

LIMITED

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Fifty-fifth session  
22-28 April 1999  
Bangkok

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

**Agenda item 1**

**OPENING OF THE SESSION**

The programme for the opening ceremony and addresses will be announced in due course.

**Agenda item 2**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Commission provides as follows: ~~■~~ The Commission shall, at its first meeting of each year, elect from among its representatives a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen, designated as First and Second Vice-Chairmen, who shall hold office until their successors are elected. They shall be eligible for re-election. ~~✕~~ If the Plenary so decides, the rule may be modified to enable the Commission to elect more than two Vice-Chairpersons, as has been the case at previous sessions, in which case, the Commission may elect a Bureau of officers comprising a Chairperson and several Vice-Chairpersons.

The senior officials segment may decide to meet in three committees of the whole and a working group on draft resolutions. It would then elect chairpersons and vice-chairpersons for each.

The ministerial segment will elect the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission.

**Agenda item 3**

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

- Provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/L.139)
- Annotated provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/L.140)

The provisional agenda was drawn up by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR). The Commission will be invited to adopt the agenda.

#### **Agenda item 4**

##### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION**

- Revision of the terms of reference of the Commission (E/ESCAP/1118)

Any development with regard to new membership or a change in the status or the name of members or associate members will be brought to the attention of the Commission for consideration and action.

#### **Agenda item 5**

##### **POLICY ISSUES FOR THE ESCAP REGION**

###### **5(a) Implications of recent economic and social developments**

- Report on the current economic situation in the region and policy issues (E/ESCAP/1119)

Under agenda item 5(a), the Commission will have before it a report on the current economic situation and policy issues (E/ESCAP/1119). The report will draw on the information contained in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1999*. It will review recent macroeconomic developments in the world economy, focusing on elements with implications for development in the region, including the continuing economic and financial crisis, international trade and the balance of payments; and international capital flows and interest rate and exchange rate trends. It will analyse the pattern of growth and inflation in the region in the light of the above. In addition, the report will discuss trade performance, capital flows and changes in macroeconomic policies in the countries of the region and it will highlight key policy issues.

The severe economic crisis in a number of countries of the region is threatening to reverse the impressive gains that had been achieved in social development. The crisis, for instance, has exposed the vulnerable situation of women, as they may bear the major brunt of the adjustment process. The report will review and analyse the impact of the economic crisis on employment, poverty, education and health and will identify key areas and vulnerable groups requiring the attention of policy makers. It will also cover policy initiatives, particularly safety net programmes initiated by national governments and international agencies, to mitigate the adverse effects of the crisis on vulnerable groups. The analysis will lead to the identification of areas in which efforts can be strengthened.

###### **5(b) Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: information technology, globalization, economic security and development**

- Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: information technology, globalization,

economic security and development: summary (E/ESCAP/1120)

Under agenda item 5(b), the Commission will have before it a summary of the theme study (E/ESCAP/1120), the full text of which will be available for reference as part II of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1999*. The summary will begin with a discussion of the influence of information technology on globalization and development. It will then provide an analysis of the development and application of information technologies, the constraints on their application and the opportunities they offer in the areas of trade, investment patterns and financial flows. It will also provide analyses of the effects of information technology on (a) the volatility of selected economic indicators; and (b) country-level economic security issues, such as output levels, employment size and structure, and food security. These will be followed by a review of the policies and regulatory frameworks at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in the areas outlined above. These analyses will be used to highlight policy issues relevant to the countries of the region.

### **Agenda item 6**

#### **EMERGING ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL**

##### **6(a) Regional economic cooperation**

- Report of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation on its seventh session (E/ESCAP/1121)
- Emerging issues and developments relevant to the subprogramme: trade and investment (E/ESCAP/1122)
- Implications of the Asian economic crisis for sustained industrial and technological development in the region (E/ESCAP/1123)
- Report on the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (E/ESCAP/1124)
- Report on the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery (E/ESCAP/1125)

The Commission will have before it the report of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its seventh session (E/ESCAP/1121). The session, scheduled to take place at Bangkok from 10 to 12 March 1999, will consider the following issues: the economic situation in the ESCAP region; the report of the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation on its tenth meeting; skills development for the new and emerging technologies in the wake of the Asian economic crisis; and the draft programme of work, 2000-2001 for subprogramme 1. Regional economic cooperation: trade and industry.

