

GENERAL

E/ESCAP/1070

25 March 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Fifty-third session

23-30 April 1997

Bangkok

**STRENGTHENING INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE  
PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE REGION**

(Item 9 of the provisional agenda)

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

The Commission, at its fifty-second session, expressed satisfaction with efforts towards strengthening inter-organizational cooperation. It felt that the work of the Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific (RICAP) involved concrete issues and that it would facilitate communication, exchange of information and efficient use of resources and enhance the quality of technical assistance with a view to attaining a United Nations system integrated approach to regional development. In that regard, it suggested that a detailed analysis of the work programmes of the United Nations organizations and agencies would assist in developing mutually complementary programmes. The results of such inter-organizational cooperation and collaboration should be provided to the Commission to facilitate assessment of the usefulness of institutional arrangements for such cooperation.

The present document provides an account of the concrete collaborative activities undertaken through the efforts of RICAP and its various subcommittees. It also highlights the technical cooperation activities carried out by ESCAP in cooperation with the United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, financial institutions, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the role played by the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre in effecting inter-organizational cooperation in the Pacific.

In reviewing the activities carried out by the secretariat, the Commission may wish to suggest possible approaches to mobilize resources for joint programmes developed within the framework of RICAP. The Commission is also requested to provide suggestions to the secretariat on how to further strengthen inter-organizational cooperation and, in the light of the review of this subject by RICAP at its biannual meetings as well as by ACPR at its monthly meetings, to decide on the need for inclusion of this subject in the agenda of future sessions of the Commission.

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
I. COOPERATION WITH UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES: REGIONAL INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC .....	1
II. TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES .....	6
A. United Nations bodies and specialized agencies .....	6
B. Intergovernmental organizations .....	10
C. Financial institutions .....	11
D. Non-governmental organizations .....	12
III. COOPERATION WITH SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS .....	13
IV. CONCLUSIONS .....	15

## INTRODUCTION

1. The decisions taken by the international community at the recent global conferences, namely, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and subsequently endorsed by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, necessitate system-wide collaboration and coordination on the implementation of those decisions contained in the various global mandates and involving economic and social development issues of importance to member countries. Furthermore, there is a strong need to optimize the use of the scarce resources for that purpose through strengthening collaboration within the United Nations development system and between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions and other financial institutions, regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as for improved arrangements for data collection and information exchange. In that connection, the Commission has emphasized that it is essential to further strengthen inter-organizational cooperation at the regional level, especially since such cooperation would enhance the efficiency as well as the quality of the technical assistance rendered by the secretariat to the members and associate members of the Commission. The secretariat is pleased to report that since the fifty-second session of the Commission, inter-organizational cooperation in the promotion of economic and social development in the Asian and Pacific region has been further strengthened.

### **I. COOPERATION WITH UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES: REGIONAL INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

2. The Commission, at its fifty-second session, had suggested that the Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific (RICAP), which had been established as a regional administrative committee for inter-agency cooperation in May 1994, could further strengthen such cooperation through a comparative analysis of the work programmes of associate agencies and organizations with a view to developing mutually complementary programmes. Towards that end, since the fifty-second session, RICAP has held two meetings, on 8 August 1996 and 31 January 1997, to review the progress of the work undertaken by its subcommittees and to provide guidance to achieve enhanced and more meaningful results through the work of the RICAP inter-agency subcommittees. The meetings were attended by representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (UNCHS), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Labour Organization (ILO), Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Although the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had expressed interest in participating in the work of RICAP, their participation was only possible when the RICAP meeting coincided with their missions to the Asian and Pacific region.

3. RICAP reviewed the work of all its subcommittees, with particular emphasis on inter-agency follow-up of mandates contained in the plans and programmes of action adopted at the various global conferences referred to in paragraph 1 above. A brief summary of the activities of the various subcommittees since the fifty-second session of the Commission follows.

