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Seventy-first session

Bangkok, 25-29 May 2015

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the annotated provisional agenda for the seventy-first session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Annotation

Senior officials segment

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening addresses

The detailed programme for the opening of the session will be made available upon finalization.

(b) Election of officers

Rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Commission states: “The Commission shall, at its first meeting of each year, elect from among the 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 applied differently to enable the Commission to elect more than two vice-chairs, as has been the practice at previous sessions, in which case the Commission may elect a bureau of officers composed of a chair and several vice-chairs.

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

The ministerial segment will elect the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Commission.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/71/L.1)

Annotated provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/71/L.2)

2. Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries

(a) The new programme of action for the small island developing States

Documentation

ESCAP support for implementation of the Samoa Pathway for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (E/ESCAP/71/1)

The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States was held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014. The overarching theme of the Conference was “the sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships”. The outcome document of the Conference, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway), identifies priority areas for the sustainable development of small island developing States, and the means of implementation. The Samoa Pathway highlights three main areas of support for small island developing States from the regional commissions: (a) enhancing national capacities and institutions: supporting capacity development at the national level through country teams; (b) enhancing the Pacific voice in regional and global processes and platforms; and (c) monitoring and accountability: monitoring of the full implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados Programme of Action), the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Mauritius Strategy) and the Samoa Pathway. As the agreed global framework for support to small island developing States, the Samoa Pathway requires the collective efforts of Asia-Pacific member States and development partners to promote policy coherence, cooperation and coordination. In her policy statement at the Conference in Apia, the Executive Secretary committed the secretariat to:

- (a) Respect the new Framework for Pacific Regionalism — the pivotal subregional framework for sustainable development, inclusive and equitable growth, governance and security, as adopted by Pacific leaders in 2014;
- (b) Support the call for regional solidarity among Pacific States;
- (c) Recognize the need for nurturing and supporting subregional cooperation and integration in the Pacific;
- (d) Recognize the need to support regional policy as well as legal and institutional frameworks, based on best practice and harmonized standards, recognizing the context and specific vulnerabilities faced by the ocean-based economies of Pacific States.

The Samoa Pathway provides a unique opportunity to build on the work of ESCAP in the Pacific in support of an integrated approach to sustainable development.

The Special Body may wish to provide guidance on how the secretariat can assist Asia-Pacific small island developing States in the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, in cooperation with development partners and other international entities while taking into account their respective mandates.

(b) The new programme of action for the landlocked developing countries**Documentation**

ESCAP support for implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (E/ESCAP/71/2)

The Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries was held in Vienna from 3 to 5 November 2014. The Conference adopted as the outcome document the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (the Vienna Programme of Action), which has the overarching goal of addressing the special development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries that arise from landlockedness and isolation from key global markets.

The Vienna Programme of Action noted, among other things, that landlocked developing countries have achieved moderate economic growth since the adoption of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries. It also identified priority areas for action for the development and expansion of efficient transit systems and transport development, enhancement of competitiveness, expansion of trade, structural transformation, regional cooperation, and the promotion of inclusive economic growth and sustainable development to reduce poverty, build resilience, bridge economic and social gaps and ultimately help transform those countries into land-linked countries.

The Vienna Programme of Action highlights five main areas of support for landlocked developing countries from regional commissions: (a) monitoring and review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action through existing intergovernmental processes at the subregional and regional levels; (b) building the capacity of landlocked developing countries in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in a well-coordinated and coherent manner; (c) inviting regional and subregional organizations to mainstream the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action into their relevant programmes; (d) submitting analytical reports on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action; and, in that regard, (e) inviting regional and subregional organizations and the private sector to be actively involved in the sessions of the Commission.

The Special Body may wish to provide guidance to the secretariat in assisting Asian landlocked developing countries, in cooperation with their development partners and other international entities, in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and in building their capacity to make appropriate policy responses that address their special development needs and challenges in a more coherent manner.

(c) Midterm review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region**Documentation**

Outcome of the High-level Policy Dialogue on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (E/ESCAP/71/3)

In May 2011, the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries adopted the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (the Istanbul Programme of Action). The overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action is to overcome the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category. The aim of the Istanbul Programme of Action is to enable half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020 with a strong focus on developing their productive capacities. It is commonly recognized that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need effective national policies, enhanced global support and appropriate mechanisms at all levels for the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action. As such, the Istanbul Programme of Action focuses on reducing the vulnerabilities of the least developed countries and addresses new challenges associated with development, including the effects of the interlinked food, fuel and economic crises, and climate change, with a strong focus on structural transformation through increasing productive capacity. It also aims at generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, particularly for youth.

