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Eightieth session

Bangkok, 22–26 April 2024

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the eightieth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (sect. I) and the annotations thereto (sect. II).

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Theme topic, “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”:
 - (a) General debate;
 - (b) Subregional perspectives.
3. Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States.
4. Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission:
 - (a) Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development;
 - (b) Social development;
 - (c) Environment and development;
 - (d) Disaster risk reduction;
 - (e) Energy;
 - (f) Transport;
 - (g) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development;
 - (h) Trade, investment, enterprise and business innovation;

- (i) Information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation;
 - (j) Statistics.
5. Management issues:
- (a) Proposed programme plan for 2025;
 - (b) Overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development;
 - (c) Evaluation activities of the Commission during the biennium 2022–2023;
 - (d) Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology.
6. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.
7. Dates and venue of and theme topic for the eighty-first session of the Commission (2025).
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its eightieth session.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening addresses

The Executive Secretary and high-level dignitaries will deliver opening remarks.

The detailed programme for the opening of the session will be made available once it has been finalized.

(b) Election of officers

According to rule 13 of its rules of procedure, the Commission shall, at its first meeting of each year, elect from among its representatives a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, designated as First and Second Vice-Chair, who shall hold office until their successors are elected. They shall be eligible for re-election.

If so decided in plenary, the rule may be applied differently to enable the Commission to elect more than two Vice-Chairs, as has been the practice at previous sessions, in which case the Commission may elect a bureau of officers composed of a Chair and several Vice-Chairs.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Provisional agenda (ESCAP/80/1)

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/80/1/Add.1)

2. **Theme topic, “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”**

(a) **General debate**

Documentation

Summary of the theme study on leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/80/2)

The swift diffusion of digital technologies in Asia and the Pacific in recent years has created new opportunities to leverage the link between digital innovation and sustainable development. These new technologies, including cognitive digital technologies, the Internet of things, cloud computing and big data, are driving the development of new products, services and processes that add value to economies and societies in the region. These technologies are also increasing the quantity of data available and driving further innovations that increase their accessibility, availability and actionability, thereby empowering policymakers and other users to rapidly create solutions that are agile, adaptable and evidence-based. However, in the absence of deliberate policy action and investment, digital technologies may not deliver benefits for all. They may also exacerbate existing inequalities and create new barriers that prevent individuals, especially those belonging to marginalized communities, from effectively participating in socioeconomic, political and cultural life.

In the document, the secretariat provides a description of the wide spectrum of digital technologies and the innovations that are under way in Asia and the Pacific, albeit at different speeds and levels of intensity in different countries. It also focuses on how digitalization has spurred innovations to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, it identifies regional cooperative pathways to augment the impact and scale of transformative sustainable development outcomes that can benefit everyone. Digital innovation is therefore presented as a key enabler for the achievement of the Goals.

The Commission may wish to take note of the document and endorse the recommendations contained therein.

(b) **Subregional perspectives**

Documentation

Subregional perspectives on leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development (ESCAP/80/3)

In the document, the secretariat provides a snapshot of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and highlights some of the challenges in achieving them in each subregion. It describes how digital innovation can help address these challenges. It also describes opportunities for leveraging digital innovations for sustainable development, as well as some of the barriers that prevent the realization of their potential. Furthermore, the secretariat sets out examples of innovations that are already helping to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Commission may wish to take note of the document and provide guidance on the future work of the secretariat in that regard.

3. Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States

The Commission will explore how digitalization and automation affect productivity and decent employment in countries in special situations and provide an assessment of the digitalization landscape in these countries. It will also examine the transformative role that digitalization and automation can play in countries in special situations while highlighting the potential risks.

Documentation

Summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2024: Leveraging Digitalization for Productivity and Decent Employment (ESCAP/80/4)

Against the backdrop of automation and the megatrend of digitalization, the traditional path of labour-intensive industrialization is becoming less viable for countries in special situations, in particular for least developed countries, since a significant proportion of the labour force in many of them is concentrated in low-productivity agricultural sectors. Moreover, countries in special situations generally exhibit low levels of digitalization and face unique challenges in leveraging technology owing to limitations such as scarce resources, inadequate infrastructure, a low-skilled workforce and vulnerable economies. These factors collectively hinder the ability of countries in special situations to fully participate in the digital revolution.

