

## COVER STORY

# ESCAP and Korea explore innovative financing mechanisms for development



Senior ministers and representatives from the private sector and civil society in Asia and the Pacific affirmed the importance of enhancing innovative financing sources, modalities and priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, on the sidelines at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York on 18 July.

Moderating the panel on ‘Financing for Development to Ensure No One is Left Behind,’ United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, highlighted that domestic resource mobilization is key to implementing the 2030 Agenda but that low tax-to-GDP ratios, low capitalization of markets and inadequate financial inclusion are critical challenges for the region.

“Sustainable financing requires all countries to strengthen their public financial management by tapping all public funding sources and

reorienting expenditure to leave no one behind,” said Dr. Akhtar during the panel discussion organized by ESCAP in partnership with the Republic of Korea. “To achieve this, structural weaknesses in tax policy and low tax collection rates, especially in Asia-Pacific developing countries must be addressed,” she added.

Dr. Akhtar also stressed that financial inclusion is required to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and that this will require a strong political commitment to provide banking services to the more than 2 billion adults currently without access around the world.

Mr. Oh Joon, Ambassador and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations underlined that the Asia-Pacific region “can enhance its domestic resource mobilization by realizing its tax potential, nurturing the private sector and encouraging the development of STI.”

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/2aIWxW>

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### UPCOMING AT ESCAP

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

## Sri Lanka and ESCAP underline need for Asia-Pacific shift to governing for transformation



**T**he Asia-Pacific region is already undergoing growth transitions but it now “needs a transition from a “growth-centric framework to sustainable development,” affirmed United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, as she called for changes in incentive, policy, regulation and enforcement backed by appropriate market frameworks.

Dr. Akhtar was speaking at the dialogue on ‘Planning for an Inclusive Transformation: a dialogue towards building scenarios for visions and pathways,’ organized by ESCAP and the Government of Sri Lanka on the sidelines of the High-Level Political Forum in New York on 19 July.

“In order to achieve sustainable results there has to be decisive shift in governments and the private sector, from governing for business as usual to governing for transformation,” said Dr. Akhtar.

“To enable this shift, countries require access to appropriate levels of finance and technology, effective regional networks and efficient governance structures. Essentially they require transformation capacities. They must be in a position to undertake change management, coalition building and stakeholder engagement to achieve sustainable results,” she added.

The panel engaged in a moderated dialogue to help provide insight into building scenarios for the transformation in 2030 and beyond. They concluded that a collective initiative is required to ensure that all countries and stakeholders feel a sense of ownership and therefore extend the necessary support in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/2abNg6P>

**LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

## ESCAP calls for action on development cooperation frameworks at global UN forum

**A** high-level panel organized by ESCAP in partnership with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries (OHRLS) in New York concluded that the translation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into national planning and budgetary processes is particularly important for countries with special needs.

Opening the side event at the Development Cooperation Forum on 21 July, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP Dr. Shamshad Akhtar emphasized that least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states face a range of challenges resulting from lower levels of domestic economic diversification, limited productive capacities and increased vulnerability to external shocks, which has impeded structural transformation.

“In order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, development partners must forge and act on development cooperation frameworks,” said Dr. Akhtar at the high-level panel on ‘Adaptation of the 2030 Agenda



and the Role of Development Cooperation in Asia-Pacific.’

“Given the global economic challenges and slowdown, more supportive global partnerships for finance, trade and investment will be critical, especially in the trade of the countries with special needs, which accounts for barely 0.9 per cent of total regional trade,” she added.

The DCF engages policymakers and practitioners from around the world to review latest international development cooperation trends. This year, the meeting, held from 21 to 22 July, focused on the importance and tremendous potential of development cooperation as a lever for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/2aoWgDN>

**ENERGY**

## ESCAP and GEIDCO partnership to promote transboundary power interconnection and trade in Asia-Pacific

**E**SCAP and the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO) affirmed their commitment to work together to facilitate increased regional cooperation, integration and environmentally sustainable transboundary power interconnection and trade, through a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in Beijing on 1 July.

