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Agenda item 3 (i)

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions:
Subregional activities for development**

Draft report

Subregional activities for development

1. The Commission had before it two documents related to the agenda item: the subprogramme overview: issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/69/3) and the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its seventh session (E/ESCAP/69/15).

East and North-East Asia

2. The following countries made statements: China; Republic of Korea; and Russian Federation.

3. The Commission noted the contribution of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia through its activities in support of inclusive and sustainable development, and subregional integration. It also noted the role of the Office in facilitating the 17th Senior Officials Meeting of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation, which was held in Chengdu, China, on 21 and 22 December 2012, during which tangible results had been achieved.

4. The Commission was briefed on the Office's plans to organize the second Youth Forum in August 2013 in Vladivostok, Russian Federation. In that regard, the delegation of the Russian Federation confirmed its support for holding the Forum.

5. In noting the upcoming final review of the conference structure of the Commission, including its subsidiary structure, pursuant to resolutions 64/1 and 67/15, the Commission recognized the need to further strengthen coordination between the subregional offices and the substantive divisions of the secretariat. The Commission also noted a request to continue close and regular communication through established procedures.

6. The Commission noted the importance of promoting green initiatives and trade facilitation and requested the Office to continue to play an important role in deepening subregional cooperation in those areas through capacity-building programmes and other activities.

North and Central Asia

7. The following countries made statements: Kazakhstan; and Russian Federation.

8. The Commission noted the aligning of the activities of the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia with the outcomes of United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to better address the needs of member States in accordance with its mandate.

9. The Commission noted that the Office had successfully implemented a number of projects as well as carried out various activities related to subregion-specific development priorities. It was also noted that the Office had built two-way linkages between ESCAP headquarters and member States, established working relations with sectoral ministries and governmental organizations and forged partnerships with financial institutions and intergovernmental organizations based in North and Central Asia.

10. The delegation of the Russian Federation requested the Office to increase its efforts to establish closer cooperation and collaboration with the Eurasian Economic Commission and expressed its readiness to facilitate the efforts of the Office in this endeavour.

11. The delegation of Kazakhstan expressed its deep appreciation to the Executive Secretary for accepting the invitation to participate in the Sixth Astana Economic Forum and for organizing the secretariat's session during the event.

12. The Commission noted that the Office had implemented the first phase of the project on the economic and social recovery of Afghanistan, which focused on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and creation of additional jobs. The Commission also noted that two specific projects related to the safety assessment of small hydro technical installations and the strengthening of cooperation for disaster risk reduction in Central Asia were planned to be implemented in 2013 with financial support from the Russian Federation.

13. The Commission noted that the Office had coordinated the activities of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) which was supported by ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Europe and covered five Central Asian economies, as well as Afghanistan and Azerbaijan.

14. The delegation of Kazakhstan highlighted priority areas for potential close cooperation to implement regional dimensions of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, including the Green Bridge Partnership Programme, South-South and triangular cooperation activities financed by the newly established national agency for official development assistance, KazAID, as well as regional and subregional cooperation on the water-energy-land nexus.

15. The Commission expressed appreciation for the Office's initiative to regularly publish the electronic newsletter *North and Central Asian Observer*.

16. The Commission noted the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its seventh session.

17. The delegation of Kazakhstan noted with satisfaction the contribution of the Office to the work of the IV Astana Economic Forum and the seventh session of the SPECA Governing Council, which was held in Bangkok on 28 November 2012. The Government of Kazakhstan had recommended that the Office further its focus on the priority areas of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcomes, in particular to provide the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries with support through the Green Bridge Partnership Programme, which would be fully operationalized with commitments from Kazakhstan, and for Central Asia. The delegation noted that Kazakhstan was establishing KazAid to support countries in Central Asia and elsewhere, and was allocating more than \$200 million for partnerships to address the water, energy and land nexus, for promotion of South-South cooperation on environmentally sound technologies and for sharing expertise, a database and case studies.

The Pacific

18. The following delegations made statements: Fiji; and Marshall Islands.

19. The Commission was informed of the activities of the secretariat in the Pacific, through the ESCAP Pacific Office, in support of the Executive Secretary's call for a new narrative and mindset and the Secretary-General's Oceans Compact to acknowledge and manage the Pacific Ocean as a great regional and global commons. The secretariat's work in support of Pacific island member States included identifying opportunities for possible application of the green economy approach, assessment of the value of social assets, such as gender equality, and support for energy security and migration with dignity in response to climate change.

20. The Commission was informed that global warming, extreme weather events and sea-level rise were problems of global proportions that were leading to the potential for the total demise of economies, cultures and nations in the Pacific. In that connection, the Commission noted with appreciation the work of the secretariat in co-organizing in July 2013 the Pacific preparatory meeting for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which would be held in Apia in 2014. The conference included as an objective the development of input from small island developing States for the development agenda beyond 2015.

21. The delegation of the Marshall Islands expressed its concern over the unique needs of Pacific small island developing States being lost in the wider context of the Asia-Pacific region. The delegation also noted that the decisions made by the General Assembly and United Nations system in New York often did not adequately reach the subregional and national levels in the Pacific. The delegation urged the United Nations system in the Pacific to continue to strengthen system-wide approaches and partnerships as well as the United Nations in-country presence. In that connection, the 2012 joint statement of the Secretary-General and Pacific leaders provided valuable outlines and roles for cooperation in the Pacific. The delegation also expressed support for the identification and mainstreaming of strategies to assist small island developing States in developing their national capacity to conserve, sustainably manage and realize the benefits of sustainable fisheries as called for in the outcome statement of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

South and South-West Asia

22. The following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; India; Nepal; and Pakistan.

23. The Commission noted that the work of the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia covered analytical undertakings, policy advocacy, technical assistance and capacity-building activities pertaining to inclusive growth and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, connectivity and regional economic integration, regional cooperation for food and energy security and disaster risk reduction, and implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of Action for the subregion's least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

24. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the work of the Office, and its many activities, including the two capacity-building workshops organized to assist Afghanistan in its bid for accession to the World Trade Organization, high-level policy dialogues on regional economic cooperation and integration, and important consultations on the following: regional cooperation for energy security; women's entrepreneurship; regional value chains for inclusive development of South Asia; and the development agenda beyond 2015.

25. The Commission also noted the importance of managing and advancing the subregional process in a comprehensive, balanced and all-encompassing manner. A wider scope and level of participation across the entire subregion was indispensable for achieving required outcomes as well as equitable gains.

26. The Commission noted the importance of the Office's report, *Regional Cooperation for Inclusive and Sustainable Development: South and Southwest Asia Development Report 2012-13*, which made a strong case for improved subregional cooperation to ensure inclusive growth, food and energy security, regional connectivity and the improved productive capacity of the subregion's least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

27. The delegation of Nepal requested the Office to assist the planning bodies of South Asian countries in developing a macroeconomic modelling framework that is consistent with the Millennium Development Goals through the exchange of experiences between those bodies in collaboration with the National Planning Commission of Nepal.

28. The Commission called on the Office to continue its capacity-building activities with a wider level of participation from all member States in the subregion, in particular the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries, and to pay greater attention in future work on strengthening regional connectivity, regional economic integration and trade and transit facilitation, as well as inclusive growth in the subregion. The secretariat was also invited to organize a workshop in Pakistan on regional connectivity in South and South-West Asia.