

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

Bangkok, 11–16 May 2018

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions**Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The present document contains a summary of the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on which the secretariat is required to report to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session.

The Commission may wish to review the progress made and provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance for the effective implementation of the resolutions.

I. Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development**Resolution 69/6****Implementation of the Tehran Declaration to promote public-private partnerships in infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development****1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs**

1. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 69/6, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, relevant offices of the United Nations secretariat, international and regional financial institutions, bilateral donors and other organizations, to continue to support the promotion of public-private partnerships for sustainable infrastructure development in the region, in particular by:

(a) Assisting members and associate members in meeting sustainable infrastructure development challenges through: (i) regional and interregional cooperation in the development of public-private partnerships;

* ESCAP/74/L.1.

(ii) the organization of meetings and regional networking arrangements aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and information, particularly on disaster risk reduction and water resource management; (iii) promotion of the use of products, networks, services and applications based on information and communications technology (ICT), to help countries overcome the digital divide, as stipulated in the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society; and (iv) the mainstreaming of ICT in their work programmes and the provision of assistance for developing countries at all levels to enable them to be involved in the preparation and implementation of national action plans to support the fulfilment of the goals indicated in the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society while taking into account the importance of regional initiatives;

(b) Assisting members and associate members in their capacity-building programmes, including the formulation of public-private partnership policy frameworks, legislative and regulatory reform and the administrative arrangements for public-private partnerships;

(c) Working collectively to strengthen an Asia-Pacific network of public-private partnership units and programmes which would, among other things, provide ad hoc advisory and training services, disseminate information on public-private partnership and coordinate regional meetings of national public-private partnership units and programmes with the aim of developing public-private partnership programmes that contribute to sustainable development;

(d) Providing technical assistance, upon request, to help increase the public-private partnership readiness of countries of the Asia-Pacific region, giving special emphasis to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, including but not limited to: (i) preparing regional financing and risk management tools to reduce transaction costs; and (ii) developing risk mitigation mechanisms against exchange rate misalignment, environmental adverse impact and natural disasters;

(e) Encouraging financial and monetary institutions as well as international development banks to invest in bankable public-private partnership projects, especially in the transport, energy, water resources, and ICT sectors;

(f) Exploring ways to facilitate cooperation among countries of the Asia-Pacific region on public-private partnership projects in their effort towards: (i) streamlining financial flows and motivating investment, especially by attracting foreign direct investment to public-private partnership projects; (ii) setting up forums to invite representatives of the private sector from different countries to cooperate in public-private partnership projects; (iii) launching a process for establishing a working group comprising interested Asian and Pacific countries to explore leveraging prudential financial institutions and instruments, including emerging ones, such as Islamic financial instruments, for financing public-private partnership projects; and (iv) encouraging and inviting countries of the Asia-Pacific region to consider setting up an Asian investment bank;

(g) Expanding their supporting activities on public-private partnerships through cooperation with all regional arrangements and organizations;

(h) Undertaking a periodic review of the progress made in infrastructure development through public-private partnerships and to report to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

2. In response to subparagraph 5 (a), the secretariat organized several regional events to share experience and best practices for public-private partnership development in the region, recently including the regional event on financing sustainable infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, December 2017) as well as four subregional policy dialogues on infrastructure financing strategies held in Bangkok (December 2017), Manila (August 2017), Tbilisi (June 2017) and Kathmandu (January 2017). Other regional events were organized earlier, such as a regional public-private partnership forum in January 2015. In addition, public-private partnerships have been among the topics covered during the yearly high-level meetings on financing for development that have been organized since 2014.

3. In response to subparagraph 5 (b), the secretariat has developed a recognized capacity-building programme on public-private partnership, including an online training programme that was launched in May 2015 and had been accessed approximately 80,000 times by November 2017. The training programme has also been used by stakeholders in several countries, including recently by the China Public-Private Partnerships Centre (February 2017). The secretariat has also supported more intensively selected member countries — Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar — in the establishment of effective policy frameworks for involving the private sector in infrastructure development. Several workshops were organized in these countries between 2014 and 2016, and, as a result, national policies were adopted and legislation developed.