4. The Subcommittee on Industry and Technology reviewed participating agency programmes of work on industry and technology in Asia and the Pacific with a view to identifying possible areas for cooperation. Examples of successful collaborative efforts included implementation of the FAO, UNIDO and ESCAP/Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) first Asian symposium on medicinal and aromatic plants, the expert group meeting on technology transfer of wastewater treatment of small and medium-sized industries in developing countries organized by ESCAP with substantive inputs from UNEP and UNIDO, and the UNIDO/ESCAP/Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery (RNAM) agro-machinery programme. Other areas identified for possible inter-agency cooperation included ESCAP cooperation with UNESCO in the preparation of an issue paper entitled "Financial, human and technological resources in skill development, infrastructure development and adaptation of new and emerging technologies: new directions and opportunities", and environmentally sound technologies; ICAO would work with ESCAP on an issue paper entitled "Infrastructure development"; and UNIDO would assist in the ESCAP-Thailand cooperation workshop on ISO-9000.

5. The Subcommittee on Drug Control identified areas of common interest for possible collaboration, with the understanding that specific follow-up activities would be effected by the concerned agencies. Positive results of inter-agency cooperation included the new cooperative efforts between UNESCO and the UNDCP Regional Centre towards the regional development or improvement of school-based programmes for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. Possible UNDCP and UNICEF collaboration on drug abuse among children in especially difficult circumstances is also under consideration.

6. The Subcommittee on Water reviewed the status of the following inter-agency regional projects: (a) implementation of a seminar on the establishment of guidelines on water and sustainable development, held at Bangkok in December 1996; (b) preparation of a guidebook on the promotion of investments for water supply and sanitation, to which significant contributions were made by UNCHS, WHO and the Mekong River Commission, and which was finalized at a seminar held in Jomtien, Thailand in October 1996; and (c) two workshops on pricing policies and structures, one for urban and rural water supply and the other for irrigation water supply, under the project on water pricing, held in Manila in August 1996 and Jakarta in October-November 1996, respectively.
7. The Subcommittee on Space Applications for Sustainable Development initiated proposals *inter alia* on joint projects in satellite communications and distance education between ESCAP and ITU under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development and a joint seminar between FAO, the European Space Agency and ESCAP on spatial information technology for planners and decision makers of the Central Asian republics. Other possibilities include ESCAP/FAO collaboration on the FAO proposal to organize an Asia-Pacific conference on information technology for planners and decision makers in agricultural management in 1998.
8. The Subcommittee on Population and Development exchanged information on the respective regional programmes and considered ways to strengthen coordination of programmes of work related to population and development, such as the joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the gender, women and development programme. It also discussed cooperation between ESCAP and UNFPA in the convening of a regional meeting in 1997 to review implementation of the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.
9. The Subcommittee on Environment and Sustainable Development considered inter-agency collaboration in the promotion of the implementation of the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in November 1995. To this end, a regional workshop to be held in May 1997 will seek to promote greater interface among agencies in developing portfolios of projects, prioritizing and phasing of activities and setting targets. The Subcommittee also promoted a project on indicators of sustainable development, and a regional meeting-cum-workshop was held on the subject in November 1996. Information exchange between agencies on major activities continued to be effected through the regional newsletter on the environment, *Asia-Pacific Environment*, published jointly by ESCAP and UNEP.
10. The Subcommittee on the Advancement of Women discussed the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women approved by the Economic and Social Council in 1996, whose objectives are to effect a major qualitative change in the mainstreaming of gender issues and to provide a baseline for coordinated follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action. It also considered areas for

collaboration and coordination at the national and regional levels. Examples of such collaboration at the national level include the gender, women and development group, with UNIFEM taking the lead role, and support towards Thai women's groups in organizing their International Women's Day and "One year after Beijing" events. The Subcommittee also suggested that women in development focal points be designated in each agency to facilitate information exchange, possibly through the ESCAP Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific.

