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**Regional mechanisms for disaster risk reduction in the
 context of the post-2015 development agenda**
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Note by the secretariat*Summary*

The present document outlines how disaster risk reduction, including the building of resilience to disasters, is being addressed in the post-2015 development agenda. It explores opportunities for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to promote enhanced regional cooperation through strengthening and better linking regional mechanisms, including for addressing common and transboundary disaster risks. Finally, a number of issues that the Committee may wish to consider are presented.

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* E/ESCAP/CDR(4)/L.1.

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. Countries across Asia and the Pacific continue to be severely impacted by natural disasters, which are often caused by hazards with transboundary origins. As recognized by States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), this situation calls for regional approaches to building resilience. Over the past 45 years, the Asia-Pacific region recorded more than 5,000 disasters, which accounted for 43 per cent of the global total.¹ These disasters affected a combined 6 billion people, causing over 2 million fatalities and costing at least \$1.15 trillion (in 2005 United States dollars) in economic losses, thus taking a huge toll in terms of the region's social and economic development.

2. The pattern of natural disasters undermining hard-won development gains has continued in 2015, and numerous countries in Asia and the Pacific have been severely affected. In March 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam caused widespread damage in Vanuatu and also impacted neighbouring countries. Approximately 166,000 people – more than half of Vanuatu's population – were affected. Eleven people were killed.

3. On 25 April 2015, an earthquake of 7.6 magnitude struck Nepal, leaving more than 8,000 people dead and destroying more than half a million houses. In May and June, India and Pakistan reported more than 1,000 deaths from a heat wave. In July and August, heavy monsoon rains claimed hundreds of lives and affected more than a million people in South and South-East Asia.

4. For a region at such a high risk of disasters, building resilience is not a question of choice, but a collective imperative. Therefore, the countries in Asia and the Pacific have identified disaster risk reduction as one of their core priorities in terms of regional cooperation and have requested the secretariat to intensify its work in disaster risk reduction as an integral part of achieving sustainable development in the region.

B. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

5. In March 2015, responding to the global need for greater resilience to natural disasters, and building on the regional experience of Asia and the Pacific, at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030² was adopted. The expected outcome of the Sendai Framework is a substantial reduction in disaster risk and loss of life, livelihoods, health and assets by 2030.

6. The Sendai Framework succeeded the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.³ In the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework was uneven. In particular, weak translation of policies and legislation into action served as an impediment to greater progress. While many countries developed legal and institutional mechanisms for disaster risk reduction, the majority fell short of integrating disaster risk reduction into their development policies, plans and fiscal budgets.

¹ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Overview of Natural Disasters and their Impacts in Asia and the Pacific, 1970–2014*, (Bangkok, 2015).

² General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

³ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

7. In the Sendai Framework, an effort to address these shortcomings and to serve as a common agenda for the period 2015–2030 has been made. To this end, seven global targets are identified in the Framework, all of which can be supported by ESCAP and its partners through regional and South-South cooperation. They include (a) reducing disaster mortality, (b) reducing the number of people affected, (c) reducing direct disaster economic losses, (d) reducing damages to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, (e) increasing the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, (f) enhancing international cooperation, and (g) increasing the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments.

8. Further, for the pursuit of these seven targets, the Sendai Framework lists four priorities for action. These are (a) understanding disaster risk, (b) strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, (c) investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and (d) enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Regional and South-South cooperation can significantly advance these priorities, while complementing action at the national and local levels.

9. In the Sendai Framework, the important role of regional organizations such as ESCAP in fostering regional solutions in disaster risk reduction is reaffirmed. This role includes developing regional strategies, policies and guidance; harnessing regional cooperation for the sharing of science, technology, experience and knowledge; and providing regional platforms for increasing coherence across systems, sectors and organizations. With the region as a whole at high risk of disasters and each country about to embark on implementing the Sendai Framework, the scope for regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific is greater than ever.

