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**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE PHNOM PENH REGIONAL
PLATFORM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2000**

(Item 5 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda)

**ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS IN THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The present document provides a concise analysis of the implementation of relevant outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the context of Asia and the Pacific, the priority initiatives of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific as included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the recommendations of the fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000. The document identifies ongoing concerns, opportunities, constraints, lessons learned and challenges for the promotion of sustainable development at the regional, subregional and national levels. It aims at creating a basis for debate during the Conference on the possible opportunities for the Asian and Pacific region to embrace a strategy for achieving environmentally sustainable economic growth (“Green Growth”).

The Preparatory Meeting is invited to review the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit and provide guidance on a future course of action.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This document presents a summary assessment of major regional efforts towards the implementation of regional and global decisions on sustainable development for the period since the fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000, including the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005 (2000), the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific (2001) and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development with its Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002).

2. The assessment and analysis are based on the reports available on the sustainable development activities in the region, as well as information and reports on the activities of United Nations and international agencies and the periodic compilation and review of activities on environmental and sustainable development conducted by ESCAP. The projects and programmes undertaken by national Governments in cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and ESCAP, have also been reviewed.

3. The review also attempts to highlight and flag major issues related to the implementation. It is envisaged that some insights and lessons that emanate from the review will provide the basis for a strategically focused Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010.

4. The Meeting is invited to review the progress made in the implementation of various outcomes and provide guidance on a future course of action, including the possible inclusion of some of the ongoing concerns in the Regional Implementation Plan, for consideration under item 7 of the provisional agenda.

I. HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE AND LINKAGES BETWEEN THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME (2001-2005), THE PHNOM PENH REGIONAL PLATFORM (2001) AND THE OUTCOMES OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2002)

5. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992 defined the goals and means for achieving sustainable development. These were re-emphasized and elaborated at the five-year review of the achievements of that Conference (Earth Summit+5) in the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and at the Summit itself. Earth Summit+5 developed the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session, held in June 1997. The outcomes emphasized the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives, the three pillars of sustainable development.

6. At the regional level, the implementation of Agenda 21 was discussed at the ministerial conferences in 1995 and 2000 and the progress made in the promotion of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific was assessed. At the fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in Kitakyushu, Japan, in 2000, the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005, with eight programme areas, including cross-sectoral areas and a set of implementation tools, was adopted. Another major outcome of the Conference was the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment, a review of which is presented in a separate document.

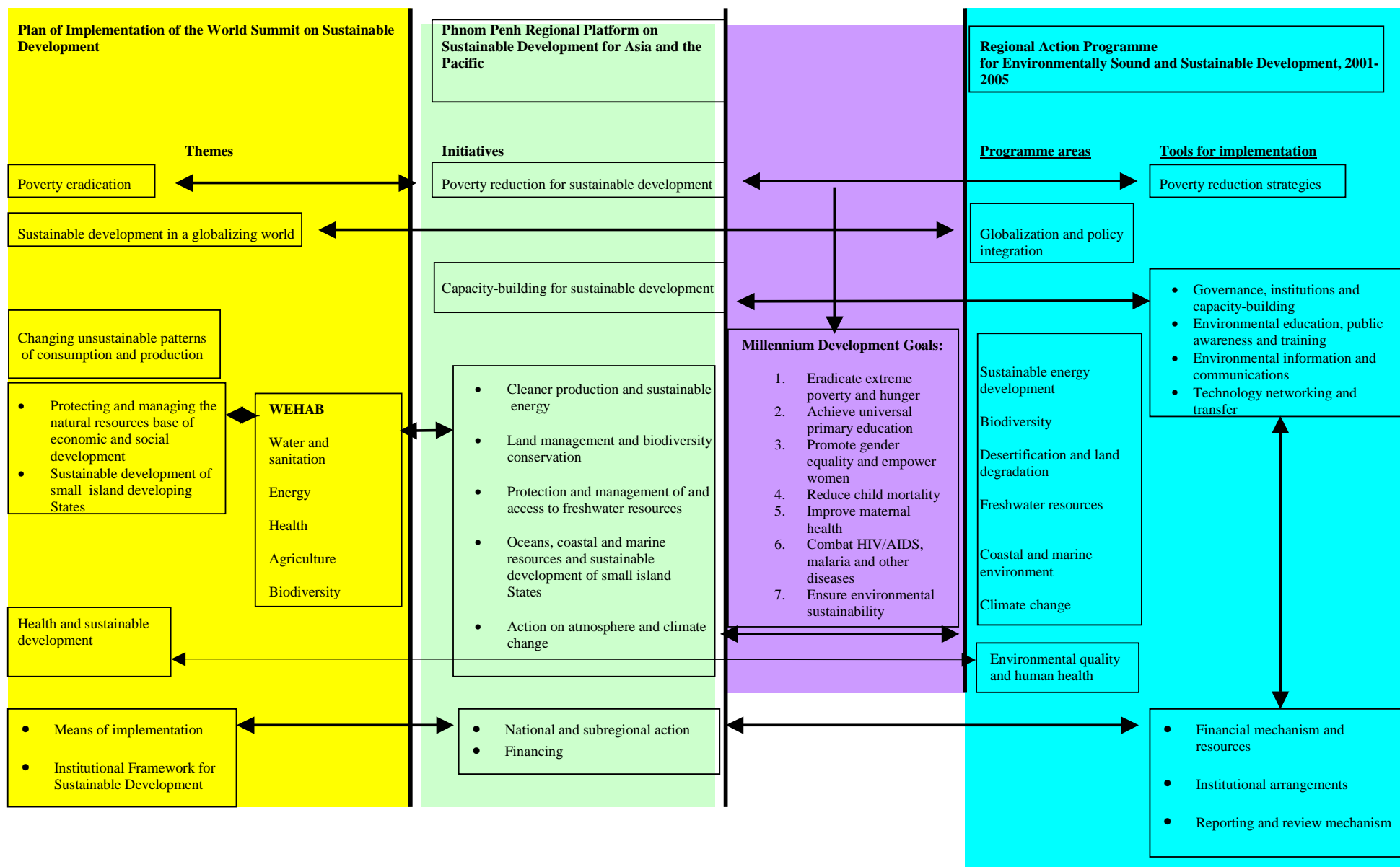
7. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, with 8 goals and 18 targets addressing the issues of global poverty reduction, achieving social objectives and ensuring environmental sustainability, was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2000. With more than 700 million poor people whose income is less than a dollar a day, the Asian and Pacific region is the prime focus in the struggle for achieving the goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

