



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Sixty-fifth session
23-29 April 2009
Bangkok

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the sixty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (section I) and the annotations to the provisional agenda (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

Senior officials segment

1. Opening of the session:¹
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.

2. Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission:
 - (a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development;
 - (b) Trade and investment;
 - (c) Transport;
 - (d) Environment and development;
 - (e) Information and communications technology;
 - (f) Disaster risk reduction;
 - (g) Social development;
 - (h) Statistics.

3. Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries:
 - (a) The food-fuel-financial crisis and climate change: addressing threats to development;
 - (b) Regional cooperation for shared prosperity and social progress;

¹ There will be an opening session for both the senior officials segment and the ministerial segment.

- (c) Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to countries with special needs;
 - (d) Other matters.
4. Management issues:
- (a) Draft programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011;
 - (b) Programme changes for the biennium 2008-2009;
 - (c) Strengthening the United Nations development pillar at the regional level: proposed ESCAP subregional offices;
 - (d) Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions.
5. Work of the ESCAP regional institutions.
6. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.
7. Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission.

Ministerial segment

8. Theme topic for the sixty-fifth session: "Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in the Asia-Pacific region".
9. Addressing threats to development: key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region:
- (a) Addressing the financial crisis and its convergence with other threats to development: towards a stable and supportive financial system for development;
 - (b) Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCAP region.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

II. Annotations

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 provides as follows: "The Commission shall, at its first meeting of each year, elect from among its 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-chairpersons, as has been the practice at previous sessions, in which case the Commission may elect a bureau of officers composed of a chairperson and several vice-chairpersons.

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 chairpersons and vice-chairpersons for each.

The ministerial segment will elect the chairperson and vice-chairpersons of the Commission.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Provisional agenda
(E/ESCAP/65/L.1)

Annotated provisional agenda
(E/ESCAP/65/L.2)

The provisional agenda was drawn up by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the current Chairperson of the Commission and the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

The Commission may wish to adopt the agenda.

2. Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission

In accordance with resolution 64/1, the subsidiary structure of the Commission has been reorganized into eight committees, as follows:

- (a) Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development;
- (b) Committee on Trade and Investment;
- (c) Committee on Transport;
- (d) Committee on Environment and Development;
- (e) Committee on Information and Communications Technology;
- (f) Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction;
- (g) Committee on Social Development;
- (h) Committee on Statistics.

Agenda item 2 focuses on: (a) the reports of subsidiary bodies of the Commission (where sessions have already been held); (b) progress in the implementation of Commission mandates; and (c) the review and analysis of regional trends of important issues pertaining to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development. Documents under this agenda item identify key priorities and emerging issues, taking into consideration the subregional aspects.

The expected outcomes under this agenda item include: (a) the identification of progress achieved and gaps requiring priority attention in the Asia-Pacific region with regard to the implementation of Commission mandates; (b) the identification of

emerging issues that merit policy attention; (c) follow-up to major global conferences; (d) the articulation of Asian and Pacific perspectives on issues that will be addressed in major global forums in 2009, (e) the endorsement of the reports of the subsidiary bodies which have held sessions; and (f) the identification of key issues to be taken up in meetings of subsidiary bodies in 2009.

The outcomes of deliberations under this agenda item will be reflected in the annual report submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session. Country statements will be analysed for the preparation of regional inputs to the annual ministerial review, the Development Cooperation Forum reporting processes and the dialogue of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions with the Economic and Social Council in July 2009. The analysis will also be used in the preparation of regional inputs to mandated reports of the Secretary-General on economic, social and environmental development issues. The agreed outcomes will guide the Executive Secretary in interventions in diverse forums, including those in the Second Committee of the General Assembly and other presentations of the ESCAP secretariat at major global forums in 2009.

The Commission may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on enhanced and effective implementation of its activities related to key issues under this agenda item through decisions or resolutions.

(a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development

Documentation

Recent macroeconomic developments and other issues to be raised at the first session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development
(E/ESCAP/65/1)

Document E/ESCAP/65/1 provides an overview of recent macroeconomic trends, issues and challenges and their implications for poverty reduction and inclusive development. It proposes that the first session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development, to be held during the second half of 2009, include a thorough discussion on the key development issues.