10. Successful implementation of the Sendai Framework depends on generating a broad recognition at all levels of government that disaster risk reduction is essential to protecting past gains and fostering future progress in sustainable development. This means that, unless disasters cease to be seen as a sectoral issue, and instead become integrated into development policies and plans and fiscal budgets, the targets of the Sendai Framework are unlikely to be reached. Therefore, there is a need for multisector, regional platforms such as ESCAP to bring together the previously separate agendas of disaster risk reduction and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

C. The post-2015 sustainable development agenda

11. In June 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development set the strategic direction for a closer integration of disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. In the outcome document, “The future we want”,⁴ the Conference called for disaster risk reduction and the building of resilience to disasters to be addressed, with a renewed sense of urgency, in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and for these issues to be integrated, as appropriate, into policies, plans, programmes and budgets at all levels. Setting the stage for greater coherence at all levels, the Conference further called for coordinated and comprehensive strategies that integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into public and private investment, decision-making and planning.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

12. In August 2015, the meeting on intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda reached consensus on the document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, marking an important step in the efforts that began with the Conference on Sustainable Development. This new development agenda will build on the Millennium Development Goals, which had a target date of 2015. It contains a proposal for 17 new sustainable development goals, which are closely related to the Commission’s mandate to promote inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific. Member States are expected to formally adopt the outcome document at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, which will be held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015.

13. The 17 sustainable development goals and the 169 related targets aim at tackling key systemic barriers to sustainable development, such as inequality, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, inadequate infrastructure and lack of decent jobs, many of which are also drivers of vulnerability to disasters. As such, there are important synergies between the proposed sustainable development goals and the Sendai Framework. Consequently, disaster risk management and resilience components have been factored into several sustainable development goals and targets across the multiple sectors.

14. Specifically, disasters are explicitly mentioned in the proposed targets related to goal 1, “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”, goal 2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, goal 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, and goal 13, “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”. Given the close linkages between resilience and development, especially in Asia and the Pacific, reducing disaster risk would bolster efforts to reach multiple other sustainable development goals as well.

15. Responsibilities and actions at the regional level, which are clearly outlined in the Sendai Framework, are also being formulated in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, United Nations regional commissions such as ESCAP have an important role to play, as they have the ability to bring the disaster risk reduction agenda into broader regional intergovernmental discussions on sustainable development by pursuing a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach.

16. In the context of Asia and the Pacific, the nexus between disasters and sustainable development has at least three different dimensions. First, disasters erode development gains and therefore risk reduction is important for protecting those gains. Second, deficits in development create higher disaster risk and therefore development is the key to reducing the underlying vulnerabilities to disasters. Third, unplanned and unsustainable development creates new disaster risk. Consequently, strategies in disaster risk reduction and sustainable development must be closely aligned to ensure that the targets of the Sendai Framework as well as the proposed sustainable development goals are reached.

17. In General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system of 2012, Member States recognized the contribution of the United Nations bodies, including regional commissions, to addressing development challenges and achieving the internationally agreed development goals. In particular, in the resolution, the role of regional commissions in helping developing countries to strengthen capacities and maximize the benefits and impact of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in order to achieve their national goals was highlighted.

II. The role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction

18. Supporting a region that is quickly developing but also highly prone to natural disasters, ESCAP plays a particularly important role in building regional and South-South cooperation for developing regional strategies and addressing shared risks in the context of sustainable development. In this regard, ESCAP is uniquely positioned as a formal United Nations platform for policymaking in the region, facilitator of regional knowledge- and experience-sharing, and catalyst for creating a strong regional voice. A set of resolutions that closely link regional strategies in disaster risk reduction and sustainable development anchor the Commission's role in this regard.⁵

19. ESCAP already plays an important role in bringing disaster risk reduction into high-level policy discussions on sustainable development, particularly through its annual Commission session. Further, the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction provides senior government officials from various development sectors with a platform for policy dialogue at the regional level and an opportunity to make recommendations to the Commission. In this regard, ESCAP adds value by serving the entire Asia-Pacific region and pursuing an approach that involves the whole of government.

20. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which was convened by ESCAP in 2014 and 2015, has served to further consolidate the regional voice on sustainable development. At the Forum, building resilience to natural disasters has been described as an urgent regional issue and disaster risk reduction has been adopted as one of the sustainable development priorities for Asia and the Pacific.