8. The World Summit on Sustainable Development sought to overcome the obstacles to achieving sustainable development while reaching a global consensus on the actions for the betterment of the lives of poor people, and to halt and reverse the continuing degradation of the environment and restore its carrying-capacity levels. The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as the major outcomes of the World Summit, called for immediate steps to formulate national strategies for sustainable development. Another major outcome was the promotion of the partnership process to implement the Secretary-General's initiative on water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture, and biodiversity, known as the WEHAB initiative.

9. The Asian and Pacific region made its key input into the World Summit through its Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific, covering key issues and priorities for sustainable development, and including seven priority regional initiatives which were reflected in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

10. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, jointly with the WEHAB initiative, the Phnom Penh Regional Platform, the Regional Action Programme with the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment, and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, provides a comprehensive package of programmes for achieving sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. The package opens up an opportunity for close interlinkages between the regional implementation initiatives or activities and the national reporting process, so that the decisions at each level can be mutually supportive. The figure summarizes the interlinkages between the commitments, priorities and target areas of these programmes and initiatives.

Figure. Outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in relation to the Phnom Penh Regional Platform and the Regional Action Programme of the fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000



11. Based on the above review and analysis, a list of key programme areas for assessment has been drawn up, as shown in the table.

Table. Key programme areas for assessment

- Capacity-building for sustainable development
- Poverty reduction for sustainable development
- Globalization and policy integration
- Cleaner production and sustainable energy
- Land management and biodiversity conservation
- Protection and management of and access to freshwater resources
- Oceans, coastal and marine resources and sustainable development of small island States
- Action on atmosphere and climate change
- Environmental quality and human health: Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment

II. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS MADE IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

A. Capacity-building for sustainable development

12. Almost all the countries in the region have carried out national capacity self-assessment for the implementation of the three international conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as the conventions on persistent organic pollutants, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and supported by UNDP, UNEP or the World Bank.

13. A positive trend observed among countries in the region relates to incorporating capacity-building activities into investment projects in the fields of energy, water, the marine environment and environmental management, especially in urban areas, river basins, efficient utilization of water in agriculture, wetland protection, ecosystem development and protection of lakes, acid rain monitoring, renewable energy, methane gas recovery from the coal bed, combating land degradation to improve the living conditions in small towns, and rural energy development community empowerment and institutional and policy development at the subnational level, and solid waste disposal and air quality improvement.

14. ESCAP and FAO have assisted the four South-East Asian countries in the formulation of water vision to action. Various capacity-building projects and programmes have been developed and

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are being implemented in the Mekong river basin, in the Ton le Sap basin, in the Pasig River basin etc. Some countries, such as Thailand, have carried out institutional reforms to strengthen environmental management.

15. The international efforts through global, regional and subregional programmes have focused on assisting the countries to build their national capacities. UNDP's Capacity 21 and Capacity 2015 programmes can be mentioned as examples. The subregional arrangements for strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable development, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Forum Secretariat, South Asia Cooperative Environmental Programme (SACEP), South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in Central Asia, and the Northeast Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation, provide forums for the exchange of experiences and undertake cooperative initiatives and actions.

