goals have contributed to transforming how businesses operate. Corporations are beginning to realign their priorities in the face of shifting demands from consumers, investors and employees. In addition, innovative business models such as social enterprises and inclusive businesses are emerging, which purposefully aim to address social and environmental challenges through market-based approaches and to provide livelihood opportunities, products and services to those at the base of the economic pyramid.

Governments in the Asia-Pacific region have spearheaded policies to enable such business innovations. Document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/6 contains an overview of emerging policy options to promote business innovation for

inclusive and sustainable development, drawing from policies and practices implemented by member States of ESCAP.

In addition, the important role that regional cooperation and South-South collaboration play in promoting business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development is highlighted in document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/6.

The Committee may wish to share experiences related to national and regional cooperation and South-South collaboration, including effective practices and lessons learned, in promoting business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development.

The Committee may also wish to indicate the support required from the secretariat to promote the agenda on enabling business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development; make recommendations to the secretariat on advancing business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development, both nationally and regionally; and identify new and priority policy issues related to business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development that the secretariat should address in greater detail.

6. Promoting regional cooperation in new and emerging technologies to achieve sustainable development

Documentation

Promoting regional cooperation in new and emerging technologies to achieve sustainable development (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/7)

Annotation

Technological development is considered a key driver for progress towards sustainable development. Technologies, particularly the new and emerging technologies, including the fourth industrial revolution technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of things, robotics, machine learning, blockchain, big data and others, offer significant opportunities to address climate change and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The accelerated adoption and diffusion of new and emerging technologies depends on the availability of enabling ecosystems with viable policy options and tools, capacities, investment, innovative business models and partnerships. Regional cooperation plays an important role in promoting and accelerating the adoption and diffusion of new and emerging technologies.

Document ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/7 contains an overview of the role of cross-border cooperation in the adoption and diffusion of new and emerging technologies for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region with a focus on climate change. In particular, the document includes an examination of the role of capacity-building and technical support in promoting regional cooperation in new and emerging technologies. It also contains an overview of the capacity-building and technical support provided by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology to member States between 2020 and 2022 in this regard.

The Committee may wish to share country perspectives, experiences and good practices for the successful adoption and diffusion of new and emerging technologies and to identify new and priority policy issues that may be addressed through regional cooperation to support sustainable development in the region. The Committee may also wish to provide guidance on the promotion of these technologies in the region and indicate the

capacity-building and technical support that may be required from the secretariat to facilitate their adoption and diffusion in sustainable development and in addressing climate change.

7. Other matters

The Committee may wish to consider other matters not covered under the items mentioned above.

8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its first session

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/L.1)

Annotation

The Committee will consider and adopt the report on its first session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-ninth session.