The document focuses on three key areas: (a) macroeconomic trends, issues and challenges, including an analysis of the implications of recent trends, such as food and fuel price increases and financial market volatility, on poverty and poverty reduction efforts at both the national and regional levels, (b) the impact of recent trends in access to basic services and resources, including financial resources, and the resulting economic and social disparities; and (c) the impact of the changing economic environment on poverty in countries with special needs. The document provides a set of policy recommendations, which policymakers and other development partners at the national and regional levels may wish to consider when addressing the identified issues and challenges.

The Commission may wish to review the recent developments, issues and challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region in relation to macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development and provide guidance on the preparation of the provisional agenda of the inaugural session of the Committee.

(b) Trade and investment

Documentation

Regional trade and investment: trends, issues and ESCAP responses
(E/ESCAP/65/2)

End-of-decade report on the implementation of Commission resolution 56/1
on the Decade of Greater Mekong Subregion Development Cooperation,
2000-2009
(E/ESCAP/65/3)

**Regional trade and investment: trends, issues and ESCAP responses
(E/ESCAP/65/2)**

Document E/ESCAP/65/2 provides an overview of the main trade and investment issues in the region, drawing particular attention to the impact of the global recession on Asia-Pacific trade and investment flows.

The document reviews recent developments and trends in trade and investment, and private sector repositioning, in the context of the current global financial crisis and the economic recession in the major import markets for Asia-Pacific goods and services. It provides an analysis of development challenges and the roles of the multilateral trading system and regional mechanisms for cooperation in the area of trade and investment policy, including trade agreements, in guiding economies of the region through the crisis. The document describes how countries in the region could strengthen national and regional trade capacities by designing appropriate trade strategies, enhancing trade facilitation and developing a highly competitive business sector. The document also provides a brief overview of ESCAP activities that address trade and investment trends and developments.

The Commission may wish to provide guidance on the proposed recommendations for national responses, regional cooperation and the role of ESCAP in this regard.

**End-of-decade report on the implementation of Commission resolution 56/1 on
the Decade of Greater Mekong Subregion Development Cooperation, 2000-2009
(E/ESCAP/65/3)**

This document, prepared in accordance with resolution 56/1, reviews various initiatives undertaken by the secretariat and highlights the key achievements made by the countries in the subregion through the secretariat's technical assistance programmes.

The Commission may wish to review and endorse the report and provide the secretariat with further guidance on follow-up action to promote the development of the Greater Mekong Subregion.

(c) Transport

Documentation

Report of the Committee on Transport on its first session
(E/ESCAP/65/4)

Report on the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for
Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011)
(E/ESCAP/65/5)

Report of the Committee on Transport on its first session (E/ESCAP/65/4)

The Committee on Transport reiterated the importance of the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011). It also made a number of recommendations with respect to a more inclusive approach to implementing the work of the secretariat in the area of transport.

The Commission may wish to consider 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 on the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011) (E/ESCAP/65/5)

The Commission may wish to review the report on the Regional Action Programme, consider the recommendations contained therein and provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance for enhanced and effective implementation of the Programme.

(d) Environment and development

Documentation

Turning crisis into opportunity: greening economic recovery strategies
(E/ESCAP/65/6)

Document E/ESCAP/65/6 analyses the unfolding financial crisis and its likely progression into a global economic recession that will affect the poor most severely. Several countries in the region have initiated or are planning to initiate economic stimulus programmes to combat the adverse impacts of the global recession on their economies. Many of these programmes include or will include investments in energy, water and transport infrastructure, housing, and other sectors of the economy, with high multiplier and stabilizing effects.

In the document, it is argued that economic stimulus programmes should increase the provision of basic services to the poor and bolster social safety nets to help the vulnerable tackle the crisis. Applying eco-efficient and other sustainable development criteria to investment decision-making will result in low carbon development and create new green business opportunities for years to come. Failing to grasp this opportunity to reorient infrastructure development would lock countries into a high level of greenhouse gas emissions for at least 20 to 30 years, resulting in higher long-term costs. The document also highlights the need to adopt a regional approach to ensure synergy of national efforts in low-carbon development and the creation of green business opportunities. Such an approach should also contribute to strengthening the capacity of the regional economy to deal with future socio-economic and environmental shocks, thereby helping improve energy, water and food security.