Following a decade of both robust economic growth predicated on outward oriented policies and an increasingly intraregional orientation, the countries of the region are now faced with an Asian crisis that threatens to reverse the achievements of the past. Over the past year, negative trends have been discernible in the trade growth of the affected countries, with the result that the region might no longer provide a dynamic market for exports. It is therefore imperative for regional economic cooperation in

trade and investment to be strengthened to enable developing countries to respond effectively to the challenges ahead. Document E/ESCAP/1122 will address selected policy issues relating to enhancing regional economic cooperation in order to strengthen intraregional trade and investment flows and take advantage of new opportunities in the aftermath of the crisis.

Document E/ESCAP/1123 will discuss the implications of the Asian economic crisis for sustained industrial and technological development in the Asian and Pacific region. While over the last few decades, the economies of the region, especially the South-East Asian economies, had achieved dynamic economic growth, with sustained progress in the industrial and technological areas, since mid-1996 that growth had been adversely affected by several events and factors. The document will review the causes of the economic crisis in Asia and analyse the implications for current and future industrial and technological development in the region. It will emphasize that the current crisis has revealed fundamental weaknesses in the economies and that appropriate policy responses are required to achieve structural changes not only in the financial sector, but also in the productive sectors, such as in industrial and technological areas. Some responses will be proposed at the end of the document.

Document E/ESCAP/1124 will contain a brief review of the major activities undertaken by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology since the last Commission session, as well as the major recommendations of the Governing Board of the Centre at its thirteenth session. It will also address responses to those recommendations.

Document E/ESCAP/1125 will contain a review of activities undertaken by the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery. It will elaborate on the problems and challenges, as well as the prospects for the Network's continued operation.

#### **6(b) Environment and natural resources development**

- Report of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Development on its first session (E/ESCAP/1126)
- Emerging issues and developments related to natural and man-made disasters (E/ESCAP/1127)
- Emerging issues and developments related to the environment and sustainable development of natural resources: the impact of the economic crisis on the energy sector (E/ESCAP/1128)

The Commission will have before it the report of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Development on its first session (E/ESCAP/1126). The Commission may wish to consider and endorse the report and provide guidance on the matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention.

While member countries have made some progress in reducing the damage caused by natural and man-made disasters, the recent disasters that have struck a large number of countries in the region dictate continued concerted efforts to assist developing countries to enhance their capability in disaster

prevention, preparedness and rehabilitation. Document E/ESCAP/1127 will present the findings of a review of relevant emerging issues, current practices and experience in the region and discuss options for strengthening regional cooperation and collaboration with other international organizations, particularly with the secretariats of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. The document will address both the natural causes of disasters, such as El Niño, as well as the man-made causes, such as deforestation. It will also discuss the contribution to disaster mitigation being made by the integrated use of space technology applications, such as satellite communications, satellite meteorology and Earth observation. The Commission is invited to deliberate on the issues and provide guidance on the future course of action at the national, regional and international levels.

The economic crisis in East and South-East Asia has been more serious and longer-lived than was anticipated. Among other sectors, the energy sector has been hard hit. In Asia, in particular South-East Asia, energy demand had been growing rapidly over the last two decades. Since mid-1997 when the crisis started, the subregion has experienced a significant slowdown in the growth of energy demand.

While the crisis has had an immediate impact on the energy sector in terms of demand, investment, financing, pricing, structural changes and the environment, its long-term effect may be to worsen the energy supply/demand gap that has been constraining development efforts in many developing countries.

Document E/ESCAP/1128 analyses the current situation and the short-, medium- and long-term impacts of the economic crisis on the energy sector. It also discusses response strategies, including regional and international cooperation. The Commission is invited to deliberate on the issue and provide guidance on the future course of action at the national and regional levels.