11. The Subcommittee on Disability-related Concerns, with the participation of United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, comprising UNICEF, ILO, WHO, non-governmental organizations, including Disabled People's International, Handicap International, Rehabilitation International, and the Regional NGO Network for the Promotion of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002 and governments of the region interested in supporting cooperation to implement activities in support of the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, discussed the importance of the pooling of expertise and sharing of information and networking advantages in the implementation of activities related to disability-related concerns. Joint activities included an ILO project on integrating people with disabilities into mainstream employment services, and a proposed FAO round table on the integration of disabled people into agricultural and agro-industrial production systems. The Subcommittee also initiated preparations for the convening of the Meeting of Senior Officials to Mark the Mid-point of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in Seoul in September 1997.

12. The Subcommittee on Urbanization, comprising representatives of United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, regional networks such as the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements (CITYNET), the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), and the Network of Training, Research and Information Institutes on Human Settlements in Asia and the Pacific (TRISHNET) as well as of donor countries and member countries, discussed coordination and cooperation in follow-up to the Habitat Agenda adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). Examples of cooperation include the ESCAP/Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) agreement on incorporation of abstracts from newsletters, publications or articles into the AIT home page on the Internet, containing information on best practices and local leadership programmes, human settlements in Asia, urban environmental management and the human settlements development programme. Databases on lists of professionals and ongoing and planned urban projects of international agencies in the region will also be incorporated. Further cooperation in the implementation of activities as follow-up to the Global Plan of Action of Habitat II and the Regional Action Plan on Urbanization are anticipated.

13. In addition, participating members, such as ESCAP, UNCHS, CITYNET and WHO, also presented their programmes in detail, and cooperative activities have been implemented, for example, among ESCAP, CITYNET and WHO in a subregional and regional seminar to promote the Healthy

Cities Programme.

14. The Subcommittee on HIV/AIDS discussed matters pertaining to intercountry responses to HIV/AIDS in border areas, and means of electronic consultations with UNAIDS country theme groups and national AIDS managers of the region to increase participation in information-sharing. In subsequent meetings, the Subcommittee expects to develop a joint strategy for cross-border collaboration.

15. The Subcommittee on Infrastructure Development reviewed and evaluated implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, discussed reorientation of activities of the transport and communications programme of the UNDP fifth intercountry programme, 1992-1996, and considered inter-agency cooperation and support for the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and Phase I (1997-2001) of the regional action programme for implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific. That would include the mobilization of resources to implement the portfolio of activities to be implemented in follow-up to the regional action programme.

16. Although the Subcommittee on Trade and Investment did not meet in formal sessions, close inter-agency cooperation was established through correspondence and discussions in the implementation of regional activities undertaken within the framework of the Revised Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment. UNCTAD, UNDP and ESCAP collaborated in the preparation for the Meeting of Senior Officials held in Jakarta in September 1996 which served as preparation for the first Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Singapore in December 1996.

17. To provide better opportunities for developing collaborative opportunities between organizations in the United Nations development system, ILO and FAO presented their strategies and programme priorities for the year 1997 to RICAP at its meeting on 31 January 1997. Other agencies, including UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO would make similar presentations at the next RICAP meeting, scheduled for mid-1997. The concerned subcommittees of RICAP are expected to take fully into account the programme priorities of the various United Nations organizations and specialized agencies with a view to developing mutually complementary programmes.

## **II. TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES**

### **A. United Nations bodies and specialized agencies**

18. In 1996, ESCAP expanded its collaboration with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies covering a broad range of areas in the implementation of its technical cooperation programme, not only within the framework of RICAP but also bilaterally in areas of specific relevance to each particular agency.

19. In line with the recommendation of the Commission at its fifty-second session, the secretariat has further enhanced its collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in a broad range of activities, particularly those which have an impact on countries with common membership of ECE and ESCAP. An important example of such collaborative efforts is the provision of coordinated technical assistance to the economies in transition in Central Asia in the area of energy efficiency promotion under the ECE Energy Efficiency 2000 project. A joint ESCAP/ECE mission was despatched to Kazakstan with a view to developing a special technical assistance programme for the economies of Central Asia. The programme will provide better focus and improved complementarity among the technical assistance activities of ESCAP and ECE for the benefit of the economies in transition of Central Asia. The collaboration of UNDP is also being solicited for the programme. The areas under consideration relate to transport, industrial restructuring, entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises, promotion of foreign direct investment and trade facilitation.