The MoU will support collaborative activities between the two organizations to promote the concept of global energy interconnection through research and innovation including pre-feasibility studies, pilot projects and the development of institutional mechanisms.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, highlighted that the partnership is particularly timely as the global electricity sector must make simultaneous progress on multiple fronts in order to meet the broader goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“This MoU between ESCAP and GEIDCO will help achieve these goals, by leveraging the technical capacities of GEIDCO and the knowledge-sharing platforms that ESCAP provides, linking experts and policy-makers from diverse member States,” said Dr. Akhtar. “The MoU, made possible by a shared vision of creating a dynamic, interconnected Asia-Pacific regional electricity grid, will allow for the integration of substantial shares of renewable energy in order to accelerate the energy transitions currently underway.”

As part of the MoU, ESCAP and GEIDCO have also agreed to prepare joint national, sub-regional and regional studies in order to analyze

the sustainability of the power sector and the linkages between transboundary power interconnection and trade on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/296W0H8>

**ALMATY**

## ESCAP and Kazakhstan strengthen sustainable development in North and Central Asia

**A** new agreement, signed by ESCAP and the Government of Kazakhstan on July 11, underscores the joint commitment to address critical social and economic development needs of the people of North and Central Asia.

Under the Agreement, which supplements the Host Country Agreement, the Government of Kazakhstan committed to provide the premises for the ESCAP's subregional office for North and Central Asia (SONCA), along with a recurring annual grant for operational and programme costs of the office.

“The signing ceremony marks an important step in our journey towards making a meaningful contribution to the development of the North and Central Asian subregion,” said United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar.

“The conclusion of this Agreement cements the status of the office and provides assurances for its continued functioning, reinforcing the proposed role of Almaty as the hub for United Nations offices in Central Asia. We are grateful to the Government of Kazakhstan for its generous support to the Office,” said Dr. Akhtar.

H.E. Mr. Marat Yessenbayev, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kazakhstan to Thailand and Permanent Representative to ESCAP echoed that the ceremony was an important step in the expansion and deepening of cooperation between ESCAP and the countries of North and Central Asia.

“This is especially important given the fact that Kazakhstan has become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council,” said the Ambassador.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/29HJCiT>



**SUSTAINABLE CITIES**

## Lecture by Mayor of Seoul: 'WEconomics – Seoul's Solution for Sustainability'



The Mayor of Seoul, Republic of Korea Mr. Won-soon Park shared his philosophy and policy approaches towards a sustainable and inclusive economy at a lecture at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok on 8 July, entitled 'WEconomics – Seoul's Solution for Sustainability.' The lecture, which was opened by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, highlighted Mayor Park's approaches and policies for sustainable and inclusive development, and how these have been applied in Seoul – the fourth largest metropolitan area in the world.

Dr. Akhtar introduced the lecture by affirming that "there is an urgent need across the region to promote more balanced models of growth."

"At present, too many people are living in cities without access to adequate shelter, security of tenure, affordable health care or social protection," said Dr. Akhtar. "For the most vulnerable, all disparities impact their well-being exponentially. To create a more prosperous and inclusive urban future, policymakers must urgently close social divides and this calls for a renewed urban social policy agenda," she added.

Dr. Akhtar highlighted the recent cooperation between ESCAP, the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Citynet that led to the first International Forum on Urban Policy for the Sustainable Development Goals in Seoul in June, and announced that the partnership is developing a new online Urban SDG Knowledge Platform to enable city-to-city urban policy-sharing and cooperation, and facilitate the transfer of innovation, solutions and models for sustainable urban development. Mayor Park also addressed the challenges of unequal wealth distribution and weakened community ties that lead to economic stagnation when governments move from a state-led development model to a neoliberalist, market-based economic growth model.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/29UiPTH>

## AROUND THE REGION

### Strengthening ICT capacity of senior government officials in Myanmar

In collaboration with the Union Civil Service Board (UCSB), the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) conducted the 'Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders' workshop from 20 to 31 July at the Central Institute of Civil Service in Upper Myanmar.