The Istanbul Programme of Action also invited the General Assembly to consider conducting a comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Commission, in its resolution 70/3 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in Asia and the Pacific, requested the Executive Secretary to organize the Asia-Pacific midterm review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The Special Body may wish to review the status of implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the Asia-Pacific region. It may also wish to provide further guidance on how the secretariat can assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries, in cooperation with development partners and other international entities while taking into account their respective mandates, in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, especially in assisting the least developed countries graduate out of the least developed country category.

(d) Key challenges and prospects for Asia-Pacific countries with special needs

Documentation

Summary of the Asia-Pacific countries with special needs development report (E/ESCAP/71/39)

The document provides a review of the status, challenges and prospects of Asia-Pacific countries with special needs, together with targeted policy options to promote their inclusive growth and sustainable development. Key areas of economic policy to be covered include the macroeconomic performance of these countries in recent years, the short- and medium-term growth prospects, and the structure of the economy in terms of various production sectors, employment shares and final demand. The document provides a snapshot of the progress made by the countries with special needs according to selected economic and social indicators, and analyses the various structural and long-term development challenges faced by them, highlighting their differences from other developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Also highlighted is the structural reform agenda that these countries could consider in the short to medium term, even as they seek to

address their long-term structural constraints. The document also analyses the role of economic diversification in reducing the vulnerability of these countries, through reducing export concentration, creating jobs, raising GDP and securing competitive advantages within product niches. The document identifies policy options in promoting potential new sectors, products and markets for successful diversification of Asia-Pacific countries with special needs, enabling the development of new capabilities and easing their structural bottlenecks.

(e) Other matters

The Special Body may wish to consider other matters brought to its attention.

3. Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions

The documents listed below contain information spanning all of the subprogrammes and the relevant sections will be deliberated under each of them as required.

Documentation

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4)

Interim programme performance report for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/ESCAP/71/5)

Item 3 of the provisional agenda focuses on: (a) addressing the issues and challenges pertaining to the eight subprogrammes, including the work of the regional institutions; (b) the reports of subsidiary bodies of the Commission (the sessions of which have been held since the last Commission session); (c) reports of other intergovernmental bodies; and (d) progress in the implementation of Commission mandates. In the documents under this agenda item, key priorities and emerging issues that take into consideration subregional perspectives are identified.

The expected outcomes under this agenda item are: (a) identification of emerging development issues that merit policy dialogue; (b) identification of progress achieved and gaps requiring priority attention with regard to the implementation of Commission mandates; (c) follow-up actions to major global conferences; (d) articulation of Asian and Pacific perspectives on issues that will be addressed in major global forums in 2015; (e) endorsement of the reports of the subsidiary bodies that have held sessions since the seventieth session of the Commission; and (f) identification of key issues to be taken up in meetings of subsidiary bodies in 2015.

The document “Interim programme performance report for the biennium 2014-2015” contains an assessment of the implementation of outputs and activities for the biennium 2014-2015 measured against the expected accomplishments for each subprogramme as set out in the strategic framework for the biennium. The programme performance report consists of (a) highlights of programme achievements and (b) results, by subprogramme, for the first year of the biennium 2014-2015.

The Commission may wish to review the present interim report and comment on the performance of ESCAP and its subprogrammes. Based on

the lessons learned, the Commission may also wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on how to improve its effectiveness.

(a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development

Documentation

Financing for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/6)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 70/1 and 70/3)

Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture on its eleventh session (E/ESCAP/71/7)

Financing for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/6)

Finance is a key means of implementation of the sustainable development goals to be agreed in 2015, and ESCAP has been providing a forum for Governments and key stakeholders from Asia and the Pacific to contribute to global discussions in this area. In addition to the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing, which took place in Jakarta in July 2014, ESCAP is organizing a regional preparatory meeting for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to take place in Addis Ababa in July 2015. In addition, ESCAP is contributing to regional discussions on how to enhance financial cooperation within the region as a key element of a comprehensive agenda for regional integration in Asia and the Pacific in the context of the Bangkok Declaration of December 2013.

This issue paper will provide the background for a discussion on why the region needs to prioritize its financial development as a key component of its development strategy. Moreover, it will assess the region's financial needs, discuss how these needs could be satisfied through the mobilization of existing resources, and take stock of existing regional initiatives and efforts. The paper will also discuss the work of ESCAP in this area and suggest ways in which the Commission could provide further guidance and support to enhance financial cooperation among its member States.

