



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Seventy-fourth session**

Bangkok, 11–16 May 2018

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-fifth session of the Commission (2019)**Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-fifth session of the Commission (2019)****Note by the secretariat*****Summary*

The present note contains information on the possible dates and venue of the seventy-fifth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which is to be held in 2019, and a proposal for a theme topic for that session.

The Commission may wish to make a decision on these matters.

I. Introduction

1. The present note contains suggestions made by the secretariat for the consideration of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-fourth session. The Commission may wish to consider the dates, venue and theme topic for its seventy-fifth session, to be held in 2019, and to provide the secretariat with guidance in this regard.

II. Dates and venue

2. Rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the Commission requires it to recommend the dates and venue for its next session, subject to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and in consultation with the Secretary-General. In accordance with established practice, at each session, the Commission recommends the convening of the next session. The actual dates and venue are then determined by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the members and the Chair of the Commission.

* ESCAP/74/L.1/Rev.1.

** The present note was submitted late owing to the need to take into account the views of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, which were expressed at its 374th session on 23 January 2018, and 375th session on 2 April 2018.

3. In addition, in rule 1 of the rules of procedure, it is stated that sessions of the Commission shall ordinarily be held at the office of the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific, unless the Commission recommends otherwise.

III. Theme topic

4. The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission at its 374th session, held on 23 January 2018, considered the proposal for a theme topic for the seventy-fifth session of the Commission, and at its 375th session, held on 2 April 2018, considered an outline of issues to be covered in the proposed theme topic. The Commission is invited to consider the following proposal for the theme topic of its seventy-fifth session: “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.

A. Introduction

5. In its resolution 66/288, the General Assembly established the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2012. The Assembly later outlined the format and organizational aspects of the forum in its resolution 67/290, and further elaborated guidance on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals in resolution 70/299.

6. In paragraph 3 (c) of resolution 70/299, the Assembly decided that the theme of the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development would be “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.”

7. In paragraph 6 of resolution 70/299, the Assembly also decided that the Economic and Social Council should ensure the alignment of its annual main themes and the corresponding annual themes of the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council, to foster coherence.

8. The ministerial declaration of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, recognized the important role that regional and subregional forums, including the United Nations regional commissions, could have in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and invited them to continue contributing to the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development including with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.

9. For its part, the Commission adopted resolution 70/11 in 2014 welcoming the inaugural session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, and in resolution 72/6 in 2016, agreed to implement the recommendations of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development’s third session concerning the modalities of the Forum.

10. In 2017, the Commission decided in its resolution 73/1 to include the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development as part of the conference structure of the Commission, and agreed on its terms of reference. The terms of reference mention that the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development will be convened to support regional preparations for the high-level political forum on sustainable development both in the context of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly, and its annual theme and in-depth review of the cluster of goals each year will be aligned with that of the high-level political forum. Furthermore, the terms of reference also stipulate that

“in the years when the high-level political forum meets under the auspices of the General Assembly at the summit level, which is every four years, the Forum may converge with the Commission session in April/May, and the Commission and the Forum will share the same theme, where appropriate”.

B. Issues to be covered by the theme study

11. The theme study for the seventy-fourth session of the Commission in 2018, “Inequality in Asia and the Pacific in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, reviewed the inequality trends in the region, focusing on multi-faceted challenges for sustainable development within three broad types of inequalities: inequality of outcome (gaps in income and wealth); inequality of opportunity (gaps in access to basic services and fundamental rights); and inequality of impact (how environmental degradation and disasters impact population groups differently).

12. The theme study for the seventy-fifth session in 2019, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality,” will build further on the findings of the 2018 study, including a more in-depth review of target 10.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 10 (“...empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”). Several groups of people were already identified in the 2018 theme study as the furthest behind. The 2019 study will present inequality from the perspectives of these most marginalized groups and explore policies and programmes required to support their empowerment and inclusion.

13. This people-centred approach will lay the foundation for the 2019 theme study, which aims to cover the following:

- Means to improve inclusiveness and equality of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including youth, older persons, persons with disability and the rural poor, in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Benefits (and the costs of inaction) and means of empowering vulnerable and marginalized groups and ensuring their inclusion and equality in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Means to improve inclusiveness and equality of women as well as the benefits (and the costs of inaction) and means of empowering women to be engaged in the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Good practices from across the region and the world of successful policies and programmes to enhance empowerment and inclusion
- Policy lessons for empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in the region

IV. Previous theme topics

14. For reference, a list of the theme topics of previous Commission sessions is contained in the annex to the present note.

Annex**List of theme topics of previous Commission sessions**

<i>Session^a</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme topic</i>
40	1984	Technology for development
41	1985	Technology for development
42	1986	Human resources development
43	1987	Human resources development
44	1988	Human resources development
45	1989	Restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s
46	1990	Restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s
47	1991	Industrial restructuring in Asia and the Pacific, in particular with a view to strengthening regional cooperation
48	1992	Regional economic cooperation in the ESCAP region: prospects, priorities and policy options
49	1993	Expansion of investment and intraregional trade as a vehicle for enhancing regional economic cooperation and development
50	1994	Infrastructure development as key to economic growth and regional economic cooperation
51	1995	Strengthening of regional cooperation in human resources development with special reference to the social implications of sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific
52	1996	Sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Asia and the Pacific
53	1997	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: opportunities and challenges for ESCAP
54	1998	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: status of and prospects for social development
55	1999	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: information technology, globalization, economic security and development
56	2000	Development through globalization and partnership in the twenty-first century: an Asia-Pacific perspective for integrating developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system on a fair and equitable basis
57	2001	Balanced development of urban and rural areas and regions within the countries of Asia and the Pacific
58	2002	Sustainable social development in a period of rapid globalization: challenges, opportunities and policy options
59	2003	Integrating economic and social concerns, especially HIV/AIDS, in meeting the needs of the region
60	2004	Meeting the challenges in an era of globalization by strengthening regional development cooperation
61	2005	Implementing the Monterrey Consensus in the Asian and Pacific region: achieving coherence and consistency
62	2006	Enhancing regional cooperation in infrastructure development, including that related to disaster management

<i>Session^a</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme topic</i>
63	2007	Development of health systems in the context of enhancing economic growth towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific
64	2008	Energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific
65	2009	Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in the Asia-Pacific region
66	2010	Addressing challenges in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: promoting a stable and supportive financial system; and green growth or environmentally sustainable economic growth, including through technology and financing
67	2011	Beyond the crises: long-term perspectives on social protection and development in Asia and the Pacific
68	2012	Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific
69	2013	Opportunities to build resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises
70	2014	Regional connectivity for shared prosperity
71	2015	Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation
72	2016	Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development
73	2017	Regional cooperation for sustainable energy
74	2018	Inequality in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

^a From the fortieth to the seventy-fourth session.