16. Capacity-building activities in South Asia related mainly to urban environmental improvement (India and Pakistan), ecotourism (Nepal) and water (Afghanistan and Bangladesh), and to environmental management in almost all the countries. In Central Asia, the main focus for capacity-building was on water resources management and environmental management through subregional projects and programmes. The Pacific island countries are addressing the capacity-building issues through subregional projects with the assistance of UNEP, ESCAP, SPREP and ADB.

17. Capacity-building activities to strengthen national capacity in strategic planning and management to ensure that environmental issues are addressed in the development and implementation of major sectoral policies, such as energy and water, have been undertaken by ESCAP since 2001. Countries in the region have been assisted with guidelines and through a series of training workshops and demonstration projects. ESCAP implemented a major project to enhance the capacity of Governments to integrate sustainability issues, in particular environmental issues, into vital sectors such as energy and water. An integrated regional workshop on strategic planning and management, covering energy, water and the environment, was held in November 2004 to share the experience gained in those sectors through a series of national-level activities.

B. Poverty reduction for sustainable development

18. The experiences in fighting poverty in Asia and the Pacific are as varied as the region itself. East Asia has reduced its poverty count significantly through fast economic growth, although the absolute number is still high. The South Asian poverty situation has been improving, albeit at a slow pace. Central Asia is still coping with the transition process to a market economy. The Pacific countries are yet to find a way to come out of the poverty cycle. The alleviation of income poverty with the provision of essential services is the basic policy objective in the region in order to meet the goals and targets of the Millennium Summit by 2015. Some of the countries have already achieved the Millennium Development Goal targets and many others are still striving to do so.

19. Countries have developed either dedicated national poverty reduction strategies or built them into their perspective plans. Regional assessment of the progress in achieving the Goals is being carried out by ESCAP jointly with UNDP. The plans and programmes of the countries and the activities targeted on poverty reduction relate to the conservation and management of natural resources, rural development, slum improvement, providing means of livelihood through environmental resources and promoting stakeholders' involvement in the protection of the environment.

20. The round-table discussion held during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission in September 2003 and the Shanghai Conference on Scaling Up Poverty Reduction held in May 2004 revealed the new policy initiatives and interventions that had been put in place by several countries of the region to promote human development and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

21. Poverty-related activities at the country level are numerous; most are carried out by Governments and others by civil society organizations through their own resources, supported by various international organizations, with projects on livelihood improvement, income generation through resource management and rural development with a wide coverage.

22. ESCAP has taken the lead in following up the World Summit on Sustainable Development to implement the "Pro-Poor Public Private Partnerships" or 5Ps project, initiated in January 2003 as a pilot project in a few countries. The project focuses on the following key sectors related to sustainable development: water, energy, health (HIV/AIDS), and biodiversity conservation. It aims to provide affordable basic services to the poor through public-private partnerships in the project's target countries. Specifically, the project seeks (a) to make available "tested models" in public-private partnership, appropriate for subsequent replication in the Asian and Pacific region for the provision of basic services to the poor, and (b) to develop or strengthen the capacity of national facilities to promote and disseminate models of pro-poor partnerships in public service delivery.

C. Globalization and policy integration

23. Globalization is a fast-moving process driven mainly by market expansion. Globalization has become a reality and consequently managing the process in such a way that the countries of the region are able to promote economic growth, alleviate poverty and protect their natural resources and the environment poses a challenge. The developing countries are facing the challenge of developing their institutional capacity to be able to participate actively in local, national-, regional- and global-level negotiations to seize the opportunities offered by globalization while minimizing its negative impacts.

24. The major regional activities were held in preparation for global events such as the WTO ministerial conferences held in Doha and Cancún and their follow-up activities. A major project was undertaken by ESCAP on strengthening the capacities of developing countries to manage globalization through effective integration into the multilateral trading system, which included a

number of regional subregional and national training workshops, advisory missions and high-level policy dialogue seminars in the areas of trade, investment and macroeconomic policy. Activities to facilitate the accession of ESCAP member States to WTO and preparation for the Cancún conference were also undertaken. In recognition of the linkages between trade and the environment, a project was developed whose purpose was to assist developing countries in improving the market access of goods and services which are subject to environmental standards and in making imports more environmentally sustainable.

25. The emerging issues of globalization were discussed in the Committee on Managing Globalization, and its various subcommittees, in November 2003 and at the annual sessions of the Commission in 2003 and 2004, in order to exchange experiences and discuss the policies of the countries as well as to provide comments on the global developments.

26. In 1998, ESCAP initiated and conducted a region-wide project on the integration of environmental considerations into economic policy-making processes. The project covered 26 countries and case studies; 6 subregional synthesis papers, for East and South-East Asia, the Pacific and South Asia, were prepared and presented for discussion and exchange of ideas during the subregional and regional meetings. During the first phase of the project, an institutional component was introduced, focusing on country case studies at the national and subnational levels, and at the sectoral level in selected countries. The second component of the project developed modalities for environmental assessment, which provided the basis for the case country. Throughout the duration of the project, various training materials and guidelines were published, including the findings from the country studies, and an interactive virtual conference in CD-ROM format was produced. The findings and outcomes of the project formed the basis for further development of sustainable development policies in the Asian and Pacific region. During the follow-up phase of the project, a series of national and subregional workshops on the integration of environmental considerations into economic policy-making were organized through the region, with specific emphasis on the use of various measures, economic incentives and market-based instruments.