**6(c) Socio-economic measures to alleviate poverty in rural and urban areas**

- Report of the Committee on Socio-economic Measures to Alleviate Poverty in Rural and Urban Areas on its first session (E/ESCAP/1129)
- Progress in the implementation of resolutions and decisions relating to socio-economic measures to alleviate poverty in rural and urban areas (E/ESCAP/1130)
- Report on the Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/1131)
- Report on the Regional Meeting on a Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific, Macau, 28 September to 1 October 1998 (E/ESCAP/1132)
- Empowerment of Women in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/1133)
- Report on the Second Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on Human Resources Development for Youth (E/ESCAP/1134)

The Commission will have before it the report of the Committee on Socio-economic Measures to Alleviate Poverty in Rural and Urban Areas on its first session (E/ESCAP/1129). The Commission

may wish to discuss the matters calling for action or brought to its attention by the Committee and decide on or recommend follow-up activities.

Document E/ESCAP/1130 will report on progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to socio-economic measures to alleviate poverty in rural and urban areas and the related actions taken by the secretariat in follow-up to major decisions of the Commission at its recent sessions. The Commission may wish to review the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions and provide the secretariat with guidance on enhancing their implementation.

Document E/ESCAP/1131 will contain a report on the Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Topics of Asia and the Pacific.

In the implementation of Commission resolution 54/5 of 22 April 1998 on the International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages, ESCAP organized the Regional Meeting on a Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Macau from 28 September to 1 October 1998. The Commission will have before it the Macau Declaration and Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific, as adopted by the Regional Meeting (E/ESCAP/1132). In its Declaration, the Meeting, *inter alia*, called upon the Commission to devote at least one plenary meeting at its fifty-fifth annual session to be held in 1999 to the commemoration of the International Year of Older Persons and to generate greater awareness of issues related to ageing and older persons. The Meeting also recommended that the Commission endorse the Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific and provide support for its successful implementation. The Commission may wish to deliberate on issues relating to ageing and older persons in connection with the celebration of the International Year of Older Persons and endorse the Macau Declaration and Plan of Action on Ageing.

Since the adoption of the Jakarta Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific and the Beijing Platform for Action, progress has been achieved in empowering women in the economic and social fields, particularly with regard to developing capabilities, although access to opportunities and productive resources remain unequal. Furthermore, the formidable challenges of globalization and recent events and trends have burdened women disproportionately, possibly eroding the gains which have been made in recent years and reinforcing the need to work continuously towards the empowerment of women in the region. Document E/ESCAP/1133 will assess the advances made and difficulties encountered in empowering women, particularly in the light of recent economic and social developments. The Commission may wish to provide guidance on adopting possible responses in a more effective manner.

The Commission will have before it for consideration and endorsement the report on the Second Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on Human Resources Development for Youth (E/ESCAP/1134). The Meeting was convened as a regional preparatory activity for the World Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, held at Lisbon in August 1998, in accordance with the

mandate given by the General Assembly in resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995 on the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The Meeting adopted the Asia-Pacific Position for the World Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, the recommendations of which were subsequently incorporated in the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes, adopted by the World Conference. The Intergovernmental Meeting also adopted proposals for action to be implemented by ESCAP and other concerned United Nations bodies in order to promote human resources development for youth in the areas of education, employment, health and national youth policies. The Commission is invited to review the report of the Meeting, including the proposals for action, with a view to endorsing it.

**6(d) Transport, communications, tourism and infrastructure development**

- Report of the Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development on its first session (E/ESCAP/1135)
- Progress in the implementation of resolutions and major decisions of the Commission in transport, communications, tourism and infrastructure development (E/ESCAP/1136)
- Draft plan of action for sustainable tourism development in the Asian and Pacific region (E/ESCAP/1137)

The Commission will have before it the report of the Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development on its first session, held at Bangkok in November 1998 (E/ESCAP/1135). The document will highlight the major issues deliberated by the Committee, including the prospects for container shipping and port development; commercialization and private sector involvement in ports; inland water transport policy development and its integration within international and domestic transport systems; and the strengthening of national capability and the promotion of regional cooperation in sustainable tourism development. The Commission may wish to consider the major conclusions and decisions and endorse the recommendations brought to its attention. The Commission may also wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the implementation of the recommendations.