20. ESCAP, in close collaboration with ECE, has actively promoted the use of electronic commerce and electronic data interchange (EDI) in international trade in the ESCAP region as part of its electronic commerce initiatives. With ECE assistance, ESCAP developed a training module entitled "EDI - A Technical Overview", and ESCAP also developed a training module entitled "EDI and UN/EDIFACT - A Technical Overview"; both the modules have been included in ECE and UNCTAD training activities. ESCAP and ECE jointly implemented national workshops on enhancing national capabilities of the economies in transition on the use and application of EDI in international trade in Armenia and the Russian Federation in October 1996. Under an arrangement with ECE, ESCAP established a mirror site of the ECE Trade Facilitation Information Exchange (TraFIX) on the World Wide Web; this cooperative effort benefits trade practitioners in the region as it provides a quick and cost-effective method of accessing information on trade facilitation.

21. ESCAP also collaborated with ECE in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the integration of the economies in transition in the world economy for the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. ECE cooperated with ESCAP in the implementation of a seminar on the implications of the single European market for Asian and Pacific economies in July 1996, and contributed a background study for the seminar. To ensure better coordination of ESCAP/ECE technical assistance to the countries of Central Asia and the Russian Federation, ESCAP keeps ECE



informed of activities to be implemented by ESCAP in those countries.

22. In view of the priority given to the strengthening of trade and investment information capabilities, ESCAP supported the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) in the implementation of two technical assistance programmes of the Governments of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. ESCAP also participated in a joint on-site assessment of trade and investment information needs, the facilities existing for this purpose, the identification of areas for further human resources development and an appraisal of a potential trade information network for trade and investment in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces of China, and Pyongyang. ESCAP also expects to collaborate with ITC in the areas of trade and investment information networking and in the testing and evaluation of training materials for enhancing the management capabilities of trade and investment information officials.

23. In the operationalization of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP, in cooperation with UNCTAD and other United Nations organizations, namely, ILO, ICAO, the Universal Postal Union (UPU), ITU, IMO and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), developed a regional action plan in the implementation of which other agencies, such as the World Bank, UNIDO and ADB, will also be involved. ESCAP also collaborated with UNCTAD in the development of a joint project for transport development in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) region, for which funding is being sought from the Islamic Development Bank.

24. In addition to the cooperative interaction with UNIDO within the framework of the RICAP Subcommittee on Industry and Technology, ESCAP and UNIDO collaborated in the organization of seminars and workshops on rural industrialization, waste-water treatment, medicinal and aromatic plants processing and small industries development, and in the regional workshop on techniques for project identification, preparation and appraisal in the economies in transition, held in Bangkok in October 1996. The organizations have also consulted closely on possible collaboration in the preparatory activities as well as in the organization of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology scheduled for September 1997.

25. With funding from the Regional Centre of UNDCP, ESCAP implements activities in the field of drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention, particularly in the development and implementation of intercountry responses to drug abuse and HIV/AIDS in cross-border areas of China, Myanmar and Thailand.

26. ESCAP and UNESCO are jointly implementing two multi-year projects to promote human resources development for women in South Asia and selected countries of the Pacific and Indo-China subregions through capacity-building of non-governmental organizations to provide literacy training for rural women. The project for South Asia focuses on post-literacy programme development, and that for the Pacific and Indo-China subregions, on management aspects of literacy programmes.

27. In follow-up of the regional implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, the Youth Unit of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (United Nations Headquarters), other specialized agencies, including ILO, UNESCO and WHO, and UNFPA, collaborated with ESCAP in the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Human Resources Development for Youth held in Beijing in October 1996 to consider areas for regional cooperation in pursuance of the implementation of the World Programme of Action.