As most countries in special situations are still at an early stage of both structural change and digital development, understanding these linkages is important in devising effective policy measures. In the document, the secretariat examines the transformative role that digitalization and automation can play in advancing the productive capacities of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. It also highlights the potential pitfalls and risks associated with these technologies. Given the emergence of workers transitioning directly into low-productivity informal services, bypassing the manufacturing sector, the secretariat examines the potential of digitalization to boost service sector productivity and the prospect for the industrialization of services.

The Commission may wish to consider the findings, possible solutions and recommendations contained in the document and provide guidance on the future work of the secretariat in that regard.

4. Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission

The agenda item is focused on: (a) the work of the nine subprogrammes, including the work of the regional institutions, in the context of the globally agreed development agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission that have held sessions since the seventy-ninth session of the Commission; (c) the reports of other intergovernmental bodies; and (d) progress in the implementation of Commission mandates.

The sub-items have been grouped for discussion on the basis of the subsidiary structure of the Commission and along the lines of the thematic areas identified in the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda in

Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/73/31, annex II), starting with the outcomes of the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

The documents listed below cover the work of the subprogrammes and the relevant sections of each will be discussed under each sub-item, as appropriate.

Documentation

Decisions taken by the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia at its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/5)

Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1)

Decisions taken by the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia at its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/5)

The Commission may wish to review and take note of the decisions taken by the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia at its eighteenth session and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Special Programme.

Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1)

The information document contains a summary of the annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations submitted to the Commission, namely those of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and South-East Asia, the Mekong River Commission, the Panel on Tropical Cyclones and the Typhoon Committee.

(a) Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Documentation

Report on the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (ESCAP/RFS/2024/6)

Summary of round-table discussions (ESCAP/RFS/2024/6/Add.1)

The Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development will be held in Bangkok and online from 20 to 23 February 2024 under the theme “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific”.

The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development has played a unique role in informing, empowering and supporting Asia-Pacific countries, especially least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in their efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the related targets set out in the 2030 Agenda by identifying regional trends and sharing best practices and lessons learned.

In alignment with the focus of the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the participants in the Eleventh Forum will conduct an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 13 (Climate action), 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). They will examine how to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on the compounding crises faced by the region, while ensuring that the recovery process is resilient, inclusive and sustainable. Furthermore, the participants will discuss opportunities to strengthen linkages between national, regional and global follow-up and review processes related to the 2030 Agenda.

The Commission may wish to endorse the report on the Eleventh Forum, take note of the summary of round-table discussions and provide the secretariat with further guidance on the implementation of, follow-up on and review of the 2030 Agenda.

(b) Social development

Documentation

Report on the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference (ESCAP/APPC(7)/4)

Report on the ad hoc session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities held on 8 and 9 November 2023 (ESCAP/80/6)

Composition of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 (ESCAP/80/6/Add.1)

Key social development issues for consideration in 2024 (ESCAP/80/7)

Report on the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference (ESCAP/APPC(7)/4)

The Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference was held in Bangkok and online from 15 to 17 November 2023. Participants reviewed the progress made towards the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in Asia and the Pacific. As part of the Conference, a high-level panel was held. In addition, four round tables were organized focusing on the priority actions identified in the Ministerial Declaration, with due regard to the intersectionality of the priority action.

The Chair's summary annexed to the report provides an overview of the issues discussed at the Conference. It also contains recommendations relating to the following areas on which action should be taken: (a) poverty eradication and employment; (b) health; (c) sexual and reproductive health, services and rights; (d) education; (e) gender equality and women's empowerment; (f) adolescents and young people; (g) ageing; (h) international migration; (i) urbanization and internal migration; (j) population and sustainable development; and (k) data and statistics.

The Commission may wish to consider and endorse the matters calling for its action or brought to its attention contained in the report on the Conference and provide the secretariat with guidance in that regard.