Document E/ESCAP/1136 will contain a report on progress in the implementation of resolutions and other major decisions of the Commission in the areas of transport, communications, tourism and infrastructure development. It will discuss various actions taken by the secretariat in implementing Commission resolutions 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, and 51/8 of 1 May 1995 on implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific. It will also review activities and projects being undertaken to implement other major decisions of the Commission. The Commission may wish to review the progress made in the implementation of these resolutions and decisions and provide the secretariat with guidance on enhancing their implementation.

The Commission at its fifty-third session, held at Bangkok in April 1997, suggested that the

recommendations and decisions of the Intergovernmental Meeting on Tourism Development, held at Bangkok in December 1996, should be translated into a plan of action which would provide a framework for effective cooperation and promotion of tourism by ESCAP members and associate members. The Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development, at its first session, held at Bangkok in November 1998 endorsed a draft plan of action for sustainable tourism development in the Asian and Pacific region. Document E/ESCAP/1137 will contain the draft plan of action as revised by the Committee for the consideration and approval of the Commission.

**6(e) Statistics**

- Report of the Committee on Statistics on its eleventh session (E/ESCAP/1138)
- Report on the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/1139)

The Committee on Statistics held its eleventh session at Bangkok in November 1998. The report of that session (E/ESCAP/1138) will be submitted to the Commission for consideration and endorsement. The Committee briefly reviewed recent statistical and government computerization activities undertaken by members and associate members, as well as by the secretariat and other agencies active in those fields in the region. It discussed issues relating to the development of statistics, information resource management and information technology applications. The report describes the Committee's deliberations on the effects of the financial crisis on the statistical services and on issues relating to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. The Committee also reviewed the ongoing and future work programmes of the secretariat in statistics and government computerization.

Document E/ESCAP/1139 will cover issues deliberated at the fourth session of the Governing Board of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, held at Bangkok in November 1998. It will also report on the implementation of the Institute's programmes and the activities undertaken to chart the new direction of the Institute since the fifty-fourth session of the Commission. The document will also highlight new areas of statistical training by the Institute and new collaborative efforts and arrangements.

**6(f) Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries**

- Report of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/1140)

Document E/ESCAP/1140 will contain the report of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries on its fourth session. The session will be held at Bangkok on 20 and 21 April 1999. The Special Body will consider (a) the utilization of development assistance in least developed countries, and (b) the multi-agency integrated initiatives for the development of exports. A report on the Commission's activities in the least developed and landlocked developing countries will also be made to the Special Body. The Commission may wish to endorse the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Body.

An oral report will be made on the ongoing activities for Pacific island developing countries.

**Agenda item 7**

**PROGRAMME PLANNING**

**7(a) Implementation of the programme of work, 1998-1999, and proposed programme changes for 1999**

- Implementation of the programme of work, 1998-1999 (E/ESCAP/1141)
- Proposed programme changes for 1999 (E/ESCAP/1142)

Document E/ESCAP/1141 will report on the secretariat's implementation in 1998 of the programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999. The document will highlight the main achievements under the 10 subprogrammes and provide an analysis of the use of resources. The document will serve as a reference for the Commission in considering proposals for changes in the programme of work for 1999.

Document E/ESCAP/1142 will contain proposals for programme changes for 1999. The proposals will be based on (a) the need to reorient programme activities in line with the revised medium-term plan, 1998-2001, as endorsed by the Commission at its fifty-fourth session; (b) the needs expressed by member Governments at various United Nations global and regional conferences, including the fifty-fourth session of the Commission and subsequent sessions of the legislative committees; and (c) changes in anticipated resource levels.