28. ESCAP, in close cooperation with UNDP and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) secretariat, executes a project entitled "SAARC Seven Sisters: district development coordination and improved poverty project design". This involves creating and operationalizing local-level forums comprising agents and beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmes in the participating SAARC country districts, with a view to increasing coordination and participation for improving the implementation of poverty programmes. Professional coordination has been maintained with other executing agencies of the project, namely, ILO, the Asian and Pacific Development Centre, and United Nations Volunteers. Inter-agency coordination is an important requirement for the successful completion of this project within the UNDP umbrella programme on regional poverty alleviation for Asia and the Pacific. Similar coordination is pursued between the SAARC Seven Sisters project and another UNDP project, on institutional development at the grassroots level for poverty alleviation. The modalities of such coordination involve professional discussions, exchange of documents and participation in meetings.

29. Similarly, ESCAP and UNDP collaborated closely in the implementation of a number of regional projects, including the Programme for Asian Cooperation on Energy and Environment (PACE-E); the ESCAP/UNDP regional project on integrated applications of geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing for sustainable natural resources and environmental management; the ESCAP/UNDP network of trade-related research institutions in Asia and the Pacific within the project on exploitation of business opportunities network to support trade and commerce; urban transport strategies for medium-sized cities within the project on the programme for economic reforms through enhanced transport and communications services, and the subprogramme for activities in the port sector, inland water transport, urban transport and coordination of the regional action programme for the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and Pacific; the intraregional participatory urban management component of the Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific; the Mechanism for Exchange of Technology Information project implemented by APCTT; the promotion of women's participation in economic development in Indo-China; and the programme on human development indicators implemented by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP). The ESCAP secretariat also participated in the second meeting of the Steering Committee of the ECE/UNDP regional statistical project on support for the development of social statistics, with the aim of coordinating statistical activities in the Central Asian republics.

30. ESCAP, in cooperation with FAO, UNESCO, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) and non-governmental organizations, has undertaken regional activities in capacity- and institutional-building in desertification and land degradation control in the Asian and Pacific region, mainly through its Regional Network of Research and Training Centres on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific, which is supported by UNDP and UNEP and addresses the common issues of desertification. ESCAP is also promoting and assisting affected countries of the region in the preparation of national action programmes to combat desertification. With UNEP, and in cooperation with other agencies, including UNDP, FAO and UNESCO, ESCAP provided technical and financial support towards the preparation of national action programmes for China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakstan, Mongolia, Pakistan and Turkmenistan. ESCAP and UNEP are also cooperating on a project on military activities and the environment, under which two meetings at the subregional level have been organized in Bangkok: the subregional meeting on military activities and the environment for South-East Asia, held in June 1996, and the subregional meeting on military activities and the environment for South Asia, held in October 1996.

31. Other inter-agency cooperative initiatives include (i) ESCAP technical support to the expert consultation on irrigation management transfer in Asia, implemented by FAO, held in Bangkok in September 1996 and the expert consultation on the modernization of irrigation systems, held in Bangkok in November 1996; (ii) ESCAP/WMO support to the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones; (iii) the ESCAP/Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (United Nations Headquarters) regional consultative meeting on environmentally sound and sustainable development indicators, held in Bangkok in November 1996; (iv) the ESCAP/IMO country-level workshop on facilitation of maritime traffic, held in Dhaka and Colombo in July 1996 and in Karachi and Tehran in October 1996; and (v) the tourism projects within the Greater Mekong subregion conducted by ESCAP, ADB, the Mekong River Commission, the Pacific Asia Travel Association, UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization.

## **B. Intergovernmental organizations**

32. ESCAP maintains close relations with the Mekong River Commission in the field of water resources, including provision of technical support to various activities in water resources development and management. Advisory services on river basin development planning were extended to the Cambodia National Mekong Committee and its Great Lake study team at the request of the Mekong River Commission Secretariat in May 1996.