21. In May 2015, building on the priorities outlined in the Sendai Framework, the Commission adopted resolution 71/12 on strengthening regional mechanisms for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Asia and the Pacific, in which it reaffirmed its role in disaster risk reduction. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to ensure secretariat support to, inter alia:

- Ensure implementation of the Sendai Framework through policy recommendations, regional guidelines, technical assistance and advisory services

⁵ Resolution 62/7 on strengthening regional cooperation and coordination of early warning system arrangements for tsunamis through the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia; resolution 64/2 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific; resolution 68/5 on the Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017; resolution 69/11 on the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017; resolution 69/12 on enhancing regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific; resolution 70/2 on disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific; and resolution 70/13 on regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific.

- Help member States monitor and report on progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, including through disaster statistics
- Establish linkages between the interdisciplinary and intergovernmental platforms of the Commission and other regional platforms on disaster risk reduction
- Strengthen disaster risk modelling, assessment, mapping, monitoring and multi-hazard early warning systems for common and transboundary disasters
- Work through the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism to promote coherence and strengthen collaboration with subregional organizations
- Facilitate access to science, technology and innovations in disaster risk reduction
- Strengthen the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries and expand its geographic scope to also include Pacific small island developing States

22. The secretariat delivers on this mandate through a combination of normative, analytical and capacity-building work anchored in regional cooperation mechanisms. Its focus remains on providing multisectoral, multidisciplinary policy guidance for mainstreaming disaster risk management; developing a core set of statistics for monitoring resilience; promoting end-to-end regional early warning systems; building capacity for disaster risk reduction, especially through the application of space technologies and geographic information systems (GIS); and enhancing regional cooperation for knowledge- and technology-sharing among member States.

23. To further support member States in shaping strategies on disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development, ESCAP provides high-quality research publications such as the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, Building Resilience to Natural Disasters and Major Economic Crises* and a series of analytical reports. Through these publications, ESCAP promotes multisectoral policy planning that enables disaster risk reduction to be properly integrated into development plans, poverty reduction strategies and climate change adaptation frameworks. In particular, the Commission's research focuses on multidisciplinary approaches to bring disaster risk reduction into finance and planning ministries, environment ministries, infrastructure ministries and other relevant sectoral ministries as well as the private sector.

24. Since its first edition in 2010, the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report* has contributed substantially towards improving the understanding of disaster risk and aligning national-level policies and programmes with the Millennium Development Goals and the Hyogo Framework for Action. The 2015 edition of the *Report* outlines the state of the region's resilience, throws light on fairly neglected areas of disaster risk reduction, such as slow-onset drought and early warning and information management systems, and details the critical role of regional cooperation in addressing cross-border disasters. A 2015 joint publication on the role of public-private partnership in disaster risk reduction, *Resilient Business for Resilient Nations and Communities*, published by ESCAP, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre of Thailand and R3ADY Asia-Pacific, also aimed to expand the audience's understanding of the motivations, potential and challenges in enlisting the private sector in strengthening its business resilience and thus contributing to the resilience of society at large.

25. In 2013, at the request of member States, ESCAP published *Building Resilience to Natural Disasters and Major Economic Crises*, which formed the basis for deliberations during the sixty-ninth session of the Commission, which met on the theme of resilience. This publication led to the adoption of resolution 69/12 on enhancing regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific, which has wide-ranging implications, and also provided information regarding the regional dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda.

26. ESCAP deploys regional advisory services as requested by member States, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, as well as middle-income countries facing specific challenges, to deliver normative support and policy expertise in order to augment their domestic resources and capabilities with better access to capacity-building resources, technical assistance and technology transfer. The most recent examples include policy advisory support from ESCAP for the alignment of national policies in Indonesia and Bhutan with the Sendai Framework and for the review and codification of various technical guides on disaster management in the context of post-Typhoon Haiyan recovery in the Philippines. ESCAP has used the ninth tranche of funding from the United Nations Development Account for support for sustainable development initiatives at the country-level through, inter alia, capacity-building, development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements addressing the regional and subregional dimensions of disaster risk reduction and the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned.