(e) Information and communications technology

Documentation

Report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology
on its first session
(E/ESCAP/65/7)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions relating to information and communications technology (E/ESCAP/65/8)

Report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology on its first session (E/ESCAP/65/7)

The Committee on Information and Communications Technology reviewed some key challenges faced by the Asia-Pacific region in developing an inclusive and development-oriented information society, as envisioned in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Committee also reviewed the importance of information and communications technology, including space-based, for disaster risk management in Asia and the Pacific.

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

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions relating to information and communications technology (E/ESCAP/65/8)

Document E/ESCAP/65/8 summarizes the progress the secretariat has made in the implementation of the following Commission resolutions: (a) 61/6 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development; and (b) 62/5 on building the information society in Asia and the Pacific, as well as in the follow-up to the outcomes of the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society.

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 and Summit outcomes.

(f) Disaster risk reduction

Documentation

Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its first session (E/ESCAP/65/9)

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolution 64/2 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/65/10)

Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its first session (E/ESCAP/65/9)

The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will meet in Bangkok from 25 to 27 March 2009, is expected to review the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific, with an emphasis on the follow-up to the outcome of the Third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. It is also expected to review the role of and need for regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific, including the status and achievements of the cooperative mechanisms on disaster risk reduction promoted by ESCAP.

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

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolution 64/2 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/65/10)

Document E/ESCAP/65/10 summarizes the progress made by the secretariat in the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution as follow-up to the outcomes of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, in 2005.

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 resolution.

(g) Social development

Documentation

Report of the Committee on Social Development on its first session
(E/ESCAP/65/11)

Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to social development issues
(E/ESCAP/65/12)

Report of the Committee on Social Development on its first session (E/ESCAP/65/11)

The Committee on Social Development discussed ways to build more inclusive societies and reduce wide disparities and social exclusion, by tackling risks and challenges to development, such as food insecurity, health-related risks, changing population dynamics and persistent disparities, and by promoting appropriate social policy options and social protection interventions. It also discussed a conceptual framework for addressing those growing insecurities through enhanced synergy between the social, economic and environmental pillars of development and by promoting the concept of inclusive societies, ensuring that benefits reach the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged segments of the society.

The Commission may wish to consider matters calling for action or brought to its attention in this regard and provide the secretariat with further guidance.

Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to social development (E/ESCAP/65/12)

Document E/ESCAP/65/12 summarizes the progress the secretariat has made in the implementation of the following Commission resolutions: (a) 63/8 on sustainable financing towards achieving universal health-care coverage in Asia and the Pacific; and (b) 64/9 on the midpoint review of the implementation of the Plan of Action on Population and Poverty adopted at the Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference.

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.

(h) Statistics

Documentation

Report of the Committee on Statistics on its first session
(E/ESCAP/65/13)

Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to the area of statistics
(E/ESCAP/65/14)

Report of the Committee on Statistics on its first session (E/ESCAP/65/13)

The Committee on Statistics deliberated on its terms of reference and functioning in the context of its re-establishment, and on the strengthening of statistics development and technical cooperation in the region. As regards specific areas of statistics, the Committee focused on: (a) the improvement of gender statistics, particularly those that measure violence against women; (b) the upgrading of economic statistics; (c) the improvement of population estimates and vital statistics; and (d) the measurement of the progress of societies. The Committee also reviewed the strategic framework 2010-2011 of the subprogramme on statistics.

Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to the area of statistics (E/ESCAP/65/14)

Document E/ESCAP/65/14 reports on the implementation of recent resolutions that have implications for official statistics in the Asian and Pacific region. Statistical issues related to tracking progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are discussed in document E/ESCAP/65/31 under item 9(b) of the provisional agenda.

The Commission may wish to review the report of the Committee on Statistics on its first session and provide the secretariat with further guidance on its implementation of resolutions that have statistical implications.

3. Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries

In accordance with resolution 64/1, the session of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries has been integrated within the Commission session with the status of a Committee of the Whole. Under item 3 of the provisional agenda, the Special Body will focus on the impact that the food-fuel-financial crisis and climate change have had, particularly with regard to least developed and landlocked developing countries (countries with special needs). It will also highlight gaps in the achievement of Millennium Development Goals observed in countries with special needs, and the need to address institutional weaknesses if this group of countries is to achieve the Goals. The Special Body will also review the progress made in the implementation of the three Commission resolutions related to countries with special needs.

