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Outcomes of key regional dialogues on sustainable development:

(b) Asian and Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting on Rio+20

Outcomes; (c) Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit; (d) Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015; (e) Meeting of Stakeholders of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme

Outcomes of key regional dialogues on sustainable development

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In the light of ongoing international deliberations pertaining to sustainable development and the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the Millennium Development Goals, and the post-2015 development framework, the Asia-Pacific region has discussed its future engagement on environment, development and sustainability issues at the following recent meetings: (a) Asian and Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting on Rio+20 Outcomes; (b) second Asia-Pacific Water Summit; (c) Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015; and (d) Meeting of Stakeholders of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme. The present document reviews the scope and the outcomes of these meetings and seeks the Committee's guidance on the role that ESCAP should play in implementing the outcomes.

I. Introduction

1. In the light of ongoing international deliberations pertaining to sustainable development and the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the Millennium Development Goals, and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, the following recent meetings have been organized or co-organized by the secretariat of ESCAP to facilitate the discussion on the region's future engagement on issues of environment, development and sustainability. The secretariat seeks

^{*} E/ESCAP/CED(3)/L.1.

the Committee's guidance on the role that ESCAP should play in implementing the outcomes of these meetings.

II. Asian and Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting on Rio+20 Outcomes

2. The Asian and Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting on Rio+20 Outcomes (regional implementation meeting for Asia and the Pacific on the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development) was convened by ESCAP in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Asian Development Bank in Bangkok from 22 to 24 April 2013.

3. It was attended by more than 170 participants, including Government representatives from 36 Governments and 41 representatives from civil society and the business community.

4. During the meeting, the participants discussed the institutional framework for sustainable development, sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015, means of implementation and other aspects of follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in the region.

5. The meeting also shared views, experiences and challenges of the region in all three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — and the interrelationships between them. Significant challenges identified for the region included poverty, climate change and related impacts, national debt, energy security and water resource management, low levels of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to gender equality, health and food insecurity, among others.

6. The dialogue on the sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015 was particularly rich. The majority of meeting participants emphasized the need for a sustainable and equitable development agenda, and urgent attention to poverty reduction. Without prejudging the outcomes of the ongoing discussions, many representatives expressed support for a unified development agenda — with a development agenda beyond 2015 centred on sustainable development as its core.

7. The role of ESCAP as a regional platform in promoting sustainable development, as reflected by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”,¹ and the needs of the region, was strongly recognized by almost every delegation. Several recommendations were made for the role of ESCAP. These included an emphasis on United Nations system coherence and collaboration, which was highly relevant to the review of the conference structure of the Commission, in addition to the current discussion.

8. The regional implementation meeting adopted a report (E/CN.17/2013/3/Add.1) with a Chair's summary capturing the perspectives of ESCAP stakeholders on regional follow-up to the outcome of the Conference.

¹ General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

9. The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance for the future direction of its work in the areas of regional follow-up to the outcome of the meeting.

III. Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit

10. The second Asia-Pacific Water Summit was hosted by the Government of Thailand and co-organized by the Asia-Pacific Water Forum in May 2013, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The secretariat, as one of the key members of the Water Forum, jointly organized the Summit. The theme was “Water security and water-related disaster challenges — leadership and commitment”.²

11. About 300 representatives of government agencies, international organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector attended the second Asia-Pacific Water Summit. A total of 10 heads of State and Government attended the Leaders’ Forum, from Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, Georgia, the Republic of Korea, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Niue, Tajikistan, Thailand and Vanuatu, as well as ministers and high-level representatives from many countries.

12. The second Asia-Pacific Water Summit offered a venue for leaders from Asian and Pacific countries, as well as international and regional development agencies, to network face-to-face and forge new partnerships on water security and water-related disaster challenges.

13. During the Summit, participants discussed issues of water resources management in relation to food security, human well-being, and disaster risk reduction, with many countries delivering policy statements and sharing their experiences and national actions towards water security.

14. In its outcome document, the Chiang Mai Declaration, the Summit acknowledged and reiterated the importance of water for human security, environment and economy by outlining specific recommendations, such as: (a) prioritizing water and sanitation and integrated water resources management (IWRM) in national agendas; (b) including disaster risk reduction and water issues in the development agenda beyond 2015; (c) enhancing regional and international cooperation; and (d) improving efficiencies in the agricultural sector. The Summit invited the Asia-Pacific Water Forum to mobilize initiatives to support the recommendations and consider establishing an Asian water information system.

15. The secretariat organized two out of seven focus area sessions and contributed to the delivery of technical workshops on economic, food and water security, urban water security, environmental water security, household water security, water risks and resilience, the IWRM process for a water-secure world, and water-related disaster challenges.

16. The Committee may wish to call upon member States to implement the Chiang Mai Declaration, and to provide guidance to the secretariat for the future direction of its work in the areas of water and sanitation.

² See <http://info.apwatersummit2.org>.

IV. Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015

17. The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015 is scheduled to be held from 26 to 28 August 2013. The Executive Secretary was requested to support the organization of the Dialogue by the Commission in its resolution 69/4. This meeting was the first regional ministerial-level event to discuss the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 following the release of the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons. The objective of the meeting was to collectively explore and identify the challenges in the region that should be addressed in the elaboration of the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015 based on the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals framework and in the overall context of the three dimensions of sustainable development, plus resilience. The Dialogue was also designed to benefit from the leadership role that regionally-based civil society organizations played in outlining civil society perspectives, as well as the increasing role of the private sector in seeking triple bottom-line business outcomes. The Committee will be informed of the key outcome of the Ministerial Dialogue.

V. Meeting of stakeholders of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme

18. The Green Bridge Conference 2013, organized by the Government of Kazakhstan, is scheduled to be held in Astana from 30 September to 1 October 2013. It is the first meeting of stakeholders of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme, an interregional initiative for sustainable development spearheaded by the Government of Kazakhstan.. In Commission resolution 69/9, the Executive Secretary was requested, among other things, to provide expert technical support in the preparations for the meeting. The aim of the meeting was: (a) to identify specific institutional arrangements necessary for the operationalization of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme taken from the experience and success stories of promotion, development and implementation of green economy or green growth initiatives and institutional frameworks at the regional, national and local levels in the European and Asia-Pacific regions; (b) to define the roles of relevant stakeholders in the institutional framework to support the implementation of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme; (c) to elaborate the necessary instruments for the governance and operation of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme; and (d) to identify the key priority programme areas and Green Bridge projects with focus on least developed and landlocked developing countries as well as Central Asian States. The Committee will be informed of the key outcomes of the stakeholder meeting.