D. Cleaner production and sustainable energy

27. The World Summit on Sustainable Development called for promoting the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production. It also recalled the decisions on energy issues made by the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in 2001. Since the Asian and Pacific region was predominantly rural, energy supply in the rural areas was vital for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Rural electrification was recognized as a means of enhancing the livelihoods and economic activities of the region.

28. The Committee on Managing Globalization, at its first session, held in November 2003, requested Governments to adopt policies on sustainable green procurement; promote various environment management tools, including regulatory and market-based instruments; encourage recycling and waste minimization; and develop national labelling schemes for selected products to promote sustainable consumption and production. It further identified the roles of industry and civil society groups in promoting sustainable consumption and production.

Cleaner production

29. Technological development has been accorded priority in some countries as a tool for environmental improvement and sustainable development to minimize or reverse environmental degradation. In addition to traditional measures to reduce industrial pollution, a new dimension of policy is being introduced in some countries of the region to promote cleaner production aimed at reducing pollution and environmental impact through source reduction.¹

30. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development is active in cleaner production and promoting sustainability-related best practices to business leaders. The Netherlands supports projects in the region, including those through the Mongolian Business Council for Sustainable Development on cleaner production, waste-water treatment, energy efficiency investments and development of cleaner production centres for project development, implementation and fund-raising capacity. With funding from the Netherlands, UNEP is also trying to meet the needs of developing countries through capacity development using the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. The UNIDO-supported region-wide cleaner production programme and network aim at building national capacities, enhancing investment and fostering dialogue between industry and government, and have successfully promoted the establishment of national cleaner production centres in various countries in the Asian and Pacific region.

Sustainable energy

31. With the growing demand for energy and the number of people without access to basic energy supply in the region, the challenge in the coming years will be to meet and manage these demands with minimum adverse impact on the environment. This complex challenge will require an integrated and holistic approach to policy formulation, diversifying energy options with low or no carbon energy sources, strengthening transboundary energy cooperation, adapting best practices and promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency and clean energy technologies.

32. The High-level Regional Meeting on Energy for Sustainable Development, held in November 2000, organized to provide a regional input into the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, adopted a regional sustainable energy development action programme with the vision

¹ In the Republic of Korea, the Eco-2 project and in China a demonstration project on pulp and paper manufacturing were carried out.

of enhancing the capacity of concerned stakeholders in developing sustainable energy development strategies under which energy services could be expanded and improved with minimum effect on environmental quality. This action programme was subsequently taken into account at the ninth session of the Commission and in the Phnom Penh Regional Platform. Elements of the action programme remain relevant, as reflected in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and are being implemented by the countries and by ESCAP and other organizations.

33. In the light of the foregoing, the activities on energy in the region cover six major areas: increased access to reliable and affordable energy services, strengthening planning capacity, promotion of supply- and demand-side management, promotion of increased use of renewable and clean energy, promotion of renewable energy in the Pacific and mobilizing financial resources.

34. Many countries of the region are investing in projects on renewable energy, energy supply in rural areas, and energy efficiency and conservation with support from the World Bank, ADB and GEF. These projects also aim at the commercialization of renewable energy, removing barriers to efficient lighting products and systems, commercial utilization of coal bed methane capture, industrial energy efficiency and energy efficiency in heat and hot water supply. The World Bank is also promoting the Asia Alternative Energy Programme to mainstream renewable energy and energy efficiency into its portfolio of energy projects.

35. UNDP, through its Subregional Resource Facility for Asia and the Pacific, funded with support from GEF, has conducted case studies in a number of countries on issues such as the use of biomass as an energy source in rural areas with biomass gasification for power generation, a decentralized community-based rural energy development programme, the feasibility of micro-hydropower applications for rural electrification, funding opportunities for the development of renewable energy sources, and demonstration projects on solar energy.

36. With the support of ESCAP, national-level activities on strategic planning and management of the energy sector were carried out in selected countries of the Asian and Pacific region in 2003 and 2004. In December 2003, a regional workshop on strategic planning and management focused on the sharing of experiences on strategic planning and management of the energy sector. The energy component of the ESCAP flagship project, which provided basic services, focused on mobilizing private sector involvement in a partnership venture with the village community in the development of a mini-hydropower plant in Indonesia. For cross-border energy cooperation, ESCAP, with the Republic of Korea, has been supporting an initiative to promote energy cooperation in North-East Asia through an intensive intergovernmental dialogue to establish a collaborative framework with a view to improving energy security in North-East Asia through energy cooperation in a sustainable manner.