Report on the ad hoc session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities held on 8 and 9 November 2023 (ESCAP/80/6)

The report includes a summary of the issues discussed at the ad hoc session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities held in Bangkok and online on 8 and 9 November 2023. The Working Group examined progress achieved, initiatives undertaken and future plans with regard to the six priority areas for disability-inclusive development outlined in the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032. The Working Group also reviewed the draft operational guide on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and strategies for resource mobilization for the current Decade. Furthermore, it adopted a set of recommendations to support the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration.

The Commission may wish to consider and take note of the report of the Working Group and provide guidance on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration.

Composition of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 (ESCAP/80/6/Add.1)

In the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, members and associate members of the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to continue to utilize the guidance of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, as appropriate, to support the effective implementation of the Jakarta Declaration. To this end, the secretariat has called upon members and associate members, as well as civil society organizations, to express interest in being represented in the Working Group. The document provides background information, details about the nomination process and the proposed composition of the Working Group for the period 2024–2032.

The Commission may wish to endorse the proposed composition of the Working Group.

Key social development issues for consideration in 2024 (ESCAP/80/7)

In the document, the secretariat examines the key social development trends, issues and priorities related to the agendas of recently concluded and upcoming intergovernmental meetings, including their preparatory processes, organized by the Commission in 2023 and 2024.

Noting that the region is at the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the secretariat examines the progress made on a number of areas critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of increasing impacts of climate change and the rapid demographic change sweeping across the Asia-Pacific region. With an outlook to the future, discussions will be focused on progress made and new and remaining challenges in relation to extending comprehensive social protection; ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women; and addressing the rights and special needs of groups left furthest behind, including older persons, persons with disabilities and migrants.

In preparing the document, consideration was given to the outcomes of the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference, held in November 2023. In the document, the secretariat sets out the key priority areas that are to be considered by the Committee on Social Development at its eighth session, to be held in 2024, and those to be considered during the regional review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on gender equality and empowerment of women in 2024 and the regional review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2025.

The Commission may wish to take note of the document, in particular of the forthcoming intergovernmental meetings and the opportunities provided to discuss priority actions, and provide further guidance to the secretariat in that regard.

(c) Environment and development

Documentation

Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/8)

Crisis-resilient cities for a sustainable Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/9)

Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1, reports of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and South-East Asia and of the Mekong River Commission)

Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/8)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, endorse the recommendations contained therein and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Centre.

Crisis-resilient cities for a sustainable Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/9)

The Asia-Pacific region is rapidly urbanizing, with the urban population projected to increase from approximately 2.5 billion in 2023 to 3.4 billion in 2050, making it one of the most populous regions in the world, with growing cities, economies and digital landscapes. The region is also facing multiple interlinked crises that are having an impact on cities, infrastructure, biodiversity, pollution and policies to address climate change, which make the achievement of sustainable urban development both urgent and essential. Cities, especially in developing countries, are under pressure to meet the growing demand for urban services, housing and infrastructure with limited resources and capacity. The escalating nature of these challenges and the growing urban population create a demand for immediate action to make cities more inclusive and crisis-resilient. In order to ensure that no one or place is left behind, it is essential to employ people-centred policies and tools, multisector partnerships and targeted finance to create compact and low-carbon cities supported by urban nature.

In the document, the secretariat sets out collaborative partnerships involving Governments, businesses, civil society and local communities and encourages regional dialogue and collaboration to identify and address common challenges in sustainable urban development.

The Commission may wish to take note of the priorities and recommendations contained in the document and advise on the future work of the secretariat.

Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1, reports of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and South-East Asia and of the Mekong River Commission)

The Commission may wish to take note of the reports of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and South-East Asia and of the Mekong River Commission.

(d) Disaster risk reduction

Documentation

Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its eighth session (ESCAP/CDR(8)/6)

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its eighth session (ESCAP/80/10)

Scaling up the use of early warnings for preventive actions through the implementation of a regional strategy (ESCAP/80/11)

Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1, reports of the Typhoon Committee and of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones)

Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its eighth session (ESCAP/CDR(8)/6)

The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction held its eighth session in Bangkok and online from 25 to 27 July 2023. At the session, the Committee focused on several key areas of disaster risk reduction, including (a) adopting a transformative adaptation framework supported by the analysis contained in the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023: Seizing the Moment – Targeting Transformative Disaster Risk Resilience*, and (b) supporting the implementation of the Executive Action Plan on Early Warnings for All, 2023–2027, through the use of a regional strategy in support of the global and country-level implementation of the four pillars of multi-hazard early warning systems – namely, disaster risk knowledge and management, observations and forecasting, dissemination and communication, and preparedness to respond.