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 70/1 and 70/3)

The document contains summaries of progress made in the implementation of Commission resolutions 70/1 on implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, and 70/3 on implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in Asia and the Pacific.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and provide the secretariat with further guidance on effective implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions.

Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture on its eleventh session (E/ESCAP/71/7)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Centre.

(b) Trade and investment**Documentation**

Global value chains, regional integration and sustainable development: linkages and policy implications (E/ESCAP/71/8)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolution 70/6)

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its tenth session (E/ESCAP/71/9)

Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its tenth session (E/ESCAP/71/10)

Global value chains, regional integration and sustainable development: linkages and policy implications (E/ESCAP/71/8)

This issue paper summarizes the recent empirical and academic findings of the research literature on global value chains (GVCs), including policy analysis conducted by the ESCAP secretariat, while suggesting policy implications and recommendations for consideration by Asian and Pacific Governments. In the paper, alternative measures are used to estimate the extent of participation of ESCAP members and associate members in regional and global value chains. The main factors contributing to these levels of participation are also examined. This is followed by an analysis of the prospects for Asia-Pacific developing economies to enhance their participation in regional and global value chains as a way to achieve the sustainable development goals. More specifically, the paper aims to deepen understanding of development implications (inclusivity and environmental responsibility) of value chains in selected sectors (agrifood processing, textile and apparel, electronics, machinery, automobiles, tourism). The interlinkages between GVCs and small and medium-sized enterprises, intra-firm trade, gender, productivity changes, innovation, transfer of technology, etc. are carefully examined. Moreover, the paper explores the relationship between GVCs and other regional integration processes, in particular the linkages between different types of preferential trade agreements and the evolution of GVCs.

The analysis concludes with a number of policy options for national trade strategies and the design of economic policies to enhance the competitiveness of firms and value-added content of production. The paper emphasizes that no simple “one-size-fits-all” prescriptions are available or desirable and that in fact some of the factors influencing developments in this area may not even be under the control of trade policymakers.

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolution 70/6)

The document contains a summary of the progress made in the implementation of Commission resolution 70/6 on implementation of the decision of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and provide the secretariat with further guidance for effective implementation of the resolution.

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its tenth session (E/ESCAP/71/9)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council and provide the secretariat with further guidance on the future work of the Centre.

Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its tenth session (E/ESCAP/71/10)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council and provide the secretariat with further guidance on the future work of the Centre.

(c) Transport**Documentation**

An integrated intermodal transport and logistics system under the sustainable development agenda (E/ESCAP/71/11)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 66/5, 68/4 and 69/7)

Report of the Committee on Transport on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/71/12)

An integrated intermodal transport and logistics system under the sustainable development agenda (E/ESCAP/71/11)

Transport is a fundamental pillar of all economic and social activities. It carries raw materials for industrial and agricultural production, delivers products to markets and distributes goods to consumers. In spite of progress in transport connectivity, the region is still more of a transport patchwork, as is evident in the gaping infrastructural, operational, institutional and technical holes. Too many road and rail links are still missing, cross-border procedures are not aligned with the needs of business, transport vehicles across borders operate under different regulations, and rail systems on both sides of common borders require standardization of track gauges, signalling systems and tractive power.

While transport makes an enormous contribution to economic and social development, it also has a negative impact on the environment and society. It remains the largest consumer of oil, the primary urban polluter and the second largest contributor to carbon dioxide emissions. The key solution is to develop and operationalize an integrated intermodal transport and logistics system with balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The issue paper makes a case for the need to urgently develop and operationalize an integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region and summarizes major challenges in establishing such a system.

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 66/5, 68/4 and 69/7)

The document contains summaries of the progress made in the implementation of the following Commission resolutions:

- (a) 66/5 on implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific;
- (b) 68/4 on implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport;
- (c) 69/7 on the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance on more effective implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions.

Report of the Committee on Transport on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/71/12)

The Committee held its fourth session in Bangkok from 15 to 17 October 2014 to review national, subregional and regional progress achieved in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and engage in a substantive interactive dialogue to discuss ways of addressing common challenges in regional connectivity. It also deliberated on the future direction of the Regional Action Programme for the contribution of transport to the development agenda beyond 2015, which could lead towards the realization of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region. With regard to the future programme of work, the Committee generally endorsed the draft programme of work for 2016-2017. It also welcomed the convening of the third session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport in 2016 and recommended submitting a resolution on a “Regional cooperation framework for the facilitation of international railway transport” to the Commission at its seventy-first session.