37. In line with the recommendations of the Workshop on Sustainable Energy Policies and Strategies for Pacific Island Developing States, organized jointly by the Forum Secretariat and ESCAP in February 2002, interventions and programmes for those States have been designed to address policy and capacity-building issues, in particular those related to the increased utilization of renewable energy. ESCAP, in close collaboration with members of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific, is developing a capacity-building programme on renewable energy and has been providing a number of advisory services and training courses related to renewable and policy development for the Pacific subregion since 2001.

E. Land management and biodiversity conservation

38. Land degradation and biodiversity loss are considerable and caused either by the natural physico-geographic characteristics of the region or intense anthropogenic activities. The region's forest cover has also been declining at the rate of 1 million hectares per year during the past decade with more areas degraded owing to poor management and logging practices, shifting cultivation, wildfires and pests and diseases.² Desertification and land degradation are affecting the livelihoods of over 800 million people in the region. The expansion of arid areas in parts of South Asia and Central and North-East Asia is often due to wind erosion, climatic conditions and overgrazing of pastures. Water scarcity and seasonal aridity constitute a widespread problem in the region. The region attaches high priority to afforestation, improving forest management and the empowerment of local communities.

39. At the subregional level, an action programme was developed for the five Central Asian countries through a series of consultation meetings. The South-East Asian Subregional Action Programme for Combating Desertification and Eradicating Poverty in Dry, Drought-prone and Food Unsecured Areas was finalized at the workshop held in Bali, Indonesia, in July 2003. The workshop to develop the subregional action programme for South Asia was held in Sri Lanka in July 2004. Following an ESCAP initiative on sustainable land management, a subregional project on mitigation and prevention of dust and sandstorms in North-East Asia was launched in 2003 with funding support from the GEF, implemented through ADB in close partnership with the Governments of China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea.

40. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification organized the Second Asian Ministerial Conference on UNCCD Implementation and in Preparation for the Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Abu Dhabi in June 2003. The Conference adopted the priority activities within the framework of the Regional Action Programme, and the Abu Dhabi Initiative on implementation of the Programme to catalyse activities for desertification control and drought impact mitigation through regional cooperation, capacity-building, and initiating pilot and demonstration projects.

² *State of Forestry in Asia and the Pacific - 2003* (FAO, 2003).

41. The success of forest plantation in Asia and the Pacific is mixed. The twentieth session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission was held in Fiji in April 2004 to consider possible action to deal with critical issues facing the forestry sector in the region, focusing on regional initiatives and cooperation among the countries. Weak institutional capacities, insufficient budgetary resources and inadequate political will were cited as constraints on the alleviation of degradation of forests in the region. However, some countries reported that deforestation had been curbed or even reversed, even though the loss of natural forests was continuing. To better understand this issue, the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission sponsored a regional study on the effectiveness and impacts of incentives for plantation development. As part of the study, a workshop in China reviewed the impact of incentives for forest plantation development in East and South-East Asia. FAO organized a workshop in Delhi in March 2004, to review the status of national forest programmes in South Asia, strengthen linkages to sustainable development strategies and increase collaboration among the countries of South Asia.

Biodiversity

42. The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004, reviewed the activities of the countries through the second national reports submitted under the Convention's thematic programmes of work, including forest, agricultural, marine and coastal biodiversity, inland waters biodiversity, and dry and sub-humid land biodiversity, conservation of ecosystems, wetlands and protection of habitats of endemic plants and endangered species. The cross-cutting issues that were analysed included access and benefit-sharing, the ecosystem approach, protected areas, public education and awareness, general measures for conservation and sustainable use, impact assessment and indicators, incentive measures, access to and transfer of technology, and traditional knowledge, innovations and practices.

43. Many countries have adopted forestry and biodiversity conservation laws, designated more protected areas, and increased their efforts towards forest conservation and reforestation. With support from the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP, many countries in the region have developed national biodiversity conservation strategies, and demonstration projects on protected areas and forestry management, involving local communities, to meet the increasing demand for forest products.

44. The South Pacific biodiversity conservation project was implemented by SPREP over a five-year period commencing in 1996 as a community-managed conservation initiative. The programme helped to establish conservation areas in 14 countries and community managed conservation initiatives complementing the South Pacific Biodiversity Action Programme, and to promote other measures, such as traditional forms of conservation, including fishing and hunting restrictions. The programme also helped in establishing a trust fund to ensure the sustainability of the overall action strategy for nature conservation. The national strategies for biodiversity are included in the national environmental management strategies and were developed and implemented by international agencies and Pacific NGOs.