27. In accordance with resolution 71/11 of May 2015, the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management was established as a regional institution of ESCAP to further strengthen the capacities of member States and regional organizations in the fields of disaster information management and disaster risk reduction. With a focus on assisting high-risk, low-capacity countries, the Centre will facilitate access to regional and global disaster information and data sources through the creation of appropriate standards, frameworks and mechanisms, such as a regional disaster database for multi-hazard risk assessment. Following the 2015 earthquake in Gorkha, Nepal, and at the request of the Government of Bhutan, the Centre has already started capacity development activities in these two countries. In this way, the Centre contributes towards the seventh global target of the Sendai Framework, which is to substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030, as well as towards the goals of the evolving post-2015 development agenda.

28. ESCAP serves as a regional hub and clearing-house for harnessing the latest advances in space technology and GIS for member States to enhance their capacities in areas such as risk identification, early warning, response, and post-disaster damage and loss assessment. ESCAP also provides a multilateral platform for enhancing the scientific and technical work on disaster risk reduction through the sharing of knowledge and skills, and for building consensus on the effective use of geospatial information in reducing disaster risk in Asia and the Pacific. In this regard, the work of the secretariat focuses on the timely provision of space-derived data, products and services to countries affected by severe disasters and on institutional capacity-building in the use of space technology and GIS for disaster risk reduction.

29. In particular, through its long-standing Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP), ESCAP has made concerted efforts to promote the applications of space technology for disaster

risk reduction. RESAP is a unique regional cooperative platform that brings together national space agencies in the Asia-Pacific region to help disaster-affected countries through the provision of regional support in satellite-derived data, products and services. Through many years of efforts by ESCAP member States under RESAP, countries without their own space programmes can now access and effectively utilize space-derived data, products and services for disaster management. Space applications are also increasingly being used by countries in Asia and the Pacific for disaster preparedness and risk reduction. These technologies are cost-effective and readily available through the regional cooperative programmes promoted by ESCAP.

30. ESCAP supports a wide range of activities to strengthen early warning systems in Asia and the Pacific, including through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries. The Trust Fund was established in 2005 following the devastation wrought by the Indian Ocean tsunami. It supports the strengthening of early warning systems for coastal hazards, such as tsunamis, typhoons and storm surges, through regional and South-South cooperation. The Trust Fund contributed to the establishment of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, which became operational in 2011, as well as to the establishment of the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia, an intergovernmental institution focusing on the generation and application of early warning information and the provision of capacity-building support. By 2015, it had grown to include 12 member States and 19 collaborating countries.

31. As part of its work to strengthen regional early warning systems, ESCAP launched the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning in Asia and the Pacific, which marshals regional resources in space and GIS applications and enhances capacities for integrated analysis of space and in-season ground data and information. The Mechanism is particularly useful in building the resilience of agrarian communities in developing countries that are perennially affected by drought. Participating pilot countries in Asia and the Pacific have already benefited from enhanced access to space-based data, products and services; institutional capacity-building in drought early warning, preparedness and response; and strengthened institutional coordination and policies at the country level.

32. To further enhance early warning for hydro-meteorological hazards, ESCAP and the World Meteorological Organization have actively supported the ESCAP/World Meteorological Organization Typhoon Committee and the World Meteorological Organization/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones since their establishment in the 1970s. The Typhoon Committee, focusing on storms emerging from the western Pacific, and the Panel, focusing on the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, are unique regional mechanisms that bring together a wide range of experts in meteorology, hydrology and disaster risk reduction in order to build capacities and develop joint strategies across countries and professional fields. The Typhoon Committee and the Panel also conduct original research and pilot projects to further improve the understanding of tropical cyclones and related hazards.

33. To strengthen cooperation between these two platforms, ESCAP hosted a joint session of the Typhoon Committee and the Panel in February 2015. The joint session led to an agreement on a new cooperative mechanism, which will enable the sharing of second-generation meteorological satellite data and products as well as advanced modelling skills for improved forecasting and early warning. The mechanism will also facilitate joint initiatives to enhance

the capacities of member States with support from the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres in India and Japan.

34. ESCAP also plays an important role as a catalyst for implementing global initiatives and tools in the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP, the United Nations Development Programme and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre are working together to further strengthen the post-disaster needs assessment process by enhancing regional capacity. Further, ESCAP and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are developing an analytical tool for rapid post-disaster assessment based on the innovative use of space technology applications, geospatial modelling, navigation systems and crowdsourcing.