The expected outcomes include the identification of the progress achieved as well as gaps requiring priority attention in the Asia-Pacific region with regard to the implementation of Commission mandates related to countries with special needs. The outcomes of deliberations under this agenda item will be reflected in the annual report submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session.

The Special Body may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the key issues raised under the present agenda item as well as on enhanced and effective implementation of the secretariat's activities.

(a) The food-fuel-financial crisis and climate change: addressing threats to development

Documentation

The food-fuel-financial crisis and climate change: addressing threats to development
(E/ESCAP/65/15)

The Commission at its sixty-fourth session requested the secretariat to consider holding, on an urgent basis, a high-level consultative meeting to address, through partnerships, the challenges of the food and fuel crisis prevailing in Asian and Pacific developing countries, including least developed countries. In response to this request, the secretariat, in cooperation with the Government of Indonesia, held the High-level Regional Policy Dialogue on the food-fuel crisis and climate change: reshaping the development agenda in Bali, Indonesia, on 9 and 10 December 2008. The Policy Dialogue adopted the Bali Outcome Document in which, among other things, a call is made for urgent and concerted regional efforts to confront the food-fuel-financial crisis and climate change in order to prevent those challenges from becoming a development emergency.

Food insecurity in particular has been a major challenge for countries with special needs, including small island developing States and has greatly complicated their fight against income and non-income poverty. These countries are also highly vulnerable to fuel price volatility and climate change, bearing the major brunt of the adverse effects of these threats to development. High food and energy prices have put huge pressure on their fiscal resources, as subsidies have been necessary. Climate change, particularly sea-level rise, could impose incalculable economic, social and environmental costs on the coastal areas of many least developed countries and small island developing States, reducing their ability to survive as viable States.

To these challenges have been added the downstream effects of the prevailing global financial crisis. Several countries with special needs have already reported slowdowns in their current and forecast growth rates with falling exports and rising unemployment, threatening their economic and social stability, even though their links with the global financial systems are weak. Official development assistance could also decline as a result of the recession spreading in the developed countries, hitting this special group of countries the hardest.

The Special Body may wish to deliberate on the issues and concerns contained in document ESCAP/65/15 and provide further guidance to the secretariat.

(b) Regional cooperation for shared prosperity and social progress

Documentation

Regional cooperation for shared prosperity and social progress
(E/ESCAP/65/16)

The Millennium Development Goals provide a useful framework for promoting economic and social progress in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. All available evidence, including that provided through the tripartite partnership between ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, suggests that

countries with special needs are at risk of missing the 2015 deadline for most of the Goals. They may not achieve targets related to poverty, education, health, gender, and infant and maternal mortality. Their situation has been further complicated by the food-fuel-financial crisis and climate change. In other words, there are serious “Millennium Development Goal gaps” faced mainly by countries with special needs which urgently need to be bridged. One of the main reasons behind the lacklustre performance of such countries is the slow progress in achieving Goal 8, particularly in areas such as market access, official development assistance and private capital flows. From their standpoint, countries with special needs have yet to see the benefits of the internationally agreed commitments. These countries are also constrained by their domestic capacity to implement their part of the commitments as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals. Institutional weaknesses, together with limited or insufficient fiscal and other resources devoted to achieving the Goals, have appeared as critical implementation challenges. As countries with special needs enter a new phase of heightened global uncertainty, there is an urgent need to develop and implement effective and durable regional cooperation measures and mechanisms to put them on a self-sustaining path to shared prosperity and economic and social progress.

The Special Body may wish to deliberate on the issues and concerns contained in document ESCAP/65/16 and provide further guidance to the secretariat.

(c) Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to countries with special needs

Documentation

Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to countries with special needs
(E/ESCAP/65/17)

Document E/ESCAP/65/17 summarizes the progress the secretariat has made in the implementation of the following Commission resolutions: (a) 63/5 on the midterm review of the implementation 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; (b) 63/6 on the implementation of intercountry energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development with a view to widening access to energy services in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; (c) 63/7 on international migration and development for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

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.