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

(d) Environment and development

Documentation

Towards a sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban future for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/13)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 69/8 and 70/11)

Report of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on its second session (E/ESCAP/71/14)

Report on the intergovernmental consultative process on the future architecture of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (E/ESCAP/71/15)

Report of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (E/ESCAP/71/INF/1)

Report of the Mekong River Commission (E/ESCAP/71/INF/2)

Towards a sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban future for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/13)

The Asia and Pacific region is now home to more than two billion urban residents and it is estimated that by 2030 over half of the region's population will live in cities — a figure that will rise to 64 per cent in 2050. This represents an unprecedented demographic, economic and cultural shift, which will undoubtedly reshape the region's future. Cities in the Asia-Pacific region will be home to the largest middle class in history and urban areas will continue to drive national, regional and global economic growth. Such transformation can and must be harnessed, but at present much of the region's cities exhibit inefficient patterns of resource use; high and growing levels of income and other forms of inequality; environmental degradation; and ineffective governance systems. There are, overall, growing gaps between the current and projected patterns and impacts of growth, and what needs to be done to ensure more sustainable, equitable and resilient cities. This issue paper will not only highlight the complex challenges but also the opportunities brought about through urbanization for ESCAP member States. It will also propose recommendations, for consideration by the Commission, in adapting to the region's shared urban future.

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 69/8 and 70/11)

The document contains summaries of the progress made in the implementation of resolution 69/8 on enhancing knowledge-sharing and cooperation in integrated water resources management in Asia and the Pacific, and resolution 70/11 on implementing the outcome of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and provide the secretariat with further guidance for effective implementation of the resolutions.

Report of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on its second session (E/ESCAP/71/14)

The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development will hold its second session on 21 and 22 May 2015. The Forum will discuss, among other things, follow-up and review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the field of sustainable development in the region, including their respective means of implementation, sharing best practices and experiences of sustainable development policies, and promotion of system-wide coherence and coordination. The Forum will also consider the long-term institutional framework for future sessions.

The Commission may wish to review the outcome of the second session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, endorse the key components if appropriate, and provide the secretariat with further guidance.

Report on the intergovernmental consultative process on the future architecture of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (E/ESCAP/71/15)

The document before the Commission is submitted in response to resolution 70/11, which requested the secretariat to launch an

intergovernmental process “to determine the future architecture of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, including its mandate, scope of work and other procedural aspects”. It outlines the steps taken to respond to this request, in close consultation with member States through the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission. As proposed to the Advisory Committee at its 357th session in December 2014, the second session of the Forum, which is scheduled to be held on 21 and 22 May 2015, will agree on a preferred option for future sessions of the Forum. The document presents the preliminary results of the consultation process for the information of the Commission, with a view to supporting consideration by the Commission of any recommendations that may emerge from the Forum, as appropriate.

Report of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (E/ESCAP/71/INF/1)

Report of the Mekong River Commission (E/ESCAP/71/INF/2)

The Commission may wish to take note of the two reports.

(e) Information and communications technology

(f) Disaster risk reduction and management

Documentation

Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway: for inclusive and seamless connectivity (E/ESCAP/71/16)

Building resilience to disasters — a key enabler for the development agenda beyond 2015 (E/ESCAP/71/17)

Report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/71/18)

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its ninth session (E/ESCAP/71/19)

Report of the Typhoon Committee (E/ESCAP/71/INF/3)

Report of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones (E/ESCAP/71/INF/4)

Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway: for inclusive and seamless connectivity (E/ESCAP/71/16)

The Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative is focused on promoting the resilience, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the regional communications network in order to facilitate seamless integration of all connectivity modes. The smooth functioning of this telecommunications infrastructure, which serves as a key component of regional connectivity, global commerce, the Internet and critical services, is of increasing importance. The regional backbone of this infrastructure is now heavily dependent on fibre-optic technology. In recognition of the significance of this infrastructure, new emphasis has been placed on the need for pan-regional seamless connectivity and e-resilience. By promoting universal access to Internet connectivity, the region will be better positioned to experience the benefits of promising new and emerging technologies in support of inclusive and sustainable development. The issue paper will explore the way forward for the Information Superhighway, as mandated by the fourth session of the Committee. It will include an analysis of infrastructure needs, and principles

and norms of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, including policy and technical aspects, such as infrastructure collocation, regional cohesion, open access, non-discriminatory pricing and transparency.