4. In response to subparagraph 5 (c), the secretariat has been working on an ad hoc basis with public-private partnership units in the region, and is collaborating with the China Public-Private Partnerships Centre to further strengthen this work. In this regard, the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development at its first session, held in December 2017, requested the secretariat to consider developing a network on public-private partnerships and infrastructure financing to provide a regular platform on which experts can exchange best practices, share their experiences and knowledge products, and provide capacity-building support. In addition, the secretariat has also been contributing since 2010 to the Asia Public-Private Partnership Practitioners Network events co-organized by the Korea Development Institute, the Ministry of Strategy and Finance of Korea, the World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

5. In response to subparagraph 5 (d), the secretariat has implemented a public-private partnerships readiness assessment tool in a number of countries — such as Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar — and worked with selected countries — Nepal, Georgia, the Philippines, Samoa and Viet Nam — in 2016 and 2017 to increase knowledge and awareness of financing sources and modalities in areas of infrastructure finance. In addition, ESCAP launched a value-for-money toolkit in June 2016 to support member countries in screening public-private partnership projects.

6. In response to subparagraph 5 (e), the secretariat has involved in its public-private partnership activities representatives from commercial and development banks, including the Japan International Cooperation Agency, ADB, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank. Public-private forums were held in Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar during the period from 2014 to 2016. The secretariat produced five national and three subregional studies on infrastructure financing, which were presented at events held in Nepal (January

2017), Samoa (February 2017), Georgia (June 2017), the Philippines (August 2017) and Viet Nam (October 2017). These activities are expected to facilitate banks' investments in these countries through improved understanding of financing needs for achieving sustainable infrastructure development.

7. In response to subparagraph 5 (f), the secretariat organized a subregional event on financing sources for public-private partnerships, held in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015. The event considered, among other topics, the role of Islamic finance, the need for additional risk mitigation instruments and the potential of capital market solutions in financing infrastructure. The meeting resulted in the formulation of over 20 policy recommendations to facilitate access to finance for public-private partnership projects. To facilitate cooperation between countries in public-private partnership projects, the secretariat produced a paper in April 2017 on public-private partnerships for cross-border infrastructure development, which was realized under a joint research project with the Korea Development Institute.

8. In response to subparagraph 5 (g), the secretariat has been collaborating with 14 multilateral development banks and international organizations on the PPP Knowledge Lab initiative, which provides a comprehensive online resource about public-private partnerships with easy access to data and the latest knowledge products. In addition, ESCAP has been collaborating with the World Bank and other international organizations to produce the third version of the Public-Private Partnerships Reference Guide.

9. In response to subparagraph 5 (h), the secretariat has conducted several reviews of public-private partnership development in Asia and the Pacific, including a background paper on public-private partnership policy, legal and institutional frameworks in Asia and the Pacific; a public-private partnership case study series; and a dedicated chapter on public-private partnerships and infrastructure finance in the 2013 and 2015 editions of the ESCAP *Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific*.

II. Trade and investment

Resolution 70/6

Implementation of the decision of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

10. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support and facilitate the establishment and operation of an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation in accordance with the terms of reference contained in section I.B of the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade.

11. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 70/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission annually on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution until the work of the steering group has been completed.

2. Progress made

12. In response to paragraph 2, the secretariat organized the third meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless

Trade Facilitation in Bangkok on 23 and 24 March 2017.¹ In accordance with a decision of the meeting, the secretariat organized a signing ceremony for ESCAP member States that wished to become parties to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific on 29 August 2017 in Bangkok, during which Bangladesh, Cambodia and China signed the Framework Agreement. In addition, several member States joined the signing ceremony and expressed their commitment to join the Framework Agreement soon.