35. In the area of space technology and GIS applications, standard operating procedures on the effective utilization of satellite-derived information for emergency response and relief, developed by ESCAP in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), and geo-referenced information system for disaster risk management portals for supporting evidence-based decision-making for disaster risk management are some of the more recent tools and guidelines that have generated considerable demand.

36. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, ESCAP plans to continue to work with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management to develop the above-mentioned standard operating procedures and to continue to work with SAARC to develop a manual for rapid post-disaster assessment for the rest of Asia and the Pacific.

37. ESCAP is currently preparing a series of tools and guidelines on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction at the national and subnational levels as well as in key sectors. The guidelines will assist planning and finance ministries, disaster management authorities and other ministries in charge of critical infrastructure, transport and the environment, among others, in integrating disaster risk reduction into multiple sectors. Serving to build the capacity of government officials in particular, the guidelines will take into account the Sendai Framework as well as the upcoming post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals.

38. Much of the Commission's work on disaster risk reduction is delivered in cooperation with other United Nations agencies. For example, the ecosystems for adaptation and disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) initiative is a programme of the United Nations Environment Programme-led Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction, which is an important global alliance of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and specialized institutes. At the regional level, ESCAP plans to join the Partnership's initiative to promote the Eco-DRR approach. In this way, by working in partnerships, ESCAP has helped to bring the global post-disaster needs assessment processes and Eco-DRR approaches to the regional level.

39. The ESCAP-led Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism serves as an important regional platform for enhancing coherence and partnership in the United Nations family. In particular, the thematic working group on environment and disaster risk management of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, co-chaired by ESCAP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme, has been working to build greater coherence in its engagement with ASEAN, as

part of the comprehensive partnership launched by the United Nations and ASEAN in 2011.

40. To this end, the members of the thematic working group partnered with ASEAN to develop the ASEAN-United Nations Strategic Plan of Cooperation on Disaster Management 2011-2015. The Strategic Plan constituted an important step towards greater coherence and reduced fragmentation in United Nations engagement with ASEAN on disaster management. Instead of each United Nations actor pursuing separate initiatives with ASEAN, the Strategic Plan serves as an overall framework and promotes consistency in engagement, covering areas such as preparedness and response; risk assessment, early warning and monitoring; and prevention, mitigation, outreach and mainstreaming. A revised plan was finalized in April 2015. The thematic working group's experience in bringing about greater coherence in engagement with subregional organizations offers a potential blueprint for more strategic United Nations engagement in other subregions and thematic areas.

III. Regional gaps and opportunities

41. After 10 years of implementation of the Hyogo Framework, the Asia-Pacific region is home to an increasing number of pockets of good practices and successes in disaster risk reduction, which could be scaled up further and elevated to regional norms. Going forward, as part of the implementation of the Sendai Framework, there is a regional need for additional capacity- and institution-building, as well as sharing of good practices among countries. Regional and South-South cooperation has a key role to play, in this regard.

42. There are already multiple regional mechanisms on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific, supported by United Nations as well as non-United Nations actors. While each of the mechanisms represents important initiatives and commitment, there is a need for greater coherence by bringing together multiple mechanisms and initiatives, as recognized by ESCAP member States through resolution 71/12.

43. As of 2015, the existing regional mechanisms in disaster risk reduction typically have generated significant declarations and recommendations which reflect the important progress made to date. However, many of the mechanisms could benefit from having a recognized channel to take up policy recommendations – particularly those with regional implications – to formal regional platforms within the United Nations system where member States and their many development partners could implement them. The fifth session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction could serve as a key platform in this regard.

44. ESCAP is uniquely placed to support the Asia-Pacific region in addressing this gap. Specifically, ESCAP could extend its intergovernmental, multisectoral platform to support disaster risk reduction in the region and at the same time ensure strong linkages to policy discussions on sustainable development. Bringing about a greater convergence of regional mechanisms would also allow the region to capitalize on ESCAP-supported mechanisms such as the Regional Coordination Mechanism, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the Committee.