Building resilience to disasters — a key enabler for the development agenda beyond 2015 (E/ESCAP/71/17)

Building resilience to disasters in the world's most disaster-prone region is one of the key development challenges. In recent years, the surge in economic losses due to disasters is the result of increasing exposure and vulnerability — driven largely by economic growth, rising population, rapid urbanization, and climate change impacts. Building resilience essentially entails the minimizing of disaster impacts by preventing and reducing disaster risk in critical development sectors. The theme clearly emerges as a cross-cutting issue in the development agenda beyond 2015, linking disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. On one hand, building resilience requires concerted efforts at regional level through South-South and triangular cooperation for such areas as effective end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems; and innovative space applications for risk assessment, resilient land use planning and post-disaster impact assessment for recovery and reconstruction. On the other hand, it involves strategic investments at national level in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction measures into sustainable development. In line with the recommendations of the third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, the issue paper will examine the critical areas of regional cooperation, and provide recommendations on critical investments at the national level.

Report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/71/18)

The Committee held its fourth session in Bangkok from 14 to 16 October 2014. Cross-border and cross-sectoral connectivity was a major focus of the deliberations — with member States agreeing to set up an open-ended working group to develop principles and norms for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, and to develop a master plan covering both policy and technical aspects of such an initiative. The Committee recognized that this work would help close the widening digital divide in the region by providing affordable access to broadband Internet for all. During the session, a first-ever joint session with the Committee on Transport was held, focusing on harnessing cross-sectoral synergies between transport and ICT. A key recommendation from the joint session was that consideration should be given, through the respective Working Groups, to amendments of the Asian Highway network and Trans-Asian Railway network for the co-deployment of fibre infrastructure along roads and railways.

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

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its ninth session (E/ESCAP/71/19)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Centre.

Report of the Typhoon Committee (E/ESCAP/71/INF/3)**Report of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones (E/ESCAP/71/INF/4)**

The Commission may wish to take note of the two reports.

(g) Social development**Documentation**

Key issues and challenges in achieving the social-sector-related Millennium Development Goals (E/ESCAP/71/20)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 68/6 and 69/14)

Report of the Committee on Social Development on its third session (E/ESCAP/71/21)

Report of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review (E/ESCAP/71/22)

Report of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on HIV and AIDS (E/ESCAP/71/23)

Key issues and challenges in achieving the social-sector-related Millennium Development Goals (E/ESCAP/71/20)

The deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is looming and the international community is embarking on the shift towards a new development agenda beyond 2015. The document reviews the progress made by ESCAP member States in attaining the social-sector-related Millennium Development Goals, namely Goals 1 to 6.

The overview indicates that over 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific region have already achieved, or are on track to achieve, Goal 1 related to poverty reduction, Goal 2 on universal primary education, and Goal 4 on reducing child mortality. At the same time, the majority of ESCAP countries are lagging behind in achieving Goal 3 on gender equality and Goal 5 on improving maternal health. The analysis further reveals that at least 15 countries will not achieve Goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The document devotes particular attention to the performance of the region's least developed and landlocked developing countries, as well as small island developing States, many of which have successfully achieved several social-related Millennium Development Goals. Challenges and gaps in achieving the Goals, however, still remain and these will be reviewed in the context of "unfinished business" in the lead-up to the new development agenda beyond 2015.

The Commission is invited to review the analysis and identify priority areas of action with a view to preparing the Asia-Pacific region for a smooth transition to the development agenda beyond 2015.

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolutions 68/6 and 69/14)

The document contains summaries of the progress made in the implementation of the following Commission resolutions:

(a) 68/6 on Asia-Pacific regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014;

(b) 69/14 on implementation of the Bangkok statement on the Asia-Pacific review of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and provide the secretariat with further guidance on effective implementation of the resolutions.

Report of the Committee on Social Development on its third session (E/ESCAP/71/21)

The Committee held its third session in Bangkok from 18 to 20 August 2014. It reviewed the key social development trends and issues in the region, with particular attention given to addressing the challenge of inequalities and identifying priorities for action within the context of a global development agenda beyond 2015. It reviewed and provided substantive feedback on the outcome document of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review. It also endorsed the proposed outputs for the 2016-2017 programme of work on social development. The outcomes of the deliberations, including guidance for the secretariat, are reflected in the report of the Committee. The Commission may wish to consider the matters calling for action or brought to its attention, as contained in the report of the Committee, and provide the secretariat with further guidance.

Report of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review (E/ESCAP/71/22)

The report of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review will be submitted for the consideration of the Commission.

The key outcome of the Conference was the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The Ministerial Declaration will serve as the Asia-Pacific input for the global Beijing+20 review, to be conducted at the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Ministerial Declaration proposes five key areas for accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, namely: strengthening institutions; increasing financing; enhancing accountability; forging stronger partnerships; and strengthening regional cooperation.

