



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Committee on Social Development

First session
24-26 September 2008
Bangkok

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the session

The programme for the opening ceremony will be announced in due course.

2. Election of officers

A chairperson, two vice-chairpersons and a rapporteur will be elected.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Committee, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

4. Framework for action: towards an inclusive society

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CSD/1, entitled “Framework for action: towards an inclusive society”. Despite high economic growth and progress in poverty reduction, the Asian and Pacific region is facing growing insecurities arising from persistent poverty, increased disparity and inequality, ecological damage and increasing risks and vulnerabilities. The document will provide a framework for addressing these insecurities through enhanced interconnectedness between the social, economic and environmental pillars of development. It will focus on building a stronger social foundation to meet the challenges arising from shocks and from threats to development. The document will promote the concept of inclusive societies to ensure that the outcomes of policies and interventions are equitable and that benefits do not exclude the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged. It will cover approaches to building inclusive societies, with an emphasis on social policy and social protection measures to: (a) address risks and vulnerabilities; and (b) reduce disparity and exclusion. The document will form the conceptual introduction to agenda items 5 and 6.

5. Managing emerging and persistent risks to ensure inclusive social development

(a) Managing risks posed by food insecurity through inclusive social policy and social protection interventions

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CSD/2, entitled “Managing risks posed by food insecurity through inclusive social policy and social protection interventions”. The document will examine the social implications of the emerging challenges and threats to development currently facing the Asian and Pacific region, with particular reference to food insecurity. Linkages will be made to the related issues of natural disasters, energy security and climate change. The document will also focus on the role social policy and social protection can play in preventing and mitigating the effects of the aforementioned risks and in contributing to inclusive socio-economic development. The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance concerning its work in this area.

(b) Seizing opportunities and tackling challenges arising from population dynamics to build an inclusive society

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CSD/3, entitled “Seizing opportunities and tackling challenges arising from population dynamics to build an inclusive society”, which will highlight the opportunities and risks for development faced by societies in the wake of demographic transformations. The ongoing process of demographic transition in the region is bringing about fundamental changes in the population age structure, most notably increases in the numbers and proportions of young people and the elderly. Development disparities between countries in the Asian and Pacific region, coupled with divergent demographic dynamics, have led to increased and more complex international migration. With more countries involved in migration streams, international migration has become a structural reality in the region. Building an inclusive society requires the clear recognition of the links between such demographic factors and development and their integration into planning processes.

The document will also introduce activities undertaken by the ESCAP secretariat in the context of the implementation of regionally and internationally agreed commitments, including the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Plan of Action on Population and Poverty adopted at the Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. In response to ESCAP resolution 63/7 of 23 May 2007 on international migration and development for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, the Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting on International Migration and Development has been scheduled to be held in Bangkok on 22 and 23 September 2008, immediately prior to the first session of the Committee on Social Development. The outcomes of the High-level Meeting will be presented under this agenda item. The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat

with guidance on its future strategic direction in this area, including possible outputs that could be reflected in the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011.

(c) Building an inclusive society by addressing health-related risks and improving health financing

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CSD/4, entitled “Building an inclusive society by addressing health-related risks and improving health financing”. The document will pay special attention to health-related risks in the Asian and Pacific region, including HIV and AIDS and avian influenza. In addressing these risks, the document will also emphasize the need for the comprehensive strengthening of health systems and the improvement of health financing mechanisms to ensure equitable access to health care and to protect individuals from the effects of catastrophic health-care expenditures.

The document will also discuss activities undertaken by the secretariat with reference to the aforementioned issues, ESCAP resolution 63/8 of 23 May 2007 on sustainable financing towards achieving universal health-care coverage in Asia and the Pacific and the secretariat’s potential work in the light of its niche role in promoting multisectoral approaches to addressing health issues. The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on its future strategic direction in this area, including possible outputs that could be reflected in the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011.

6. Reducing disparities and exclusion

(a) Reducing disparities: a gender perspective

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CSD/5, entitled “Reducing disparities: a gender perspective”. The document will review the types of disparities faced by women and girls throughout their lives in areas such as access to health services, nutrition, education, employment, productive resources, income generation and ownership of assets. The document will emphasize that all forms of violence against women contribute to continuing exclusion and gender-based disadvantages and that appropriate social inclusion policies in all of these areas are not only crucial from a gender perspective but will contribute greatly to building inclusive socio-economic development. In this connection, various social policy options that may help countries to reduce gender-based disparities and promote gender equality will be considered and recommended. The document will also introduce activities and programmes recently carried out by ESCAP, including with regard to the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on its future strategic direction in this area, including possible outputs that could be reflected in the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011.

(b) Building an inclusive society by addressing the exclusion of persons with disabilities

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CSD/6, entitled “Building an inclusive society by addressing the exclusion of persons with disabilities”. The document will address key issues faced by persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific and the region’s responses to those challenges through the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The document will emphasize that the active participation of persons with disabilities should be an integral part of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. Considering the fact that disability issues are attracting increasing attention within the United Nations and development organizations, the document will also identify the niche disability-related areas in which ESCAP would have a comparative advantage. The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on its future strategic direction in this area, including possible outputs that could be reflected in the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011.

In addition to the above documents, the Committee will have before it a document entitled “Strategic framework and proposed outputs for the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011” (E/ESCAP/CSD/7), which is designed to facilitate deliberation on future strategic direction.

7. Other matters

The Committee may raise any other matters not covered under the items mentioned above.

8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its first session

The Committee shall adopt the report on its first session for submission to the Commission at its sixty-fifth session.

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