13. All meetings of the Legal and Technical Working Groups and the Steering Group were organized in conjunction with capacity-building activities to maximize the benefits for participating government officials, in particular those from least developed and landlocked developing countries. The fourth meeting of the Working Groups was held on 21 and 22 March 2017, back to back with the third meeting of the Steering Group.

14. The fourth meeting of the Steering Group will be held in Bangkok on 22 and 23 March 2018.²

III. Transport

Resolution 72/5

Strengthening regional cooperation on transport connectivity for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

15. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 72/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Support the efforts of members and associate members of the Commission on the development of international transport connectivity;

(b) Promote effective coordination with the relevant United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations to exchange best practices and knowledge related to transport and transport infrastructure development;

(c) Collaborate with relevant regional initiatives and programmes aimed at developing transport connectivity, in particular through the development of East-West and North-South international transport corridors;

(d) Cooperate with all relevant international and regional financial institutions, as well as international organizations, in order to further mobilize financial and technical support for the wider development and promotion of transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific;

(e) Make all efforts to encourage all relevant international and regional financial institutions to actively cooperate with member States of the Asia-Pacific region and to assist in financing the development of transport corridors, including the completion of missing links in the routes of East-West and North-South international transport corridors;

(f) Report to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution.

¹ See E/ESCAP/73/11.

² See ESCAP/74/6.

2. Progress made

16. In response to subparagraphs 5 (a) and (b), to promote policy guidance in the area of connectivity at the ministerial level, the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session (Moscow, December 2016) stressed the importance of formulating a set of recommendations on policy actions and initiatives to enhance regional transport cooperation and connectivity for sustainable development. Consequently, the Conference culminated in the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021). The Commission subsequently endorsed the Ministerial Declaration in its resolution 73/4 of 19 May 2017 on implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific.

17. Recognizing the role of international intermodal transport corridors in achieving sustainable transport connectivity and acknowledging the importance of intermodal facilities such as dry ports in the efficient operationalization of such corridors, the secretariat developed a regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance. The framework was developed to foster a common and coordinated approach to the development and operation of dry ports across the region. It was prepared on the basis of a two-year consultation process with government officials and dry port operators in the region, as well as a number of visits to dry ports in countries as diverse as Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Thailand. The framework was presented to the Working Group on Dry Ports at its second meeting, which was held in Bangkok on 14 and 15 November 2017. The secretariat also discussed the status of international rail and road infrastructure linkages at the fifth meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (Busan, Republic of Korea, June 2017) and the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Asian Highway (Bangkok, December 2017).

18. For the enhancement of maritime connectivity in the Pacific island countries and territories, the secretariat attended the third Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' Meeting, which was held in Nuku'alofa in April 2017, and discussed further cooperation between ESCAP and the Pacific Community. To improve efficiency of ports in the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation region, the secretariat organized a South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Knowledge Event on Transport Facilitation with ADB in Bangkok in November 2017.

19. For transport facilitation, the Ministerial Conference on Transport adopted four new transport facilitation models in 2016: the Model Subregional Agreement on Transport Facilitation, the Model Bilateral Agreement on International Road Transport, the Model Multilateral Permit for International Road Transport and the Standard Model of Logistics Information Systems. In total, eight complementary transport facilitation models have been proposed to countries, and, when implemented, will contribute to enhanced harmonization of transport laws, regulations, standards, practices and documents. Consequently, regional transport operational connectivity will also be improved. The secretariat continues to provide technical assistance in preparation for the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network between the Governments of China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation and in the sharing of good practices on the facilitation of international road transport. Two workshops were organized in 2017 — in Phnom Penh in September, and

in Hanoi in December — to discuss strengthening transport operational connectivity between Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