Attended by 30 senior officials at the Deputy Director-General level, the workshop was part of the eight - week Government Executive Officials Management Course organized annually by UCSB to support a professional and transparent civil service. Demonstrating the institutionalization of the Academy in UCSB's training programmes, the event marked the 6th Academy workshop held in the country with APCICT's support.

The Academy workshop aimed to strengthen civil service capacity in leveraging ICT in the country's on-going public administration reforms intended to promote good governance, better public service delivery, and accountability. It covered various topics under the Academy curriculum, such as e-Government Applications (Module 3), Network and Information Security and Privacy (Module 6), ICT and Project Management (Module 7), and Social Media for Development (Module 11). Participants included representatives from line ministries and agencies such as education, health, home affairs, and planning and finance.

The Academy is APCICT's flagship ICT capacity development programme for government leaders and civil servants. It aims to equip stakeholders with the requisite knowledge and skills on leveraging ICT in their national development strategies and programmes. The programme consists of 11 modules covering basic to more advanced topics of ICT for development that can be delivered through face-to-face training or as online self-study courses through APCICT Virtual Academy.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/2at9x0T>



## Building productive capacities of Asia Pacific's least developed countries



**T**o build the productive capacities of Asia Pacific's least developed countries (LDCs) and achieve 'graduation status', ESCAP, in collaboration with the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, organized a regional workshop on the 'Adaptation of the 2030 Agenda and the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) at the National Level for the LDCs in Asia and the Pacific.'

More than 100 participants from the private sector, civil society, think tanks, philanthropic foundations, regional institutions, development partners, regional bodies and United Nations agencies came together in Vientiane from 28 to 30 June to develop plans for the simultaneous implementation of the IPoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The IPoA addresses structural challenges of LDCs by building human and productive capacities. The Programme highlights the need to

reduce the vulnerabilities of these countries to various shocks, such as the food, fuel and financial crises that have affected all countries in the world in the late 2000s, along with the climate change-related consequences.

IPoA complements the 2030 Agenda as it focuses the 17 SDGs and provides concrete guidance for LDCs on how to achieve the Goals and their associated targets, with a particular focus on reaching financing strategies. By analyzing the synergies between IPoA and the 2030 Agenda, the workshops served as a peer learning platform for policymakers. Participants identified financing strategies for graduation and formulated analytical frameworks to support the integration of the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/2ameo2X>/<http://bit.ly/2ajSwEe>

## Member associations from Malaysia, Turkey and Vietnam join Regional Council of Agri-Machinery



**T**hree new member associations from Malaysia, Turkey and Vietnam were elected into the Regional Council of Agricultural Machinery Association in Asia and the Pacific (ReCAMA) at a meeting organized by the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) in partnership with the India Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers' Association (AMMA-India), from 16 to 18 July in Coimbatore, India.

The Council also elected the Chair and Vice-Chair Associations for 2017 and endorsed its work report and plan for 2016-2017. Around 80 participants attended the event from 11 countries, including Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Russia Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam.

The meeting was conducted in parallel with the Indian Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers' Meeting held at the Indian Agricultural Machinery Exhibition.

ReCAMA was established in 2014, to promote sustainable agricultural mechanization in Asia and the Pacific by strengthening the capacity of national agricultural machinery associations, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and information, and enhancing collaboration and closer business connection among national associations and their members. Currently, ReCAMA has 17 member associations from 13 countries including Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam.

To read more visit <http://bit.ly/29UiPTh>



**3-4 AUGUST**

**National Validation workshop on Baseline Study  
of Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring  
Mechanism (TTFMM)**

THIMPHU, BHUTAN

**10-11 AUGUST**

**ARTNeT-ITD Training on Environmental Goods and  
Services Negotiations**

BANGKOK, THAILAND

**24-26 AUGUST**

**Asia-Pacific Conference: Transforming Official  
Statistics for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for  
Sustainable Development**

BANGKOK, THAILAND

**29-30 AUGUST**

**Second Session of the Working Group on the Asia-  
Pacific Information Superhighway**

GUANGZHOU, CHINA

ESCAP CALENDAR OF MEETINGS