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Agenda item 3 (d)

Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: Environment and development

Draft report

Environment and development

1. Representatives of China, India, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and Thailand made statements.

2. The Commission highlighted its important regional role in following up on the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012.¹ It noted that the Commission was providing the most comprehensive and inclusive regional forum in Asia and the Pacific that was promoting balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. One delegation noted that the secretariat should collaborate with relevant international agencies, such as the United Nations Environment Programme.

3. In formulating concrete responses to the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, one delegation highlighted particular challenges faced by developing countries, such as a lack of access to affordable technologies, human and institutional capacity and other resources that are needed in order to achieve sustainable development. One delegation further highlighted the particular need for assistance in bridging the global agenda and ensuring sustainable development in the region. Several delegations reaffirmed the importance of a people-centred approach, with poverty eradication and improved livelihoods as priorities. In that regard, the Commission was further reminded of the Rio Principles as set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted in 1992,² and in particular Principle 6 on common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as Agenda 21³ and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Several delegations also noted the importance of such agreements in contributing

¹ A/RES/66/288.

² *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

³ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

towards achieving relevant internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

4. The delegation of the Russian Federation noted that regional commissions had an important role to play in supporting member States in the development of regional strategies and plans, as well as in their national implementation, while ensuring that the regional actions were in alignment with global agreements on sustainable development goals.

5. The Commission was informed of national initiatives to promote inclusive and sustainable growth in member countries. Among them were initiatives of India, including its twelfth five year plan in which sustainability was mainstreamed as the primary goal and the key role of investment in natural capital was highlighted, the National Clean Energy Fund, the National Action Plan on Climate Change and a programme for “greening” rural development; national programmes of Sri Lanka that were aimed at increasing forest cover, reducing carbon emissions and protecting water sheds and catchments; and the twelfth five year plan of China.

6. The Russian Federation expressed its gratitude to member states for having been entrusted to be the host for the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, the first ministerial level forum on energy under the auspices of the Commission. The draft outcome documents from the regional preparatory meeting had identified the great potential for regional cooperation to enhance energy security in Asia and the Pacific. Member States were urged to send high-level delegations to the Forum, which was to be held in Vladivostok, Russian Federation, from 27 to 30 May 2013.

7. One delegation highlighted the importance of the work of the secretariat in promoting regional cooperation in the area of sustainable urban development and expressed gratitude to the secretariat for its work related to the sustainable urban infrastructure development project in Central Asia.

8. Several areas of work were suggested by a number of delegations as priority issues to be considered by the Committee on Environment and Development at its forthcoming session. One delegation suggested the following as potential priority issues: transboundary pollution (haze, water and hazardous waste); disasters resulting from climate change (drought, flood and pandemic diseases); sustainable city management in relation to growing urbanization in the region, and the need for a tailored approach to green growth and sustainable consumption and production depending on country-specific situations and levels of development. One delegation also emphasized the importance of the water-energy-food nexus, along with land-use, and stressed the need to examine the balance between land-use, food, energy and water security.

9. In highlighting the impact of climate change as a key challenge, one delegation underlined the need for providing international support for national actions having transboundary benefits.