33. Cooperation and collaborative efforts between ESCAP and the Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (CCOP) were further strengthened through the establishment of a formal working group for the purpose of initiating and conducting joint programmes in the fields of mineral resources assessment and integrated coastal zone management, as well as the application of geology to urban planning. As a consequence, training activities related to the assessment of mineral potential in North-East Asia, sustainable supply of minerals and integrated coastal zone management in the Asian and Pacific region will be implemented jointly by ESCAP and CCOP in 1997 through the pooling of expertise and resources.

34. ESCAP has established cooperation with the Executive Committee of the Interstate Council for Addressing the Aral Sea Crisis and the International Aral Sea Rehabilitation Fund, and assisted in promoting cooperation between these organizations and the Mekong River Commission.

35. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at its forty-eighth session in April 1992, endorsed an integrated project on Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID), comprising the Asian Highway, the Trans-Asian Railway projects and facilitation of land transport, as a priority item for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific. In the implementation of the ALTID project, ESCAP has cooperated closely with subregional and intergovernmental organizations, including ECE, UNCTAD, UNDP, World Bank, ADB, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), ECO, SAARC, European Commission, Global Infrastructure Fund, International Organization for International Carriage by Rail, International Railway Congress Association, International Road Federation, International Road Transport Union, International Union of Railways, Organization of Railways Cooperation and World Development Council.

36. In the implementation of resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, ESCAP, in collaboration with ECE, ADB and IRU, organized two subregional seminars, one on the implications of accession to land transport facilitation conventions for the North-East Asian countries, and the other for the countries of the Greater Mekong subregion, in May and November 1996 respectively.

37. ESCAP has entered into informal consultations with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) secretariat with a view to enlisting its cooperation in the project on implications of the APEC process for intraregional trade and investment flows. Action is also being taken to strengthen

ESCAP/APEC cooperation in the field of transport.

38. ESCAP also contributed to the work of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) through the provision of inputs and expertise to the regional workshop on development challenges and the role of development cooperation in the three countries of Indo-China, organized by OECD and held in Phnom Penh in June 1996.

### **C. Financial institutionsC. Financial institutions**

39. ESCAP and ADB jointly implement the Asia Least-cost Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy (ALGAS) project participated in by Bangladesh, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam. The project aims at the development of human resources, institutional capability and technologies to address the issues relating to climate change and to effect reduction in the growth of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the region. The immediate objective is to develop and improve national and regional capacity to prepare baseline inventories of GHG emissions and sinks to meet the requirements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to identify cost-effective, technically feasible and economically viable actions to bring about a net reduction of GHG emissions.

40. ESCAP cooperates with UNDP, UNEP, ADB and the World Bank in the implementation of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation to promote environmental cooperation in energy and air pollution, ecosystem management, particularly deforestation and desertification, and capacity-building. ESCAP and ADB co-financed three projects under the programme, on training for sulphur-dioxide reduction in coal-fired plants, demonstration of low air pollution coal-fired power plant technology, and environment pollution data collection, comparison and analysis.

41. ESCAP participated in the ADB workshop entitled "Towards a Policy for Water Resources Development and Management in the Asian and Pacific Region" held in Manila in May 1996. The working relationship in the water sector has since been strengthened, especially in the formulation of national water sector profiles. ESCAP also made a special presentation on its activities related to GIS standards and earth space information networks at the international workshop on environmental data and metadata standards, funded by ADB, UNEP and the Mekong River Commission and held in Bangkok in December 1996.

42. ESCAP cooperated with ADB and UNDP in the implementation of activities under the Forum for the Comprehensive Development of Indo-China, including the meeting of the Private Sector Advisory Group organized by ESCAP in March 1996. ESCAP will also be collaborating with ADB in organizing a private sector forum back-to-back with the Ministerial Conference on Subregional Economic Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion, in Manila in April 1997.