The Commission may wish to consider and endorse the matters calling for its action or brought to its attention contained in the report of the Committee and provide guidance on the future work of the secretariat in that regard.

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its eighth session (ESCAP/80/10)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management, endorse the recommendations contained therein and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Centre.

Scaling up the use of early warnings for preventive actions through the implementation of a regional strategy (ESCAP/80/11)

Asia and the Pacific remains the most disaster-affected region in the world. In 2022 alone, over 140 disasters struck, claiming the lives of more than 7,500 people and affecting a total of 64 million. The disasters also inflicted economic damages estimated at \$57 billion, or 0.2 per cent of the regional gross domestic product. Climate change is exacerbating these impacts. According to the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023: Seizing the Moment – Targeting Transformative Disaster Risk Resilience*, existing risk hotspots are intensifying and new hotspots are emerging. In recognition of growing climate adaptation needs, the Commission, in its resolution 79/1, committed itself to take actions to combat climate change and its impacts and develop early warning systems for all at the regional level. In welcoming the key findings contained in the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023* and the data-driven analysis available on the Risk and Resilience Portal of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network, the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, at its eighth session, requested that the secretariat facilitate the implementation of a regional strategy for early warnings in Asia and the Pacific.

In line with the above recommendations and decisions, the secretariat highlights the implementation activities for a regional strategy to address unmet needs of early warnings in multi-hazard risk hotspots across Asia and the Pacific at the subregional level. In addition, it sets out implementation pathways that capitalize on regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms, which were developed on the basis of early warning learning experiences resulting from 50 years of international cooperation under the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee and the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones, as well as 20 years under the ESCAP multi-donor trust fund for tsunamis, disaster and climate preparedness. In recognition of the fact that innovations in digital and geospatial applications are the key enablers to achieve early warnings for all, the secretariat examines how such innovations are currently being used and how they could be used in the future to scale up the implementation of early warnings for all, in particular in high-risk developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States that are on the front lines of climate change. Activities undertaken by the secretariat at the national, regional and global levels in support of these objectives are also highlighted.

The Commission may wish to consider the findings and policy recommendations contained in the document and provide further guidance to the secretariat in that regard.

Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1, reports of the Typhoon Committee and of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones)

The Commission may wish to take note of the reports of the Typhoon Committee and of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

(e) Energy

Documentation

Report on the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6)

Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6/Add.1)

Employing digitally driven innovation in the energy sector to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (ESCAP/80/12)

Report on the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6)

Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6/Add.1)

The Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum was held in Bangkok and online on 19 and 20 October 2023. The participants in the Third Forum reviewed the progress made in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) in the Asia-Pacific region and in implementing the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific, which was adopted at the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, in 2018. In addition, participants discussed the progress achieved through various initiatives aimed at enhancing energy security and developing appropriate policies and strategies to achieve the Goals, including the development of Goal 7 road maps for countries in the region, the implementation of the Regional Road Map on Power System Connectivity: Promoting Cross-border Electricity Connectivity for Sustainable Development and the secretariat's work on emerging areas of the energy transition.

In the Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific, which was adopted by participants at the Third Forum, the ministers reaffirmed their commitment to regional cooperation in support of the achievement of Goal 7 targets and of continued progress towards the energy transition.

The Commission may wish to consider and endorse the matters calling for its action or brought to its attention contained in the report on the Third Forum, endorse the Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific and provide guidance on its implementation.

Employing digitally driven innovation in the energy sector to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (ESCAP/80/12)

Energy systems across Asia and the Pacific are undergoing fast transformations. Driven by renewable energy and net-zero emissions targets and declining technology costs, and enabled by digital innovation, the way in which energy is produced, distributed and consumed is changing rapidly. Innovations across the energy sector value chain are creating new dynamics that will drive decarbonization and sustainable development. However, they will also create challenges that, in order to be addressed, will require policymakers to find new solutions, in particular by leveraging digitalization.

