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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Seventy-third session

Bangkok, 15-19 May 2017

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-fourth session of the Commission (2018)

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Note by the secretariat**

Summary

The present note contains information on the possible dates and venue of the seventy-fourth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which is to be held in 2018, and a proposal for a theme topic for that session.

The Commission may wish to make a decision on these matters.

I. Introduction

1. The present note contains suggestions made by the secretariat for the consideration of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-third session. The Commission may wish to consider the dates, venue and theme topic for its seventy-fourth session, to be held in 2018, and to provide the secretariat with guidance in this regard.

II. Dates and venue

2. Rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the Commission requires it to recommend the dates and venue for its next session, subject to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and in consultation with the Secretary-General. In accordance with established practice, at each session, the Commission recommends the convening of the next session. The actual dates and venue are then determined by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the members and the Chair of the Commission.

* E/ESCAP/73/L.1.

** The present note was submitted late owing to the need to take into account the views of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, which were expressed at its 369th session on 21 March 2017 and during informal consultations, the last of which was held on 4 May 2017.

3. In addition, in rule 1 of the rules of procedure it is stated that sessions of the Commission shall ordinarily be held at the office of the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific, unless the Commission recommends otherwise.

III. Theme topic

4. The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission at its 369th session held on 21 March 2017 and its Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions at its sessions held on 4, 19 and 25 April and 2 and 4 May 2017 considered proposals for a theme topic for the seventy-fourth session of the Commission and decided to submit the following proposal for consideration by the Commission: “Inequality in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

A. Introduction

5. The adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals has created another opportunity to address the issue of inequality of income and opportunities in accessing health, education and other public services. While income inequality between countries has somewhat improved, it has increased within countries. Within the Goals, the promotion of equality is identified as both a stand-alone goal to reduce inequality within and among countries (Goal 10) as well as a cross-cutting issue (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 11) and in the 2030 Agenda with the explicit commitment to reach the furthest behind first.

B. Topics covered by the theme study

6. The theme study could cover the following three elements: the state of inequality with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development; inequality and megatrends in Asia and the Pacific; and opportunities for addressing inequalities under the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. State of inequality with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development

7. This element could provide a snapshot of the current state of inequality with regard to the following:

- (a) Economic: including income and wealth inequality;
- (b) Social: including gender and access to opportunities, such as health care and education;
- (c) Environmental: including access to natural resources, water and sanitation, energy services, ecosystem services.

2. Inequality and megatrends in Asia and the Pacific

8. This element could be used to assess the current and potential impacts, both positive and negative, on inequality of the region’s main megatrends:

- (a) Population dynamics, especially ageing and youth;
- (b) Urbanization;
- (c) Climate change;
- (d) Environmental degradation;

- (e) Migration;
- (f) Employment and the future of work;
- (g) Innovation and information and communications technology.

3. Opportunities for addressing inequalities under the Sustainable Development Goals

9. Under this element some of the main areas for policy actions to address current and potential inequality linked to the region's megatrends, as well as case studies of successful models, could be identified, including the following:

- (a) The role of economic policies and instruments;
- (b) The role of social protection policies;
- (c) The role of natural resource management policies (for example, on fisheries, forests, urban farming,);
- (d) The role of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building policies;
- (e) The role of urban planning and policies.

IV. Previous theme topics

10. For reference, a list of the theme topics of previous Commission sessions is contained in the annex to the present note.

Annex

List of theme topics of previous Commission sessions

<i>Session^a</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme topic</i>
40	1984	Technology for development
41	1985	Technology for development
42	1986	Human resources development
43	1987	Human resources development
44	1988	Human resources development
45	1989	Restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s
46	1990	Restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s
47	1991	Industrial restructuring in Asia and the Pacific, in particular with a view to strengthening regional cooperation
48	1992	Regional economic cooperation in the ESCAP region: prospects, priorities and policy options
49	1993	Expansion of investment and intraregional trade as a vehicle for enhancing regional economic cooperation and development
50	1994	Infrastructure development as key to economic growth and regional economic cooperation
51	1995	Strengthening of regional cooperation in human resources development with special reference to the social implications of sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific
52	1996	Sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Asia and the Pacific
53	1997	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: opportunities and challenges for ESCAP
54	1998	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: status of and prospects for social development
55	1999	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: information technology, globalization, economic security and development
56	2000	Development through globalization and partnership in the twenty-first century: an Asia-Pacific perspective for integrating developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system on a fair and equitable basis
57	2001	Balanced development of urban and rural areas and regions within the countries of Asia and the Pacific
58	2002	Sustainable social development in a period of rapid globalization: challenges, opportunities and policy options
59	2003	Integrating economic and social concerns, especially HIV/AIDS, in meeting the needs of the region
60	2004	Meeting the challenges in an era of globalization by strengthening regional development cooperation
61	2005	Implementing the Monterrey Consensus in the Asian and Pacific region: achieving coherence and consistency

<i>Session</i> ^a	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme topic</i>
62	2006	Enhancing regional cooperation in infrastructure development, including that related to disaster management
63	2007	Development of health systems in the context of enhancing economic growth towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific
64	2008	Energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific
65	2009	Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in the Asia-Pacific region
66	2010	Addressing challenges in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: promoting a stable and supportive financial system; and green growth or environmentally sustainable economic growth, including through technology and financing
67	2011	Beyond the crises: Long-term perspectives on social protection and development in Asia and the Pacific
68	2012	Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific
69	2013	Opportunities to build resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises
70	2014	Regional connectivity for shared prosperity
71	2015	Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation
72	2016	Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development
73	2017	Regional cooperation for sustainable energy

^a From the fortieth to the seventy-third session.