43. ESCAP also collaborated with ADB in the implementation of follow-up activities to the Fourth

World Conference on Women, for example, in the implementation of a project involving the preparation of country studies in Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, and a study on women and the environment. Co-financing was provided by ADB for an expert group meeting on the feminization of poverty to be held early in 1997.

44. The secretariat maintained close collaboration with ADB in the area of environment statistics through participation in the ADB workshop on environment statistics in Pokhara, Nepal, held in December 1996 and in the field of transport through the implementation of the ESCAP/ADB seminar-cum-workshop on road safety in Asia and the Pacific and the ESCAP/ADB seminar on benefits of accession to land transport facilitation conventions for the Greater Mekong subregion countries.

45. In the development of transport infrastructure, ESCAP collaborated with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank in the implementation of a seminar on infrastructure regulation for the Central Asian republics and Mongolia, held in Bangkok in June/July 1996, and the ESCAP/World Bank regional seminar-cum-workshop on the management and financing of road maintenance, held in Bangkok in September 1996. ESCAP and the World Bank also undertook joint missions to China, India and Indonesia which focused on the strengthening of training institutions to enable planners and transport operators to implement urban transport strategies for medium-sized cities.

#### **D. Non-governmental organizations**

46. ESCAP collaboration with non-governmental organizations has also expanded. Workshops and seminars were implemented by the secretariat with financial and technical cooperation from non-governmental organizations and included: (i) the workshop on the promotion of self-help initiatives of people with disabilities, which was held in collaboration with Disabled People's International (Japan), the World Federation of the Deaf (Asia-Pacific Secretariat) and the Swedish Organization of Handicapped-International Aid Foundation, held in Hanoi in October 1996; (ii) the ESCAP/UNESCO projects on capacity-building of non-governmental organizations to provide literacy training for rural women, in which national non-governmental organizations serve as partners in the implementation of national- and local-level activities; (iii) the ESCAP project on assistance to non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific, in which non-governmental organizations prepared information kits in local languages and conducted national workshops to discuss implementation of the Plan of Action; and (iv) a regional seminar on GIS for coastal zone development planning to effect harmonization and synergy in the efforts aimed at the promotion of space applications for development, as a parallel activity to the Seventeenth Asian Conference on Remote Sensing organized by the Asian Association on Remote Sensing and held in Colombo in November 1996.

### **III. COOPERATION WITH SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

47. Although the annual consultative meeting among executive heads of subregional organizations

and ESCAP could not take place as scheduled in May 1996, to discuss specific proposals and measures for the promotion of inter-subregional cooperation in the fields of trade and investment, transport and communications, human resources development and energy, ESCAP continues to implement activities aimed at promoting cooperation with and between the subregional organizations through the implementation of activities under its technical assistance programme. Examples of such technical cooperation activities include the following:

(a) ESCAP provided advisory services to ASEAN on the drafting of an ASEAN plan of action on transport and communications, 1996-1998 and on a framework agreement on the facilitation of goods in transit (December 1996). In addition, ESCAP participated in the Eighteenth ASEAN Railway General Managers' Conference, held in Manila in May 1996, and the ASEAN secretariat was invited to attend a workshop on land transport of dangerous goods in Bangkok in December 1996;

(b) Within the context of the Forum for the Comprehensive Development of Indo-China, ESCAP contributed inputs and expertise in the fields of trade and investment review, tourism and transport to the Working Group on Economic Cooperation for Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, which was established by the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan. ESCAP plans to organize a joint seminar with the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta in February 1997 on the enhancement of trade and investment cooperation in South-East Asia, focusing on the requirements and implications of the expected accession of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar to ASEAN;

(c) ESCAP carried out a study on the promotion of trade and investment between ASEAN and ECO;

(d) ASEAN collaborated with the ESCAP secretariat in the implementation of technical cooperation activities pertaining to the use of natural gas in transport.

48. The next consultative meeting among executive heads of subregional organizations and ESCAP will take place in May 1997, when practical decisions for cooperation in the priority areas identified at the last consultative meeting are expected to take shape.