In the document, the secretariat explores how digitally driven innovation is reshaping the energy sector in the Asia-Pacific region and how that transformation can help address some of the most urgent priorities contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The region's potential as a hub for the development of many cutting-edge energy sector technologies is also highlighted. Furthermore, the secretariat provides recommendations for policy options aimed at leveraging digitalization to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement,

consistent with national policy objectives, including net-zero emissions targets where relevant.

The Commission may wish to take note of the document and provide guidance on the future work of the secretariat in that regard.

(f) Transport

Documentation

Transitioning to the digitalization of transport for a sustainable future in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/80/13)

While the Asia-Pacific region has experienced rapid increases in urbanization, population and motorization rates in recent decades, it has also witnessed a rise in the negative externalities of increased transport demand, including traffic congestion, road accidents and greenhouse gas emissions. The use of technological advancements allows for a more effective and efficient approach to addressing these adverse trends. The transport sector is in the midst of a digital transformation. Smart transport systems and other innovations have proliferated in many countries in the region as an intrinsic element driving the efficiency of transport networks, the mitigation of traffic congestion and carbon dioxide emissions and the provision of inclusive access for all.

The digitalization of transport plays a crucial role in advancing sustainable development by transforming traditional transport systems into more intelligent and efficient systems that meet transport demand for economic activities within and beyond cities, environmental performance and social development objectives. In the document, the secretariat outlines some of the activities and new initiatives in the region, including (a) the development of the regional road map for smart transport systems in Asia and the Pacific, (b) an electronic information-exchange and digitalization strategy for international rail operations and (c) the integration of transport innovation to improve social inclusion, as well as other activities, that are being carried out under the digitalization of transport and other related thematic areas identified in the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).

The Commission may wish to take note of the document and encourage the active engagement and continued support of its members and associate members in the planned activities, including promoting the regional road map for smart transport systems in Asia and the Pacific and rail digitalization. In addition, members and associate members of the Commission may wish to share information on innovative policies and actions being taken at the national, subregional and regional levels to enhance the digitalization of transport for the achievement of sustainable and inclusive development.

(g) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development

Documentation

Report of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development on its fourth session (ESCAP/CMPF(4)/6)

Macroeconomic outlook, challenges and policies for the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/14)

Report of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development on its fourth session (ESCAP/CMPF(4)/6)

The Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development held its fourth session in Bangkok and online from 1 to 3 November 2023.

The Committee reviewed macroeconomic challenges and challenges related to development financing faced by Asia-Pacific economies with a focus on assessing the impacts of investments in the Sustainable Development Goals on public debt sustainability and on bridging the gap in sustainable finance in Asia and the Pacific. It also reviewed activities carried out in 2022 and 2023 in response to the requests and decisions it made at its third session, in 2021, and it discussed the future focus of the subprogramme.

The Committee recommended that the secretariat continue to undertake research, provide capacity-building support and promote peer-to-peer learning and the sharing of experiences among member States in the areas of sustainable finance and public debt. It also recommended that the secretariat facilitate cooperation to bridge the substantial financing gap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific. The Committee further recommended that the secretariat continue to carry out research and provide support to member States on macroeconomic policy and debt distress issues, including long-term and development-oriented public debt sustainability assessments.

The Commission may wish to consider and endorse the matters calling for its action or brought to its attention contained in the report of the Committee and provide the secretariat with guidance in that regard.

Macroeconomic outlook, challenges and policies for the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/14)

Developing Asia-Pacific countries are facing strong economic headwinds in the near term. Economic growth in several major developed economies remains sluggish, while post-pandemic economic recovery in China is being held back by its debt-ridden property sector. Together, these factors could hamper economic growth in many Asia-Pacific economies that rely on merchandise exports, tourism and remittance flows. On the domestic front, although global commodity prices have decreased from their 2022 peaks as a result of the war in Ukraine and related international sanctions, consumer inflation remains persistently high, thus curtailing household consumption in many economies of the region. The subsequent tightening of monetary policy, while helping to manage inflation expectations going forward, has increased the debt-servicing burdens on households, companies and Governments. In addition to higher borrowing costs and fragile external demand, business investment is also being undermined by geopolitical uncertainty and geoeconomic fragmentation. Furthermore, room for fiscal policy support to weather these economic headwinds has shrunk amid rising public debt levels and distress risk in many Asia-Pacific countries.