(d) Other matters

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

4. Management issues

Under agenda item 4, the secretariat will submit for the consideration of the Commission a range of strategic management issues critical to the continued relevance and effectiveness of the work of ESCAP.

(a) Draft programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011

Documentation

Draft programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011
(E/ESCAP/65/18)

The draft programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, which is submitted for the Commission's review and endorsement, contains four sections: (a) overall orientation; (b) subprogramme results frameworks and strategies; (c) proposed output citations by subprogramme; and (d) a list of recurrent outputs from 2008-2009 that are proposed to be discontinued in 2010-2011. Sections (a) and (b) are derived from the strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011, as endorsed by the Commission at its sixty-fourth session and by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-eighth session. Section (c) contains the proposed outputs designed to enable ESCAP to achieve the results as set out in the strategic framework. In accordance with the programme planning regulations and rules, section (d) contains a list of recurrent outputs that are proposed for discontinuation in the biennium 2010-2011.

The draft programme of work for 2010-2011 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 strategic evaluations. In preparing the document, every effort has been made to reflect the priorities of member States, ensure a better balance in the secretariat's normative, analytical and operational work, and build upon the Commission's areas of comparative strength, including its multidisciplinary orientation.

Relevant sections of the draft programme of work have benefited from review by the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, the Committee on Social Development, the Committee on Statistics and the Committee on Transport during their inaugural sessions. Furthermore, 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 in January 2009.

(b) Programme changes for the biennium 2008-2009

Documentation

Proposed programme changes for 2008-2009
(E/ESCAP/65/19)

The proposed programme changes for 2008-2009 are necessary due to the restructuring of the conference structure, as decided by the Commission in its resolution 64/1. They also respond to the new global priorities identified by the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, and other global conferences. The Commission may wish to consider the proposed changes with a view to endorsing them for incorporation into the programme of work for 2008-2009.

(c) Strengthening the United Nations development pillar at the regional level: proposed ESCAP subregional offices

Documentation

Strengthening the United Nations development pillar in the Asian and Pacific region: ESCAP subregional offices
(E/ESCAP/65/20)

Document E/ESCAP/65/20 describes for the Commission's consideration the road map for the establishment of three new ESCAP subregional offices for the following subregions as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/260:

- (a) East and North-East Asia;
- (b) North and Central Asia (joint office with the Economic Commission for Europe);
- (c) South and South-West Asia.

The Commission may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the steps to be taken in order to establish the above-mentioned offices, including the identification of priority subregional issues to be addressed and consideration of the proposed locations for the offices.

(d) Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions

Documentation

Overview of technical cooperation activities and extrabudgetary contributions (E/ESCAP/65/21)

Document E/ESCAP/65/21 summarizes the secretariat's technical cooperation activities in 2008, in accordance with the ESCAP programme of work 2008-2009, the technical cooperation strategy, and Commission resolution 60/3 on the work of ESCAP in implementing its technical cooperation projects. The document also provides an overview of the extrabudgetary resources mobilized in 2008 for implementing technical cooperation activities. The Commission may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on future technical cooperation activities and announce intended contributions for 2009.

5. Work of the ESCAP regional institutions

Documentation

Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (E/ESCAP/65/22)

Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (E/ESCAP/65/23)

United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (E/ESCAP/65/24)

Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/65/25)

Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/65/26)

The work of the five ESCAP regional institutions forms an important component of the programme of work of the Commission. Under this agenda item, the Commission may wish to review the annual report of each ESCAP regional institution, as adopted by the respective governing councils. The reports review the administrative and financial status of each regional institution and the implementation of the respective programmes of work, and highlight other major events and related developments.

The Commission may wish to comment on the documents and provide guidance for the future work of the regional institutions.

6. 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/65/27 and Add.1)

Documents E/ESCAP/65/27 and Add.1 cover the main activities of the Advisory Committee since the sixty-fourth session of the Commission, including its support to the Executive Secretary on the implementation of the new conference structure, as contained in resolution 64/1, as well as 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 in its work.

7. Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission

Documentation

Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission
(E/ESCAP/65/28)

Unless otherwise decided, it is expected that the Commission will hold its sixty-sixth session in Bangkok in April/May 2010. Under this agenda item, the Commission may also wish to select a theme topic for that session, taking into consideration the synopses for the options contained in document E/ESCAP/65/28.