**F. Ocean, coastal and marine environment and the sustainable development
of small island States**

45. The problems of the seas are intricately linked to human activities in the realm of social and economic development. Comparatively, open oceans suffer less stress than the near-shore water bodies, such as estuaries, semi-enclosed seas and bays. The underlying reasons are that 40 per cent of the world's cities with a population between 1 million and 10 million are located in coastal areas. In the case of larger cities, such as those with a population of more than 10 million, over two thirds are in the coastal areas. The Asian coastal cities with a population between 1 million and 10 million account for over 50 per cent of the world total. The corresponding figure for cities with more than 10 million people is over 80 per cent. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the pollution (municipal, industrial, transport, agricultural, tourism, and other sources) comes from land-based sources.

46. Some of the unprecedented devastating impact of the tsunami on 26 December 2004 may be blamed on the deterioration and degradation of mangroves and land in coastal areas of the affected countries.

47. The activities at the national, subregional and regional levels include (a) an ecosystem-based approach following the concept of a large marine ecosystem and the Convention on Biological Diversity, (b) methods for protecting the marine environment from land-based activities, and (c) an integrated approach to coastal management. A number of regional seas programmes have been developed as cooperative ventures of the littoral countries in association with other international organizations such as UNEP, ESCAP, UNDP and subregional intergovernmental bodies. Among these are the East Asian seas, which include the South China Sea, the Gulf of Thailand and the adjoining areas, the North-west Pacific seas, the Caspian Sea and the South Pacific subregion seas.

48. The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities is a clearing-house mechanism whose secretariat is hosted by UNEP, currently implementing the work programme which was approved in November 2001. Its principal task is to develop a referral system to promote cooperation and mobilize scientific knowledge, expertise and experiences, and to provide practical guidance for developing national action programmes.

49. Starting in the mid-1980s and in the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, integrated coastal environment management plans were developed in a few countries focusing on the national- and local-level issues, on the initiatives of ESCAP, the University of Rhode Island and the ASEAN and SPREP secretariats. ADB, in partnership with the World Conservation Union, has undertaken a project on the development of coastal and marine resources management and poverty reduction in South Asia using site-specific experiences, such as Korangi Creek in Pakistan. Given the importance of proactive government coordination and action, SACEP is playing a key role in this project.

G. Freshwater resources

50. Despite some notable achievements, the Asian and Pacific region as a whole has not yet made significant progress towards achieving the water-related, internationally agreed goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. There are four major objectives with regard to water, emanating from the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Plan, as follows: (a) to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation; (b) to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005; (c) to develop programmes for mitigating the effects of extreme water-related events; and (d) to establish and/or develop national monitoring networks and water-related databases. The challenge, therefore, faced by the countries of the region is to find ways to maximize the social and economic benefits from available water resources, while ensuring that basic human needs, especially those of the poor, are met and the environment is protected.

51. The progress achieved in the thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlements in the region was assessed at the regional implementation meeting for Asia and the Pacific, held in October 2003, organized by ESCAP in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Headquarters and UNDP. The meeting identified regional diversities and discussed specific issues and challenges faced by each subregion in Asia and the Pacific. The regional assessment was presented at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in April 2004, for incorporation into the Chair's summary.

52. The most serious immediate challenge is the fact that hundreds of millions of people in the ESCAP region lack access to safe drinking water and are not provided with adequate sanitation. However, resource mobilization for financing water and sanitation projects will continue to be a demanding task in the coming decade. The pursuit of achieving the Millennium Development Goal for water supply and sanitation has given impetus to the countries launching water supply and sanitation development projects with their own resources and in cooperation with ADB, the World Bank, UNDP and other financial institutions and international agencies, as well as with bilateral donors and in partnerships with civil society organizations.

53. Many countries of the region have undertaken a large number of projects on water supply and sanitation for cities and towns and also rural areas. To support the efforts of the countries concerned, ESCAP has been advocating pro-poor policies in the water-related service sector and national capacity-building activities to promote the application of relevant policies. It has also implemented a pilot project to provide sustainable water supplies to a low-income tenement garden in Sri Lanka, to demonstrate a replicable model and viability of the first pro-poor, public-private partnership for water supply in the country, and the vital role of local communities and NGOs to work in partnership with the public sector in providing access to basic services to the poor.

54. ESCAP has continued its coordinating role in addressing water quality issues, particularly in collaborating with UNICEF and WHO in addressing the regional threat of arsenic contamination to providing safe water supplies. In June 2004, ESCAP, the International Water Management Institute and the International Atomic Energy Agency conducted a training workshop on the development of effective management tools and decision-making tools for the mitigation of contamination of soils, crops and water in the Greater Mekong Subregion. In close collaboration with UNICEF, WHO and the United Nations University, ESCAP organized a regional meeting on water quality and arsenic mitigation in China in November 2004. A major output of the meeting was the Taiyuan Declaration on water quality and arsenic, and a strategic action plan.

55. ESCAP has published *Guidelines on Strategic Planning and Management of Water Resources* and *Guide to Preparing Urban Water-use Efficiency Plans*³ and carried out capacity-building activities to advocate the concepts of strategic planning and conservation within the framework of integrated water resources management. Seventeen countries have prepared case studies highlighting important features of the process of integrated water resources management or have initiated pilot projects on developing plans and policies in that regard. In a number of countries, elements related to water-use efficiency have been incorporated into broader water resources management plans.