45. As mentioned above, the strategic engagement of the United Nations with ASEAN, through the Regional Coordination Mechanism, is a good example of this regional work. The model already implemented by the thematic working group on environment and disaster risk management of the Regional Coordination Mechanism could serve as a model to further strengthen engagement on disaster risk management with other subregional organizations,

such as SAARC. In this regard, the ESCAP-led Mechanism offers a unique regional platform for the United Nations to work towards greater coherence and to strengthen partnerships, thus supporting the overall goals of the Sendai Framework as well as the sustainable development goals.

46. As outlined in the note by the secretariat on strengthening regional multi-hazard early warning systems,⁶ ESCAP can also play an important role in promoting regional early warning mechanisms for transboundary hazards such as tsunamis, tropical cyclones and floods. For example, the Commission's research shows that there is a particular need for strengthened regional cooperation in early warning for transboundary river basin floods stemming from the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. Such cooperation could involve the sharing of data, knowledge and innovations, as well as dialogues and institutional partnerships based on an integrated flood management approach.

47. The role of the Committee could potentially be further enhanced through the establishment of a standing bureau that assumes leadership between Committee sessions by representing the Committee in regional forums on sustainable development and engaging with the Regional Coordination Mechanism and other regional platforms and mechanisms. Such a bureau could significantly enhance the impact of the outcomes of Committee sessions, with support from ESCAP.

IV. Issues for consideration by the Committee

48. As requested in resolution 71/12, the secretariat will continue to deliver its mandate in disaster risk reduction through a combination of normative, analytical and capacity-building work that is firmly anchored in the Commission's role as a convener of regional cooperation. By aligning its priorities with the Sendai Framework as well as the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, the secretariat will endeavour to enhance its assistance to member States, in particular in the following areas:

- Develop agreed strategies and mechanisms for cooperation on disaster risk reduction at the regional and, as appropriate, the subregional level, in particular to address common and transboundary disaster risks, in the context of sustainable development
- Produce policy analysis and technical advisories and promote closer policy links between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development
- Develop a basic range of regional disaster-related statistics and strengthen the capacity of member States in monitoring and reporting disaster-related statistics and developing evidence-based disaster risk reduction policies
- Facilitate the sharing of multi-hazard and transboundary risk information, modelling and monitoring, including that related to near real-time satellite data and products for assessment of post-disaster damages and impacts
- Enhance regional cooperation for end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems with a specific focus on high-risk, low-capacity countries, building on the projects and programmes delivered by the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian

⁶ E/ESCAP/CDR(4)/2.

Countries, and through the Commission's space applications programme

- Promote regional coherence across systems, sectors and organizations and establish closer relations with subregional organizations through the Regional Coordination Mechanism and its thematic working group on the environment and disaster risk management

49. Further, as a formal regional platform of the United Nations, ESCAP will seek to forge partnerships with the various platforms on disaster risk reduction at the subregional level to periodically assess progress, highlight policy recommendations and share good practices and knowledge on disaster risk-informed policies, programmes and investments.

50. To this end, the Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on effective strategies and approaches and identify priorities considered appropriate for the secretariat to follow in its future work, taking into account the regional implementation of the Sendai Framework and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

51. In summary, the Committee may wish to:

(a) Reinforce the Commission's role in supporting member States in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, especially with respect to cooperation, strategy and capacity development at the regional level;

(b) Request ESCAP to bring the many regional and subregional platforms on disaster risk reduction together to share their strategic recommendations during the fifth session of the Committee and to facilitate the deliberation of those recommendations in the Commission's interdisciplinary and intergovernmental platforms and other regional platforms on disaster risk reduction and sustainable development;

(c) Establish a standing bureau that assumes leadership between the sessions of the Committee by representing it in regional forums on sustainable development and engaging with the Regional Coordination Mechanism and other regional mechanisms, with support from ESCAP;

(d) Request ESCAP to optimize United Nations-wide coherence through the Regional Coordination Mechanism and, specifically, work through the thematic working group on the environment and disaster risk management to further strengthen collaboration with ASEAN and extend this model to other subregional organizations, such as SAARC;

(e) Building on the Commission's established intergovernmental platform, position ESCAP as a clearing house at the regional level in the implementation of the Sendai Framework in the broader context of the post-2015 sustainable development goals, and in regional cooperation on hazards with transboundary origins.