20. For sustainable transport, urban transport and rural transport, the secretariat organized a series of national, subregional and regional meetings and workshops to strengthen the capacity of transport officials and policymakers to implement related policies. The secretariat developed the sustainable urban transport index, a framework of indicators to assess urban transport systems and services and a tool to monitor progress towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11. The secretariat collaborated with national authorities in piloting the index in four Asian cities, provided advisory services to the pilot cities and organized a capacity-building workshop. The secretariat also collaborated with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development to plan and organize sessions of the Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum, a regional seminar entitled “Sustainable and inclusive transport development: fostering rural transport connectivity”, and the Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Policy Dialogue and Training Workshop for South Asia and South-East Asian Cities to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

21. For road safety, the updated Regional Road Safety Goals and Targets for Asia and the Pacific 2016–2020 were adopted at the Ministerial Conference on Transport in December 2016. A related subregional capacity-building workshop was organized in Phnom Penh in September 2017. A project to strengthen the capacities of officials of countries with special needs was also implemented. Jointly with the Economic Commission for Europe and the Ministry of Transport of Viet Nam, the secretariat was implementing the United Nations Development Account project on strengthening the national road safety management capacities of selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to examine the road safety situation in Viet Nam, identify key priority issues including the revision of traffic laws and road safety audits, and undertake activities to address those key issues.

22. To address the application of new technologies to improving transport connectivity for sustainable development, the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session (December 2016) recognized the importance of intelligent transport systems to increase the efficiency, safety and effectiveness of transport systems. Phase I of the new Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific covers the role of intelligent transport systems in sustainable development. As a first endeavour, the secretariat conducted intelligent transport systems fact-finding missions in China, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Viet Nam in 2017, and prepared a study on a policy framework for the use and deployment of intelligent transport systems in Asia and the Pacific. Regional challenges, issues and benefits resulting from intelligent transport systems roll-outs were investigated for this study, and possible policy recommendations were made to enhance the use and deployment of intelligent transport systems in the Asia-Pacific region. To provide regulatory guidelines for intelligent transport systems in the region, a study was initiated on innovative and integrated intelligent transport systems for the development and operation of sustainable transport systems in urban areas, with expected completion in 2019.

23. In response to subparagraph 5 (c), under a project on comprehensive planning of Eurasian transport corridors to strengthen intra- and interregional transport connectivity, the secretariat identified three major Eurasian transport corridors: the northern, central and southern transport corridors. When operational, the identified corridors may strengthen transport connectivity

between East Asia and Europe, but also East-West and North-South intraregional connectivity in Asia.

24. In response to subparagraphs 5 (d) and (e), the study report developed under the above-mentioned project on Eurasian transport corridors also provided various financing and investment options, such as financing from multilateral banks, development funds from Governments as well as the private sector, which member States can explore. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and ADB were also invited to give presentations at expert group meetings organized in Beijing and Bangkok.

IV. Environment and development

Resolution 72/9

Regional cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

25. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 72/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with United Nations specialized agencies and international, regional and subregional organizations, utilizing extrabudgetary contributions and within the mandates of the Commission, to undertake an assessment of capacity development needs of the countries in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

26. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 72/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

27. In response to paragraph 4, the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development facilitated an in-depth review of Goal 14, organized as a round table. This in-depth review recognized that the Pacific countries — which had concluded their Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development — had also committed to significantly improve ocean governance and the development of comprehensive frameworks to sustainably manage and conserve the ocean and its resources by 2020, with the goal of full implementation by 2030. The round table recommended building on leverage points to strengthen policy coherence in implementation efforts, including through better capacity for: (a) a whole-of-government perspective with respect to the formulation and implementation of policy and regulations; (b) the application of a policy coherence framework (analytical framework, institutional framework and monitoring framework), including through the blue economy approach; and (c) interministerial coordination to resolve policy conflict.

28. The secretariat also organized an expert meeting at the margins of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in order to: (a) identify critical areas of regional and subregional cooperation for the implementation of Goal 14; (b) present the preliminary outline of the assessment and seek input with a view to strengthening it; and (c) establish or strengthen partnerships among regional and global partners to support implementation of Commission resolution 72/9

and Goal 14. During the Conference, the secretariat registered voluntary commitment No. 16118 to support current and develop new regional partnerships, where appropriate, for the enhancement of data and statistical capacities for Goal 14 in line with the ESCAP statistical framework.