The Commission may wish to share experiences on national efforts to strengthen the above-mentioned five areas to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and provide guidance to the secretariat in identifying areas that could benefit from regional cooperation.

Report of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on HIV and AIDS (E/ESCAP/71/23)

The report of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on HIV and AIDS will be submitted for the consideration of the Commission.

The report will highlight the key elements of the discussion on challenges faced and priority actions required for the implementation of the

commitments made under the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS and Commission resolutions 66/10 and 67/9.

The Commission may wish to consider the matters calling for action or brought to its attention, as contained in the report of the Meeting, and provide the secretariat with further guidance.

(h) Statistics

Documentation

Monitoring and accountability for the emerging development agenda beyond 2015: challenges for statistics development (E/ESCAP/71/24)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolution 69/15)

Report of the Committee on Statistics on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/71/25)

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Report of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/27)

Monitoring and accountability for the emerging development agenda beyond 2015: challenges for statistics development (E/ESCAP/71/24)

National statistics systems need to embrace transformative changes in order for them to meet the demands for data for a successful implementation of the development agenda beyond 2015. The new development agenda requires a wide range of data and statistics, disaggregated by relevant population groups and accessible to all key stakeholders, to support effective monitoring of progress towards goals and clear accountability for the progress being made. In contrast, many developing countries in the region are still struggling to produce a very basic range of official statistics. Transformative changes are also required for national statistics systems to overcome the existing constraints of the production of statistics, including legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, investment of adequate resources, application of agreed methodological guidelines and standards, and competent and motivated staff. At the same time, the emergence of big data and increasing use of data from private sources for public policymaking call for re-examination of the role and frontiers of official statistics.

This issue paper will reflect on the collaborative efforts that are required to address challenges for statistics development and propose recommendations for consideration by the Commission.

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolution 69/15)

The document summarizes the progress made in the implementation of Commission resolution 69/15 on implementing the outcome of the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved, including the accomplishments of members with respect to achieving a multisectoral approach to improving civil registration and vital statistics systems, and the outcome of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital

Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Bangkok from 24 to 28 November 2014.

The Commission may also wish to provide guidance to its members, the secretariat and development partners on further implementation of the resolution, including on how the capacities and coordination of relevant institutions can be strengthened to improve national civil registration and vital statistics systems.

Report of the Committee on Statistics on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/71/25)

The fourth session of the Committee on Statistics will be held in Bangkok from 25 to 27 March 2015.

The Committee will review and decide on regional collaboration to improve: (a) social and population statistics; (b) gender statistics; (c) economic statistics; (d) civil registration and vital statistics; (e) agricultural and rural statistics; (f) environment statistics; (g) disaster statistics; and (h) modernization of statistical information systems.

Bearing in mind the emerging development agenda beyond 2015 and the outcome of an expert group meeting convened in preparation for the fourth session, which took place in Bangkok from 8 to 10 December 2014, the Committee will provide guidance on the role of national statistical systems in the implementation of such a development agenda, together with the role and focus of regional efforts to support national and global monitoring and accountability.

The Commission may wish to endorse the report of the fourth session of the Committee including the decisions and recommendations contained therein, and provide the secretariat with further guidance.

Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its tenth session (E/ESCAP/71/26)

The Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) held its tenth session on 11 and 12 December 2014.

The Council reviewed the proposed annual implementation plan for the 2015-2019 SIAP Strategic Plan, which it had endorsed at its interim session in July 2014. The Council also recommended courses of action to guide SIAP in implementing a programme that strongly supports the statistical capacity development priorities of ESCAP for the development agenda beyond 2015, in accordance with the expressed priorities of member States. Taking note of the critical importance of providing and developing Internet-based training on new and emerging statistical measurements, while also continuing to meet training needs on the foundations of official statistics, the Governing Council urged SIAP and the ESCAP secretariat to take proactive measures to secure the resources needed to implement the programme of work of SIAP on a sustainable basis.

The Commission may wish to review and endorse the report of the Governing Council and provide guidance on the future work of the Institute.

Report of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/27)

The Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was convened by the Executive Secretary in Bangkok from 24 to 28 November 2014 pursuant to Commission resolution 69/15 on implementing the outcome of the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

The Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific adopted at the Conference endorsed the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, and proclaimed the years 2015 to 2024 to be the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade.

The Commission may wish to take note of the report of the Conference, endorse its outcomes and decide upon an appropriate governance structure for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific that would fully facilitate multisectoral engagement.