56. At the subregional level, ESCAP, jointly with the Economic Commission for Europe, has assisted the countries concerned in Central Asia in formulating the Cooperation Strategy to Promote the Rational and Efficient Use of Water and Energy Resources in Central Asia. The Strategy, worked out under the umbrella of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, outlines the broad prospects for collective action to secure a sustainable future for water and energy development and provides major principles for cooperation frameworks in the subregion. In cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, assistance has also been provided to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in making their agreement of January 2000 on the Chu and Talas rivers operational by establishing a joint commission on the operation of selected water facilities on those rivers.

57. In the area of disaster preparedness and mitigation, ESCAP has been working closely with several international organizations and member countries of ESCAP to prepare for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Under the framework of the Typhoon Committee, which was established by its 14 Members under the auspices of ESCAP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a series of regional activities has been implemented aiming at promoting typhoon-related disaster prevention and preparedness.

58. Many of the planned activities were implemented jointly by all Members of the Typhoon Committee to prepare for their participation in the World Conference, among which the most

³ United Nations publications, Sales Nos. E.05.II.F.3 and E.03.II.F.35 respectively.

advanced activities are those related to the preparation of flood hazard maps and the establishment of flash flood and sediment disaster forecasting and warning systems. An international symposium-cum-regional workshop on “Living with risk: dealing with typhoon-related disasters as part of integrated water resources management” was held in Seoul in September 2004 to help establish a clearer strategy for sustaining those national and regional efforts.

59. In the common efforts to ensure effective integration of disaster prevention and preparedness measures into socio-economic development policies and strategies, ESCAP, in cooperation with UNDP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), introduced the application of new methodologies on holistic assessment of the socio-economic impacts of disasters in Asia. Following the organization of a regional workshop in May 2004 to introduce the methodology developed by ECLAC, seven countries have agreed to apply the proposed methodology to assess the impacts of hydro-meteorological disasters.

60. With the financial support of the European Commission Humanitarian Office, ESCAP and the Asia Disaster Preparedness Centre completed the implementation of phase 2 of the Partnerships for Disaster Reduction in South-East Asia in 2003-2004. The project aimed at strengthening capacity to prepare and protect at-risk communities from natural disasters through training and information exchange in targeted South-East Asian countries. The outputs of the project included a set of handbooks for field practitioners and the integration of disaster preparedness into the socio-economic development process. These achievements will enable ESCAP and its partners to take active roles in the World Conference, especially in the sessions related to flood hazard mapping, community-based disaster reduction management and regional cooperation in disaster preparedness and mitigation in Asia. In the light of the recent devastating events, ESCAP programmes will also focus on tsunami mitigation and establishing a regional task force on post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction.

H. Action on atmosphere and climate change

61. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process has assisted the countries through various grants from GEF for preparing their national communications. So far, 37 countries from the region have submitted national communications, following specific reporting requirements and a format developed by the Convention Secretariat. The national communications provide an initial assessment of countries’ vulnerability to climate change and climate variability, and adaptation options.

62. To comply with the requirements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, countries throughout the region have undertaken various national, subregional and regional activities. These activities relate mainly to the introduction of clean fuel technologies, fuel efficiency in the road transport sector, the development of clean and renewable energy sources, including the development and application of market tools to encourage the use of solar and wind power and clean

coal technology, and implementation of energy efficiency measures for heat and hot water supply. Some of the countries are conducting assessment studies on climate change vulnerability and developing adaptation programmes.

63. The Pacific island countries received specific assistance through the GEF-funded project on the Pacific Island Climate Change Action Programme, which has a particular focus on strengthening national capacity, monitoring and research and raising awareness. Further, Pacific island countries have prepared national environment management strategies, which have included components related to climate change, the development of legal instruments, and adaptation strategies linked to integrated coastal zone management plans.

64. There is growing interest in the region in developing capacity to make practical use of the Clean Development Mechanism for funding projects on clean technologies and energy efficiency. ADB has established a Clean Development Mechanism Facility with the objective of assisting the developing member countries of ADB in Clean Development Mechanism project identification, implementation and monitoring and verification of quality emission reduction credits. The World Bank is exploring the opportunity of financing national activities in carbon finance through the Prototype Carbon Fund, the Community Development Carbon Fund, the Bio Carbon Fund and other funds promoted by the Netherlands and Italy.

65. ESCAP has undertaken or been involved in a number of projects for capacity-building for implementation of the Framework Convention, such as the implementation of the capacity-building project on the Clean Development Mechanism in promoting sustainable energy development partnership, under the Kyoto Protocol, and participating in and supporting Clean Development Mechanism projects initiated by other agencies. ESCAP has been supporting an initiative taken by the Government of Japan to organize Asian and Pacific seminars on climate change annually since 1991, mainly to provide a platform for countries to discuss their regional issues. Following the recommendation of the seminars, the Government of Japan established the Asia-Pacific Network on Climate Change (AP-net) for information sharing and for online capacity-building.