29. Through additional capacity provided under the Development Account project on strengthening statistical capacities for building macroeconomic and sustainable development indicators in Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific countries, the secretariat conducted a pilot case study in Indonesia to review the country's capacity to implement Goal 14, covering the economic, environmental, ecological and social dimensions. The case study reviewed the extent to which oceans are integrated into national and subnational plans and policies, including policy and implementation gaps and good practices. The review identified national, regional and international institutions working on oceans in the country, including their mandates, and data holdings (for example, listings of main indicators and publications and partnerships between them).

30. The case study report included two main components: (a) a capacity development needs assessment for implementing Goal 14, that reviewed national ocean governance mechanisms, existing policy frameworks, and good practices including measures with respect to natural resource management, conservation, marine spatial planning and sustainable fisheries; and (b) a review of existing data sources and gaps on oceans that are indicative of the country's statistical capacity to achieve Goal 14. The report provided recommendations on improving ocean governance and statistical capacity related to Goal 14 targets and indicators. ESCAP is exploring funding options to conduct further case studies in the region as part of the assessment of the capacity development needs for the implementation of Goal 14.

31. In addition, the secretariat validated the findings of the pilot case study, including a survey of ESCAP member States to identify capacity development needs for the implementation of Goal 14. The results of this survey were presented at a briefing session aiming to highlight the critical importance of integrating existing statistics conceptually and spatially across priorities related to Goal 14, and in support of developing an oceans accounts partnership, as outlined in the voluntary commitment by ESCAP at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. The creation of a national ocean account platform and partnership would include further in-depth national pilot studies of data availability and capacity-building needs, and ongoing technical assistance from ESCAP and national, subregional, regional and international partners.

V. Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction and management

A. Resolution 68/5 Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012–2017

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

32. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 68/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the organization of activities associated with the Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the

Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012–2017, in collaboration with other regional initiatives.

33. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 68/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution and at its seventy-fourth session on the progress made in the attainment of the objectives of the Asia-Pacific Years of Action.

2. Progress made

34. In response to paragraph 10, the secretariat has contributed to the strengthening of regional cooperation with respect to applications of space technology and geographic information systems (GIS) for disaster risk reduction and sustainable development through the implementation of the ESCAP-led Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development.

35. The Programme was established in 1994 as a unique regional cooperative platform to bring together the stakeholders of space-related activities to help optimize the sharing and utilization of information, know-how and best practice.

36. In accordance with the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012–2017, the Programme's activities are currently focused on disaster risk reduction, drought monitoring and the use of space-based geospatial information.

37. In the disaster risk reduction domain, the Programme facilitates access, during times of disaster and upon request, to near real-time satellite imagery and geospatial data. This is done through the ESCAP strategic partnership with the Operational Satellite Applications Programme of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. Disaster-affected member States receive support for effective emergency response, post-disaster damage and impact assessment and policy advice on recovery and rehabilitation. These services are of particular benefit to countries with special needs, which often lack the necessary infrastructure and institutional arrangements to access and maintain their own well-integrated monitoring, early warning and response mechanisms. Since 2012, ESCAP member States have shared approximately 510 satellite images and damage maps. Provided free of charge, these space-based data, products and services have a cost value of approximately \$640,000 in data and products and \$350,000 in services, on a yearly basis.

38. Through the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, ESCAP has provided member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with three knowledge products related to the use of space applications and geospatial information for disaster risk management. These handbooks provide guidance on: (a) how to share space-based information at the response stage; (b) decision-making in the context of specific hazards; and (c) innovations in post-disaster rapid assessments. In collaboration with the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, among others, ESCAP developed and field-tested these handbooks through a systematic effort that involved the incorporation of ground-level needs and challenges and good practices. Many countries are already using the handbooks and others have expressed their desire to integrate the content into their own standard operating procedures.