In the document, the secretariat highlights short-term economic prospects and discusses selected challenges faced by macroeconomic policymakers in Asia and the Pacific. For example, striking a balance between ensuring price and financial stability and fostering economic growth by central banks will not be an easy task. Similarly, given the tight fiscal and debt positions and the substantial spending needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and climate ambitions, fiscal authorities will need to

explore several options to increase fiscal resources. The international community can play an important role in boosting the availability of affordable and long-term financing for Governments of developing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

The Commission may wish to take note of the findings presented in the document and discuss the priority actions to be taken.

(h) Trade, investment, enterprise and business innovation

Documentation

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/15)

Enabling inclusive and sustainable development through digital trade, investment, innovation and the use of technology (ESCAP/80/16)

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/15)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, endorse the recommendations contained therein and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Centre.

Enabling inclusive and sustainable development through digital trade, investment, innovation and the use of technology (ESCAP/80/16)

In the document, the secretariat provides an overview of the state of digital trade and investment in Asia and the Pacific. It presents the evolving policy environment supporting these financial flows, with a particular focus on emerging regional cooperation and integration initiatives. It also examines how these developments in digital trade, investment, innovation and emerging digital technologies are enabling inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, it provides recommendations on how these trends can be effectively harnessed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and presents issues for consideration by the Commission.

The Commission may wish to review the document and provide guidance on the future work of the secretariat.

(i) Information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation

Documentation

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/17)

Leveraging digital technologies to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/80/18)

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/17)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development, endorse the recommendations contained therein and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Centre.

Leveraging digital technologies to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/80/18)

The rapid diffusion of digital technologies in Asia and the Pacific in recent years provides opportunities to leverage digital innovation in order to enhance the impact on sustainable development. New digital technologies that increase access to and offer new services in education, skills development, start-ups and other employment-generating business opportunities have particularly strong multiplier effects on sustainable development. Furthermore, online government platforms and the delivery of e-government services are adding value related to more inclusive social protection benefits, funded through an increase in revenue made possible by the implementation of innovative digital tax solutions.

At the same time, policies aimed at digital inclusion also play a crucial role in a more equitable sharing of digital dividends. In that regard, it is vital to address structural obstacles to connectivity, notably to accelerate investments in information and communications technology infrastructure. Doing so will expand affordable and reliable access to the Internet to unserved or underserved areas, meet the diverse needs of marginalized groups and maximize opportunities associated with online operations.

In the document, the secretariat provides an overview of trends in digital connectivity, which is an essential foundation for the delivery of digital government services and digital inclusion in Asia and the Pacific. It also examines emerging good practices on digital solutions for more inclusive and sustainable government services, with a focus on innovative digital tax solutions, social protection and the provision of seamless, reliable, accessible and affordable connectivity to marginalized groups. Lastly, the secretariat outlines policy recommendations aimed at bridging the digital divide and accelerating the digital transformation with a view to enhancing the impacts on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Commission may wish to take note of the document and provide the secretariat with further guidance, including on encouraging members and associate members to share national policy perspectives and experiences on digital innovations, bridging the digital divide and accelerating the digital transformation to enhance the impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

(j) **Statistics**

Documentation

Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/19)

Towards the realization of the regional vision for inclusive civil registration and vital statistics systems (ESCAP/80/20)

Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/19)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, endorse the recommendations contained therein and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Institute.

Towards the realization of the regional vision for inclusive civil registration and vital statistics systems (ESCAP/80/20)

The Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024) is aimed at creating a region where all people benefit from universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems. Since the beginning of the Decade, the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific has guided the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific with the aim of achieving the shared vision.

To facilitate preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, to be held in June 2025, the Regional Steering Group, at its ninth meeting, held from 10 to 12 May 2023, made specific recommendations to member States, development partners and the secretariat.

The Regional Steering Group recommends that the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade (2015–2024) be extended to 2030, thereby aligning it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also highlights the importance of the 2024 review of progress made, encouraging members and associate members of the Commission to provide inputs to the review. The review will be guided by the recommendations of the Regional Steering Group to further highlight the role of resilience, inclusivity and digitalization, as well as to place an increased focus on recording causes of death.