Ministerial segment

8. Theme topic for the sixty-fifth session: "Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in the Asia-Pacific region"

Documentation

Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in Asia and the Pacific
(E/ESCAP/65/29)

This agenda item focuses on sustainable agriculture and food security from a regional perspective. The expected outcome of deliberations on the item is the guidance of the Commission on policy recommendations pertaining to, among other things, food security in the region as it is affected by agriculture, trade, transport, social protection, water and energy security, and climate change. It is expected that the deliberations under the agenda item will help to raise food security to the forefront of national policy agendas.

Based on the comprehensive theme study undertaken by the secretariat on sustainable agriculture and food security in Asia and the Pacific, document E/ESCAP/65/29 assesses the severity of food insecurity in the region and considers policies that may be used to improve the food security status of the region. The document examines food security using two key Millennium Development Goal indicators: (a) proportion of population below minimum level of dietary consumption; and (b) prevalence of underweight children under five years of age. It also considers the causes of food insecurity in the region which may be either structural or policy related. It highlights policies that have worked well to reduce the number of food insecure in the region, and the role played by various stakeholders. Community responses to food insecurity are also examined. Key challenges to food security in the region are considered; these include climate change, water and energy insecurity, genetic engineering and industrial agriculture. Trade and transport policies and their impact on food security in the region are described. The role of social protection in ensuring food security is examined.

The final part of the study outlines a framework for sustainable agriculture and food security in Asia and the Pacific and suggests policy options that are important in the immediate term, medium term and long term.

The Commission may wish to review the analysis and provide guidance, in particular on the policy options for strengthening food security in the region.

9. Addressing threats to development: key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region

(a) Addressing the financial crisis and its convergence with other threats to development: towards a stable and supportive financial system for development

Documentation

Addressing the financial crisis and its convergence with other threats to development: towards a stable and supportive financial system for development
(E/ESCAP/65/30)

For the first time in modern history, the region is faced with the convergence of a financial crisis of a magnitude not seen in a century, food and fuel insecurity, and climate changes that are bringing irreversible changes to the lives of millions in Asia and the Pacific. While this region has shown an inherent resilience to each of the three crises, their convergence brings compounding effects that pose serious threats to hard-won development gains. Policy actions are needed that will see the region evolve from crisis resilience to crisis resistance.

At the same time, the convergence of these threats provides a unique opportunity for the region to chart a development path that is more inclusive and sustainable. Coordinated macroeconomic policy actions and integrated policy planning will be key determinants of the region's future pattern of development. The Commission may wish to debate on these issues, the nature and impact of the crises on the region, the policy challenges and the policy actions that will be needed at the regional level as contained in document E/ESCAP/65/30.

(b) Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCAP region

Documentation

Progress and challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific
(E/ESCAP/65/31)

Document E/ESCAP/65/31 provides information on the major revisions of Millennium Development Goal data over the past year. The revised poverty estimates published by the World Bank in August 2008 following the 2005 round of price surveys conducted under the International Comparison Program receive particular focus. Globally, the number of poor people had previously been underestimated by as many as 400 million; a large proportion of these underestimations had occurred with respect to Asia and the Pacific.

The likely impact of the financial crisis on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is analysed based on the gap model introduced in the third regional Millennium Development Goal report (ST/ESCAP/2501). The document highlights those Goals that are most under threat as a result of the financial crisis.

The paper reports on the achievement of Goal 8, with a particular focus on “aid for trade” and the development of an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system, official development assistance and external debt.

Finally, the major outcomes of the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals held in New York in September 2008 and their implications for Asia and the Pacific are discussed. The main objectives of this event were: (a) to review progress and take stock of existing gaps at the midpoint in the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015; (b) to identify concrete actions needed to scale up efforts to this end; and (c) to help ensure that the Millennium Development Goals and international targets remain on track and that the momentum is maintained beyond 2008.

Taking into account the current economic crisis, the Commission may wish to share country perspectives on progress made with regard to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and provide guidance on regional action to prevent a reversal of progress towards achieving the Goals in the Asian and Pacific region.

10. Other matters

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

11. Adoption of the report of the Commission

The Commission will consider and adopt resolutions and the report on its sixty-fifth session.

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