



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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**REVIEW OF ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURE OF
THE COMMISSION: ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

(Agenda item 2 (d))

Draft report

1. The Commission had before it the document entitled “Turning crisis into opportunity: greening economic recovery strategies” (E/ESCAP/65/6), the report of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (E/ESCAP/65/INF/4) and the report of the Mekong River Commission (E/ESCAP/65/INF/5).

2. The Commission noted that green recovery strategies, which included the Global Green New Deal, referred to recently by the Secretary-General, had been actively promoted by United Nations agencies, and called on world leaders to consider a massive redirection of investment away from unsustainable production and consumption patterns into job-creating programmes that restore the natural systems underpinning the global economy. Such strategies had been replicated by several countries in the ESCAP region.

3. A number of delegations expressed their support for the prospect of turning the current financial crisis into an opportunity towards a low carbon development path and the achievement of sustainable development. Several delegations shared the policies and measures that had been taken in that regard in their countries at the national level. One delegation emphasized that energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable economies would become a driving force for growth. The delegation of Japan informed the Commission that the recently proposed Growth Initiative towards Doubling the Size of Asia’s Economy and the Cool Earth Partnership would assist countries in the region in building a low-carbon society.

4. Several delegations highlighted the importance of further promotion of regional cooperation for linking economic recovery and sustainable development. One delegation suggested that the secretariat should consider actions in a number of concrete areas, such as the promotion of green industry and green tourism, especially for small and medium enterprises, enhancing the implementation of economic and fiscal measures for green economic growth, the creation of environmentally friendly

markets and services, the introduction of green procurement and the standardization of goods and services for the promotion of sustainable consumption.

5. The delegation of the Philippines informed the Commission that its country would be hosting the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia, to be organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, ESCAP and the United Nations Environment Programme in Manila in September 2009. The conference would focus on how industries in the region could effectively manage the transition to resource-efficient and low-carbon industry and in the process sustain economic growth and trade competitiveness.

6. The Commission expressed its appreciation to Kazakhstan, for its offers to host the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific in 2010, and the seventh Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in 2011 with the theme of "A green economy for the conservation of ecosystems, including river basins", and emphasized the importance of bridging regional sustainable development processes in those two regions.

7. One delegation noted that strategic pro-poor investment to ease the economic crisis should encourage the integration of rural and urban economies and that, while urban growth and development were important, renewed focus was also needed on rural development.

8. A number of delegations shared their countries' national action plans and strategies in addressing climate change and sustainable development. The Commission noted the need for greater capacity-building, technology transfer and financing.

9. One delegation stressed that climate change was permanently displacing its vulnerable people, leading to increased out-migration from affected areas and a consequent surge in squatters and slum dwellers who were without physical, financial, psychological or social security.

10. The Commission noted that some delegations were encouraging improved solid waste management through the use of advanced technologies and through principles such as 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle). One delegation informed the Commission that the potential for clean development mechanism projects was negligible for smaller countries as they lacked the skilled manpower to prepare the technical documents required, and stressed the need for capacity-building initiatives. The same delegation called for the establishment of a regional fund for least developed countries and vulnerable countries to address climate change actions beyond 2012.

11. One delegation emphasized the importance for all countries to address climate change, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and in support of sustainable development. One delegation stated its support for the development of a new post-Kyoto regime at the end of 2009. Another delegation cautioned the secretariat that any work related to climate change should fall within the existing mandates.

12. One delegation underlined the achievements of the North-East Asia Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation, including the development of a transboundary mechanism for the protection of endangered species in North-East Asia.

13. Several delegations emphasized the importance of strengthening the agricultural sector and food security in coping with the financial crisis and encouraged stronger cooperation between ESCAP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in that respect. Some delegations pointed out the need to adopt the approach of integrated water resources management and river basin management as part of the efforts towards greening economic recovery and generating jobs.

14. One delegation supported workable regional cooperation initiatives to enhance the capacity of the agriculture industry to meet food security needs and incorporate sustainability principles.