The Commission may wish to take note of the recommendations and give further guidance to the secretariat and the Regional Steering Group for the achievement of the shared vision.

5. Management issues

Under this agenda item, the secretariat is submitting, for the consideration of the Commission, documents on a range of management issues relevant to the continued effectiveness of the work of the secretariat.

(a) Proposed programme plan for 2025**Documentation**

Proposed programme plan for 2025 (ESCAP/80/21)

The document comprises a foreword by the Executive Secretary, the proposed programme plan for 2025 and information on programme performance in 2023. The proposed programme plan contains an overall orientation of the programme of the secretariat, legislative mandates, evaluation activities and a programme plan for each of the subprogrammes. Each subprogramme plan comprises seven sections: objective of the subprogramme; strategy; programme performance on a selected topic in 2023; planned results for 2025, including result 1 – programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025, as reflected in the proposed programme budget for 2023 (A/77/6 (Sect. 19)); result 2 – programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025, as reflected in the proposed programme budget for 2024 (A/78/6 (Sect. 19)); result 3 – proposed programme plan on a selected topic for 2025; and deliverables for the period 2023–2025.

As subsidiary bodies of the Commission, the Committees provided the secretariat with guidance on the future focus of the subprogrammes under their purview, as appropriate. In addition, the proposed programme plan was reviewed by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

The Commission may wish to review and endorse the proposed programme plan.

(b) Overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development**Documentation**

Overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development (ESCAP/80/22)

The document contains an overview of the secretariat's partnerships in 2023, including with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, which facilitated the efforts of the United Nations at the regional level in delivering capacity-development support to member States.

The document also contains an overview of the extrabudgetary resources mobilized to implement the Commission's programme of work.

Individual members and associate members of the Commission may wish to announce their intended contributions for 2024.

The Commission may wish to take note of the document and provide the secretariat with further guidance on the development of partnerships and the mobilization of additional resources, including through the enhancement of South-South cooperation.

(c) Evaluation activities of the Commission during the biennium 2022–2023

Documentation

Evaluation activities of the Commission during the biennium 2022–2023 (ESCAP/80/23)

In its resolution 66/15, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to ensure periodic evaluation of the secretariat's programmatic work, including the work of divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions.

In the document, the secretariat provides a summary of the main findings and recommendations contained in evaluations conducted during the biennium 2022–2023 and the steps taken by the secretariat to address those recommendations.

The Commission may wish to take note of the document and identify actions to further enhance the performance and results of the secretariat's work and to strengthen its evaluation function.

(d) Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

Documentation

Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (ESCAP/80/24)

Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (ESCAP/80/INF/2)

In its resolution 71/1, the Commission decided to review the continued substantive relevance and financial viability of each regional institution every five years. To inform that review, the secretariat commissioned an independent evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology. The key findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the secretariat's response thereto, are contained in document ESCAP/80/24.

The Commission may wish to endorse the recommendations contained in document ESCAP/80/24 and take note of the full report on the evaluation of the Centre contained in information document ESCAP/80/INF/2.

6. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

Documentation

Report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ESCAP/80/25)

The report includes a summary of the main activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission since the seventy-ninth session of the Commission, including support provided by the Advisory Committee to the Executive Secretary on matters related to programme planning, implementation and monitoring.

The Commission may wish to take note of the report, comment on the role of the Advisory Committee and provide further guidance on its work.

7. Dates and venue of and theme topic for the eighty-first session of the Commission (2025)

Documentation

Dates and venue of and theme topic for the eighty-first session of the Commission (2025) (ESCAP/80/26)

The Commission may wish to decide on the dates and venue of and theme topic for its eighty-first session.

8. Other matters

The Commission may wish to consider other matters brought to its attention.

9. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its eightieth session

The Commission will consider and adopt the report on its eightieth session. Pursuant to its resolution 78/2 on a conference structure of the Commission to advance sustainable development, the report of the Commission will be composed of its decisions and resolutions. The draft record of proceedings, prepared by the secretariat, will be circulated among members and associate members for comment within 15 days after the conclusion of the session.