39. Various initiatives under the Regional Space Applications Programme's Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning have supported regional implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. First, through the promotion of access to space and GIS applications, drought-prone countries were able to utilize integrated space- and ground-based data and information for drought monitoring and early warning. Second, progress was made in moving beyond monitoring and early warning to seasonal forecasts, longer-term risk analysis, water-catchment assessment and accounting, and other tools and services for managing and adapting to drought.

40. Two pilot countries, Mongolia and Sri Lanka, have set up drought monitoring systems with the support of China and India. Both pilot countries are integrating early warning into institutional arrangements and validating the models to national conditions. Furthermore, Cambodia and Myanmar have been provided with initial training on GIS and the development of a tailored drought monitoring system, to be followed up with additional training and national validation of the drought monitoring system. Various other activities are planned, including the development of a water accounting system and a data cube for geospatial data management in Cambodia, the development of a system for monitoring *dzud* in Mongolia, more effective use of the drought monitoring system in Sri Lanka, and the linking of work on sand and dust storms to drought management in semi-arid regions.

41. The secretariat has initiated a series of programmes to build geodatabases and geoportals in the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tonga for enhanced capacity with respect to multi-hazard early warning systems. Two intensive training programmes were implemented for officials from the Pacific island countries.

42. In Central Asia, a capacity development project was initiated on the use of geospatial data for monitoring implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. In 2017, the secretariat started to develop statistical geospatial indicators to assist member States to measure and monitor the progress of implementation of disaster-related Sustainable Development Goals. The statistical geospatial indicators contribute to significantly improving the accuracy and quality of official statistics for the measuring and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals, and help policymakers in member States to prepare more effective and efficient policies and action in support of disaster risk reduction.

43. Given that the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012–2017, under which the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development has been implemented over the past few years, is reaching its completion, the secretariat initiated the development of a new plan of action in 2016.

44. At its twenty-first session, held from 9 to 12 October 2017 as part of the ESCAP Disaster Resilience Week, the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development adopted recommendations in which it endorsed the vision, mission, structure, methods and road map for the preparation and adoption of an Asia-Pacific plan of action for space applications for the period 2018–2030.

45. The Intergovernmental Consultative Committee also recommended that, as the governing structure of the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, it should be strengthened in order to equip it for

the task of helping to prepare for the proposed third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, to be held in late 2018, as well as for implementation of the new plan of action to be adopted by ministers at that conference.

46. The Development Account seventh tranche project on improving disaster risk preparedness in the ESCAP region and a series of extrabudgetary projects from donor countries, including China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, have supported these activities.

B. Resolution 72/10 Regional review of the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society action lines

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

47. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 72/10, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Accord priority to continued support for the member States and relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society action lines;

(b) Ensure enhanced efforts and linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Summit in the work of the secretariat within its existing mandate;

(c) Collaborate with international and regional organizations to continue to hold regional preparatory consultations, including through public-private partnerships and expert meetings;

(d) Hold a regional review of the implementation of the Summit action lines as part of the session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation and ensure linkage to the global forums on the Summit in collaboration with relevant international and regional organizations to avoid duplications;

(e) Coordinate United Nations agencies and partners in the regional review and follow-up towards harmonized approaches to and synergies in the implementation of the Summit;

(f) Report on progress made to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session.

2. Progress made

48. In response to subparagraph 2 (a), the secretariat published a series of studies entitled “Planning processes, policies and initiatives in ICTD education at institutions of higher learning in Asia and the Pacific”, which covered World Summit on the Information Society action lines C4 (capacity-building) and C7 (ICT applications: e-learning) in Cambodia, India, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The secretariat also published a working paper entitled “Effect of open international gateways on the broadband connectivity market”, which covered action lines C2 (information and communication infrastructure) and C6 (enabling environment); a working paper entitled “The impact of universal service funds on fixed-broadband deployment and internet adoption in Asia and the Pacific”, which focused on action line C6; and a report entitled “Artificial intelligence and broadband divide: state of ICT connectivity in Asia and the Pacific – 2017”, which focused on action lines C2, C3 (access to

information and knowledge), C4, C5 (building confidence and security in the use of ICT), C6, C7 and C10 (ethical dimensions of the information society).