(i) Subregional activities for development

Documentation

Subprogramme overview: issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/28)

Component 1: the Pacific

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/71/4, resolution 69/17)

The subprogramme overview provides a review of the multidimensional and interrelated challenges facing the Pacific subregion which, despite being made up of some of the smallest and most vulnerable member and associate member States, remains a significant global (ocean) ecosystem and economic asset. In drawing on the outcomes of the seventieth session of the Commission and the outcome documents of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which was held in Samoa in September 2014, the document contains highlights of the policy options for addressing the unique and particular vulnerabilities of the Pacific island countries and territories, with a focus on the sustainable management, conservation and use of ocean resources. Also in this overview, an agenda is set out for the work of the subregional office. The Commission may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the policy options identified and the initiatives being undertaken by the secretariat in support of member States.

Component 2: East and North-East Asia

In the subprogramme overview, there is a review of recent socioeconomic developments and environmental challenges in the subregion. The document also contains discussions on the role of the subregional office in supporting the delivery of the secretariat’s programme of work in the subregion, functioning as a hub for multilateral cooperation among member States in addressing common challenges and serving as the secretariat of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation.

The Commission may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the policy options identified and the initiatives being undertaken by the secretariat in support of member States.

Component 3: North and Central Asia

In the subprogramme overview, the issues and challenges in the North and Central Asian subregion and planned initiatives by the secretariat to support the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development are highlighted. The subregion is working towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, implementation of Rio+20 outcomes and advancing the development agenda beyond 2015, by: (a) promoting inclusive and sustainable economic and social development; (b) improving regional connectivity by encouraging transport infrastructure development and facilitating regional trade; and (c) addressing energy issues by strengthening cooperation and integration. The Commission may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the policy options identified and the initiatives being undertaken by the secretariat in support of member States.

Report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its ninth session (E/ESCAP/71/29)

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and provide the secretariat with guidance on the future work of the Programme.

Component 4: South and South-West Asia

The subprogramme overview document highlights subregional initiatives undertaken by the secretariat in priority thematic areas identified by member States to support and accelerate inclusive and sustainable development in South and South-West Asia, including through harnessing regional cooperation. The document describes the strategies and policies implemented in the subregion to address the significant challenges in achieving robust and resilient growth, and scale up progress to close the Millennium Development Goals-related gaps, in light of the fragile global economy.

Additional initiatives aimed to address impediments and development gaps, promote inclusive development, reduce poverty and hunger, redress inequality, including gender inequality, and close wide infrastructure gaps are also outlined. Other issues brought to the attention of the Commission are initiatives undertaken to support sustainable urbanization in South Asia, and seamless connectivity in the subregion as a means to boost intraregional trade and accelerate inclusive development and job creation.

The Commission may wish to provide guidance on the policy options identified and the initiatives being undertaken by the secretariat to support member States.

4. Management issues

Under agenda item 4, the secretariat is submitting for the consideration of the Commission reports on management issues relevant to the work of ESCAP.

(a) Draft programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017**Documentation**

Draft programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 (E/ESCAP/71/30)

The document is submitted for the Commission's review and endorsement.

The document contains four sections: (a) overall orientation; (b) subprogramme results frameworks and strategies; (c) proposed output citations by subprogramme; and (d) legislative mandates. Sections (a), (b) and (d) are developed in the context of the strategic framework for the period 2016-2017, as endorsed by the Commission at its seventieth session, in May 2014, and by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-fourth session, which was held in New York in June 2014. Section (c) contains the proposed outputs designed to enable ESCAP to achieve the planned results as set out in the strategic framework.

The draft programme of work for 2016-2017 has been prepared taking into account the lessons learned from the implementation of past programmes of work as well as the outcomes of a series of external evaluations. The document is based on the priorities of member States, aims to balance the secretariat's normative, analytical and operational work, and builds upon the areas of comparative strength of ESCAP, namely its roles as a regional policy centre, and intergovernmental and knowledge platform.

The Committee on Social Development, Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Committee on Transport and Committee on Statistics provided the secretariat with guidance on the focus of the future work for the subprogrammes under their purview, which served as the basis for the formulation of outputs. In addition, the draft programme of work was reviewed in its entirety by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

(b) Programme changes for the biennium 2014-2015**Documentation**

Programme changes for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/ESCAP/71/31)

Programme changes for 2014-2015 may be required following the identification of emerging global priorities by the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and global conferences since the endorsement of the draft programme of work by the Commission at its seventieth session.

The Commission may wish to consider the proposed changes with a view to endorsing them for incorporation into the programme of work for 2014-2015.