49. As a large number of regional and international organizations are present in the Pacific subregion, the ESCAP arm in the Pacific, the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (ESCAP/POC) collaborates very closely with those organizations, namely, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ADB, Forum Secretariat, South Pacific Commission (SPC), South Pacific Regional Energy Programme (SPREP), IMF, World Bank and the Commonwealth Development Corporation, on a broad range of activities, including the following:

(a) Assisting organizations in preparing their corporate plans and reviewing and making recommendations on their roles, functions and organizational structures, for example, carrying out an

organizational review of SPC, the Forum Secretariat, and the Forum Fisheries Agency; directing the economic management course organized by the Crown Agents; participating in the Cook Islands/ADB-sponsored consultative group meeting in Suva; preparing a comprehensive paper for ADB on development issues in the Pacific island countries projected into the next century; reviewing assessment procedures of jobs at SPREP and assisting SPREP in the development of training materials for a Capacity 21 workshop;

(b) Acting as resource persons for workshops organized by them, for example, at the workshop on informal financial systems organized by SPC; at the SPREP planners meeting and the workshop on planning for sustainable development; at the regional meeting of development planners organized by the Forum Secretariat; at the seminar on financing sources for private and public investment in the fisheries sector in the Pacific island countries; at the regional seminar on policy-making for senior officials organized by the University of the South Pacific and the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, and at the seminar on public sector financial management organized by the Economic Development Institute and the University of the South Pacific;

(c) Sitting on advisory boards for regional projects implemented by other organizations, for example, chairing the annual meeting of the International Finance Corporation South Pacific Project Facility Advisory Board;

(d) Assisting UNDP in formulating subregional work programmes for the Pacific subregion for the past and current programming cycles;

(e) Organizing joint workshops and missions, for example, ESCAP/POC and SPC workshops on informal financial systems in New Caledonia, and the Cook Islands/ADB consultative group meeting in Suva to apprise donor representatives of ESCAP activities in the Pacific subregion.



#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

50. In line with the suggestion of the Commission at its fifty-second session, the secretariat has expanded its collaboration with other United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies primarily through RICAP and its subcommittees, and concrete inter-agency activities have either been implemented or agreed upon for implementation, especially in regard to follow-up action at the regional level to decisions taken by the international community at the recent global conferences for the economic and social development of the Asian and Pacific region. The secretariat, in the implementation of its own programme of work, has also contributed towards the strengthening of inter-organizational cooperation, as evident from the activities carried out by the secretariat in collaboration with financial institutions, intergovernmental subregional organizations, and United Nations bodies and agencies. ESCAP/POC, in Port Vila, has played a similarly important role in the economic and social development of the Pacific subregion.

51. Despite the efforts of the secretariat, and other participating organizations and agencies both within and outside the United Nations system, to mobilize more resources towards the implementation of activities as follow-up to decisions taken at the global level insofar as they have an impact on the economic and social development of the Asian and Pacific region, the results have not been very satisfactory. Consequently, this has hampered the formulation and implementation of joint programmes. As resources for operational activities from the United Nations regular budget as well as from the budgets of the specialized agencies are limited, inter-agency cooperation can only be executed meaningfully through the greater allocation of extrabudgetary resources. Such resources, unfortunately, are also hard to come by. In view of the importance of operational linkages between the activities of the United Nations organizations and the specialized agencies to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to ensure more efficient and effective use of scarce resources, the Commission may wish to provide further guidance to the secretariat in this regard. At the same time, the Commission may also wish to urge donor countries and financing bodies and institutions such as UNDP, UNFPA and ADB to increase their financial contributions for the implementation of regional and subregional projects.

52. The Commission may also wish to consider the desirability of including this agenda item on the annual sessions of the Commission, especially since the question of inter-agency cooperation and the activities of the secretariat are reviewed by RICAP at its biannual meetings and ACPR at its monthly meetings, respectively.