49. In response to subparagraph 2 (b), the secretariat co-organized with the Government of India a side event to the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on technology and sustainability, highlighting the synergies between the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative and sustainable digital India with respect to Sustainable Development Goals 9 and 17.

50. In response to subparagraph 2 (c), the secretariat co-organized with Bangladesh the first session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee in November 2017, in collaboration with international and regional organizations. A preparatory meeting was held to discuss the governance structure of the Asia-Pacific information superhighway subregional groups and subregional plans for 2018. The meeting was attended by government officials, the private sector, donors, United Nations agencies and research think tanks, among others. In particular, the Asia-Pacific ICT Gender Working Group attended and spoke on the importance of gender and ICT. In addition, the secretariat co-organized with Internet Society a side event on Asia-Pacific regional Internet and development dialogue, which was attended by civil society organizations and the private sector, during the first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation, held in October 2016. The secretariat collaborated with the Pacific ICT Regulatory Resource Centre, the Indian Institute of Management Kashipur and LIRNEasia towards establishing an Asia-Pacific information superhighway academic network.

51. In response to subparagraph 2 (d), the secretariat collaborated with the International Telecommunication Union, and co-organized a side event on the World Summit on the Information Society and Inter-agency Working Group on ICT meeting, with the objective of conducting a regional review of the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society action lines. The side event was part of the first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation.

52. In response to subparagraph 2 (e), the secretariat collaborated with the International Telecommunication Union and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity and hosted the twentieth meeting, in 2016, and twenty-first meeting, in 2017, of the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on Information and Communications Technology. One of the key objectives was to review agencies' workplans and identify areas of potential synergy.

VI. Disaster risk reduction and statistics

Resolution 72/11

Advancing disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific for implementation of internationally agreed development goals

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

53. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 72/11, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Continue to accord priority to the support for the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) Report to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

54. In its resolution 70/2, the Commission, stressing the importance of disaggregated data related to disasters in enabling a comprehensive assessment of the socioeconomic effects of disasters and strengthening evidence-based policymaking at all levels for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, established an expert group comprising statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts to work towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics. Commission resolution 72/11 represented a continuation and strengthening of the mandate of the Expert Group, and consequently the linkages with other regional and global efforts to improve disaster-related statistics for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 are emphasized.

55. The Expert Group developed, as its main output, a disaster-related statistics framework. It is a commonly applicable statistical framework, identifying a basic range of disaster-related statistics, which is feasible for all countries and can be used to meet multiple purposes, including to inform decision-making at the national or local levels. The Expert Group's approach was iterative and interactive, with many activities, including surveying current practices across the region and conducting pilot studies to test the practical feasibility of its proposals in relation to current practices of national agencies. The process involved several rounds of open and fully transparent international consultations with a broad range of experts from national institutions, international organizations and related expert groups and forums.

56. Five Expert Group meetings were organized, interspersed with multiple planning workshops, seminars, exchanges with other groups and online consultations. The Expert Group used the Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals to interpret high-level policy demand for statistics and as a guide to prioritize the compilation of data into statistics.

57. The process of developing the disaster-related statistics framework also facilitated and strengthened partnerships between the secretariat, Expert Group members and other international organizations and initiatives. The collaboration led to the establishment, by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Europe, of the Global Partnership on Disaster-related Statistics. The stated purpose of the partnership is to maximize the utility and convergence of global, regional and national efforts to strengthen disaster-related statistics for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

58. The Commission is invited to consider the recommendations of the Expert Group,³ including expressing its support for continuing regional cooperation on disaster-related statistics and, in this respect, establishing a regional advisory group.

³ See ESCAP/74/24.