(c) Partnerships and extrabudgetary contributions**Documentation**

Overview of partnerships and extrabudgetary contributions (E/ESCAP/71/32)

The document contains an overview of the secretariat's partnerships in 2014 including with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations; in facilitating the United Nations to "work together as one" at the regional level; and in support of its technical cooperation work. It also

provides an overview of the extrabudgetary resources mobilized in 2014 for implementing the programme of work. Individual members and associate members may wish to announce their intended contributions for 2015.

5. Review of the conference structure of the Commission in implementation of resolution 69/1

Documentation

Implementation of resolution 69/1 on a conference structure of the Commission for the inclusive and sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/71/33)

The document contains an analysis of the programmatic, organizational and budgetary implications of the proposed changes to the conference structure in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolutions 69/1 and 70/11. The document draws on the findings and recommendations of the in-depth study and analysis undertaken by an external consultant to facilitate the review of the conference structure by the Commission at its seventy-first session. The study benefited from valuable inputs provided by ESCAP member States through interviews and a survey questionnaire administered during the period from September to October 2014.

The report also includes a summary of progress in the implementation of commission resolution 69/1.

The Commission may wish to consider the recommendations contained in the report and adopt a resolution on the conference structure.

6. Evaluation pursuant to resolution 67/4: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management

Documentation

Evaluation pursuant to resolution 67/4: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management (E/ESCAP/71/34)

At its seventieth session, the Commission, at the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran, deferred consideration of the evaluation to its seventy-first session. The document contains a summary of the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 67/4. The evaluation aimed at assessing the activities under paragraph 4 of resolution 67/4 and the need for, and benefit of, establishing the centre as a subsidiary body of the Commission for the development of disaster information management.

The Commission may wish to consider the findings and decide on a future course of action on this matter.

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

Documentation

Report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (E/ESCAP/71/35)

The document covers the main activities of the Advisory Committee since the seventieth session of the Commission, including its support to the Executive Secretary on matters related to programme planning, implementation and monitoring.

The Commission may wish to comment on the role of the Advisory Committee and provide further guidance regarding its work.

8. Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-second session of the Commission (2016)

Documentation

Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-second session of the Commission (2016) (E/ESCAP/71/36)

Unless the Commission decides otherwise, the seventy-second session of the Commission will be held in Bangkok in 2016. Under this agenda item, the Commission may also wish to select a theme topic for that session.

Ministerial segment

9. Policy issues for the Asia-Pacific region

(a) Key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

(b) Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2015

Documentation

Summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2015 (E/ESCAP/71/37)

The document provides a review of the region's progress as it contends with the ongoing global economic recovery. It also assesses policy recommendations to address both remaining and emerging vulnerabilities. Areas of economic and social policy to be considered include growth, inflation, trade and investment, financial markets, employment, social protection and environmental challenges. Key challenges ahead will be addressed and policy responses recommended for countries in order to sustain their development. The document also analyses the development of inclusive growth in recent years in the Asia-Pacific region. It identifies trends and patterns of inclusive growth in the region and highlights policies that have contributed to fostering such growth within countries. The document identifies challenges that were faced in implementing inclusive policies and illustrates how these were overcome. The analysis is based upon country studies and uses a broader concept of inclusiveness that captures economic and social achievements.

10. Theme topic for the seventy-first session of the Commission: "Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation"

Documentation

Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation (E/ESCAP/71/38)

The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,¹ which was held in June 2012, tasked the regional commissions with promoting the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their respective regions. Although there is consensus that the achievement of sustainable development requires an integrated approach to policy formulation and decision-making, there is a dearth of thinking about how to operationalize such an integrated approach.

In order to address such a challenge, the document, based on case studies and stepwise analysis, presents a conceptual framework that will facilitate countries in shaping their policies, strategies and approaches in an integrated manner, illustrates how national and regional initiatives can support maximizing synergies, and suggests norms for building stronger institutional frameworks at the country and regional levels to enable the transition towards sustainable development.

The study will also reflect on critical means of implementation of sustainable development across the region — finance, trade, technology transfer and capacity-building — and discuss how development partners and South-South cooperation could support countries with special needs in these areas.

The Commission may wish to review the analysis and provide the secretariat with guidance on how to strengthen regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific in the relevant area.

11. Other matters

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

12. Adoption of the report of the Commission

The Commission will consider and adopt the report on its seventy-first session. Pursuant to annex I of resolution 69/1, the report of the Commission will be composed of the decisions and the resolutions of the Commission. The draft record of proceedings of the Commission session, prepared by the secretariat, will be circulated among members and associate members for comments within 15 days after the conclusion of the session.

¹ “The future we want”, General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.