**7(b) Proposed programme of work, 2000-2001**

- Proposed programme of work, 2000-2001 (E/ESCAP/1143)

Document E/ESCAP/1143 will contain the proposals of the Executive Secretary for the programme of work, 2000-2001. The proposals will be based on the mandates and directives of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, as well as recommendations emanating from recent global and regional intergovernmental conferences. The draft programme of work will take into account the preliminary estimate of resources allocated to the secretariat in the programme budget instructions issued by United Nations Headquarters for the biennium 2000-2001. In considering the proposed programme of work, 2000-2001, the Commission may wish to note that the structure of the draft programme of work follows that of the revised medium-term plan, 1998-2001.

**7(c) Calendar of meetings and training programmes, April 1999-March 2000**

- Programme planning: tentative calendar of meetings and training programmes, April 1999-March 2000 (E/ESCAP/1144)

Document E/ESCAP/1144 will contain the tentative calendar of meetings and training programmes for the period April 1999-March 2000. The Commission is invited to give its views on any aspect of the calendar.

**Agenda item 8**

**TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF ESCAP AND  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENDED CONTRIBUTIONS**

- Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions (E/ESCAP/1145)

Document E/ESCAP/1145 comprises two parts: (a) technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and (b) mobilization of extrabudgetary resources.

*(a) Technical cooperation among developing countries*

This part will contain a report on the progress in the implementation of promotional and operational TCDC activities undertaken by the secretariat since the last session of the Commission, including activities to alleviate the impediments encountered by the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and the disadvantaged economies in transition in their efforts towards greater participation in TCDC activities. The Commission is invited to provide the secretariat with guidance on further work in this field.

(b) *Mobilization of extrabudgetary resources*

This part will report on the level of extrabudgetary resources, in cash and in kind, received from members and associate members, donor countries, United Nations system organizations and other organizations, which were allocated for the implementation of the programme of work of the Commission and its subsidiary regional institutions in 1998. The document will also set out the estimated requirements of the secretariat for extrabudgetary resources from donor countries in 1999. The document is submitted to the Commission to assist members and associate members, donor countries and organizations in deciding on the level of their respective contributions to the programme of work of the secretariat and the regional institutions in 1999.

Reports on the technical cooperation activities carried out in the ESCAP region in 1998 by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs will be provided for information.

**Agenda item 9**

**REPORTS OF REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES**

- Report of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre (E/ESCAP/1146)
- Report of the Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (CCOP) (E/ESCAP/1147)
- Report of the Mekong River Commission (E/ESCAP/1148)
- Report of the Typhoon Committee (E/ESCAP/1149)
- Report of the Panel on Tropical Cyclone (E/ESCAP/1150)

The Executive Secretary will transmit the reports for information. The Commission may wish to take note of them.

**Agenda item 10**

**ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVES AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES  
DESIGNATED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**

- Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (E/ESCAP/1151)
- Review of reform measures undertaken at ESCAP in pursuance of Commission resolution 53/1 (E/ESCAP/1152)

Documents E/ESCAP/1151 and E/ESCAP/1151/Add.1 will contain the report of ACPR for the period since the fifty-fourth session of the Commission. ACPR has continued to provide guidance and advice on the formulation and implementation of the programme of work of the secretariat and legislative bodies of the Commission. The proposed programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001 was reviewed by ACPR for submission to the Commission.

ACPR noted the review of regional commissions conducted by the Economic and Social Council and the progress made in the reform process within the secretariat, and would continue to render advice on the implementation of Council resolution 1998/46 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Document E/ESCAP/1152 will contain a brief review of reform measures undertaken at ESCAP in pursuance of Commission resolution 53/1.

### **Agenda item 11**

#### **DATE, VENUE AND ANY OTHER SUBJECT PERTAINING TO THE FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION**

- Date, venue and any other subject pertaining to the fifty-sixth session of the Commission: note by the secretariat (E/ESCAP/1153)

It is expected that the Commission will decide to hold its fifty-sixth session at Bangkok in March/April 2000. Under this item, the Commission may also wish to select a theme topic for the session.

### **Agenda item 12**

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

The Commission may wish to consider any other matter that may be brought to its attention.

### **Agenda item 13**

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION**

The Commission will consider and adopt the report and its resolutions.