66. ADB, with GEF financing, undertook a 12-country study to assist countries in preparing their greenhouse gas inventory and to identify mitigation projects. The project ran from 1995 to 1999. A follow-up programme was initiated in 2001 on the promotion of renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate change with funding from the Netherlands, Canada and Denmark. The main objectives of the programme are to assist in policies and strategies for technology development for greenhouse gas mitigation and abatement of climate change, to develop adaptation measures in the Pacific, to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency and to support activities in rural areas.

**I. Environmental quality and human health: Kitakyushu Initiative
for a Clean Environment**

67. The Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment was launched during the fourth Ministerial Conference in 2000 with the objective of sharing the experience of the city of Kitakyushu and achieving tangible outcomes for the improvement of environmental quality and health issues in the region. The Initiative started by establishing a network of 20 cities from the region with officials and stakeholders responsible for environmental quality and human health, and today includes 60 cities in 18 countries. Case studies and pilot projects in particular cities on air pollution control, solid waste and waste-water management were carried out and are to be replicated in other cities with similar problems. A separate paper on the Kitakyushu Initiative is presented under item 5 (c) of the agenda for discussion at the Ministerial Conference.

III. LESSONS LEARNED

68. The World Summit on Sustainable Development recognized the unique characteristics of the Asian and Pacific region with over half of the world's population, the largest number of the world's poor and severe socio-economic and environmental problems. The region is endowed not only with a diversity of cultures, natural wealth and economic development, but also with diverse sustainable development goals, requiring the use of different means and tools for achieving those goals at the regional, subregional and national levels. Therefore, the sustainable development of the globe is critically dependent upon achieving sustainable development in the Asian and Pacific region.

69. Countries of the region are genuinely striving towards achieving sustainable development goals and are all committed towards eradicating poverty and improving the social well-being of its growing population, by creating the necessary institutional, policy and economic tools and mechanisms. However, the challenges are too great to overcome within a short period of time and with the meagre resources they possess.

70. Economic growth is essential for sustainable development. In the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, most countries of the region are committed to following the path of fast economic growth, since it has been demonstrated that economic growth can help to reduce poverty. However, achievement could falter owing to the fragility of the economic growth, natural disasters and the unsustainable policies, which impoverish the environment.

71. Sustainable development stipulates the protection of natural resources and the integrity of the ecosystems. It requires that consumption and production patterns be within the regeneration capacity of the environment and economic growth can continue without destroying its ecologic base and polluting the environment beyond its carrying capacity.

72. The assessment review has clearly pointed out that sustainable development cannot be achieved within a society which is not conscious about it. The involvement of all stakeholders as active players in changing existing consumption patterns needs to be further enhanced. There is also a need for further decentralization of environmental governance, which, wherever it has been applied, has enabled and empowered local communities to develop and implement successful environmentally sustainable practices.

73. Regional and subregional cooperation has proved effective for undertaking collaborative efforts, dealing with transboundary environmental problems, exchange of best practices and relevant information, capacity-building through learning from each other's experience and articulating sustainable development issues through discussion in a common platform. However, the national-level development of synergies and enhancement of inter-agency collaboration is still lagging throughout the region. Strengthening the role of the national sustainable development commissions could prove quite instrumental in furthering the sustainable development agenda, including the development and implementation of integrated policies and measures addressing environmental sustainability issues.

IV. CONCLUSIONS: THE WAY FORWARD

74. Despite repeated commitments made since the Earth Summit in 1992 and many efforts taken by the countries, the international community, including the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations, donor countries and agencies, the objectives of sustainable development are far from being achieved. Taking note of that situation, the World Summit on Sustainable Development emphasized once more the need to accelerate the efforts through an agreed implementation strategy, that is, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

75. In the diverse Asian and Pacific region there is need to apply a holistic approach towards achieving sustainable development through environmentally sustainable economic growth ("Green Growth"). Such an approach will create an opportunity for integrating economic, social and environmental protection by, among other things, promoting the hidden potential of the environment as a driver of economic growth through the creation of business opportunities.

76. The Asian and Pacific region faces the challenge of shifting from the conventional "Grow First, Clean up Later" paradigm and embracing a strategy for pursuing "Green Growth", which will provide for the following:

- (a) Improved environmental sustainability by reducing environmental pressure from the economic growth through the promotion of, among other things, the circular economy and recycling society, internalizing environmental costs and promoting sustainable consumption and production;

(b) Improved environmental performance of member States and stakeholders, including strengthened interministerial coordination and reconciliation of the existing diverse goals of the members of society;

(c) Improved synergy between the environment and economy and the promotion of a win-win solution to enhance the hidden potential of the environment as the driver of economic growth.

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