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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Committee on Emerging Social Issues

Second session  
1-3 November 2005  
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. Panel discussion: “Enhancing regional cooperation to address emerging social challenges”**

The Committee is invited to exchange views on emerging challenges to social development in the region and suggest measures to enhance regional cooperation to address these challenges. Eminent speakers will be invited to share their perspectives and expert views on these issues. Focus will be laid on three key areas: socially vulnerable groups, gender and development, and health and development.

**5. Socially vulnerable groups: selected issues**

**(a) Report of the Subcommittee on Socially Vulnerable Groups on its first session, 13-15 September 2004**

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/1 entitled “Report of the Subcommittee on Socially Vulnerable Groups on its first session, 13-15 September 2004, Bangkok”. The Subcommittee on Socially Vulnerable Groups reviewed the situation and made recommendations regarding the regional implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social

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Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, social development in the Pacific, the emerging demographic dynamics of international migration and population ageing, the empowerment of persons with disabilities, and the regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its regional and global outcomes.

The Committee will be requested to endorse the recommendations and conclusions of the Subcommittee on Socially Vulnerable Groups, as contained in the report on its first session. The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance and make further recommendations for action in connection with the work of the Subcommittee and related matters.

**(b) Tackling emerging issues in international migration**

International migration is a consequence of globalization that is driven by: disparities in the levels of economic and social development; demographic changes; and the emergence of governmental and private agencies dedicated to the deployment of migrant workers. The nexus between migration and development is complex. Significant migration takes place through irregular channels, with adverse consequences for undocumented or irregular migrants, who are vulnerable and lack access to basic social services. Taking stock of the social dimensions of migration requires that the social impact of migration on health, family cohesion, child-rearing and education be factored while particular attention must be paid to social groups with special protection needs, such as women and children who are vulnerable to trafficking.

Document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/2 addresses these issues of international migration and its social implications in the broader development context. Drawing on studies on international migration undertaken in the Asian and Pacific region, the document contains policy recommendations for review and consideration by the Committee with a view to maximizing the benefits of migration while minimizing its negative impacts.

**(c) Enhancing the social integration of vulnerable groups with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/3 entitled “Enhancing the social integration of vulnerable groups: challenges and prospects”, which will provide an updated analysis of emerging issues concerning socially vulnerable groups within the context of efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The document reviews the situation in the region, including demographic issues, highlights key challenges facing the region and discusses the way forward in enhancing the social integration of vulnerable groups. Noting that equality of opportunity is crucial to social integration and building “a society for all”, the document points out that fostering social integration requires more effective social policies and legal instruments to protect vulnerable groups from discrimination and to ensure their rights and opportunities in society, particularly in such areas as education, employment, social protection and social services. The

document analyses specific issues and challenges faced by vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, older persons, youth and families. The document also suggests measures and policy options to promote the social inclusion and development of these groups.

Countries may wish to share their experiences in strengthening the social integration and development of vulnerable groups. The Committee is invited to give substantive guidance to the secretariat on the regional follow up to the relevant commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and the commitments related to the 10-year review of the Summit, the Shanghai Implementation Strategy for the Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific, 1999, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, the Proclamation on the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and other relevant international and regional mandates, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Committee is requested to consider and endorse the proposed strategies to be undertaken by the secretariat towards the mid-point review of the Decade, entitled the “Biwako plus 5: forward-looking strategies towards 2012”.

The Committee may wish to recommend to the Commission any future work in the area of strengthening the social integration of vulnerable groups.

**(d) Examining progress towards gender equality and social development: new trends and challenges**

Document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/4 addresses the recognition by the Commission at its sixty-first session of persistent and emerging challenges in achieving gender equality and the advancement of women in the region and its request that the secretariat assist the Governments of member States in their endeavours towards the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and other internationally agreed development goals.

The Commission, in its resolution 61/10 of 18 May 2005, called upon all members and associate members to contribute to collaborative approaches and strategies aimed at protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women migrant workers, and forge international understanding and cooperation to combat trafficking in women as well as to continue to implement economic policies that are designed and monitored with the full and equal protection of women within the overall framework of achieving sustainable development.

The document examines from a gender perspective the interrelationships between poverty, development, trade and migration. Both the causes and consequences of the escalating mobility of women within and between countries are analysed, with particular attention to rapidly changing or altogether new challenges and opportunities for realizing women’s human rights, including the effects

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of increased involuntary and voluntary work-related mobility among women and girls on care systems, migration laws and multilateral and bilateral trade rules and agreements. The strategic importance of regional and subregional trade agreements that allow an expansion of the space for regular female migration is discussed.

## **6. Health and development: selected issues**

### **(a) Report of the Subcommittee on Health and Development on its first session, 1-3 December 2004**

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/5, containing the report of the Subcommittee on Health and Development on its first session, held in Bangkok from 1 to 3 December 2004. The Subcommittee adopted the Regional Framework for Strategic Action: Promoting Health and Sustainable Development. Solutions to many health problems lie outside the purview of the health sector. Pivotal to addressing the root causes of ill health is a shift from a biomedical to an inclusive, societal and developmental approach to public health. The Regional Framework aims to establish a common ground for increased regional and subregional cooperation, and for developing viable policies and programmes for national implementation. The Commission at its sixty-first session, in May 2005, broadly endorsed the Regional Framework.

The Subcommittee requested the secretariat to assist ESCAP members and associate members in implementing the Regional Framework, with particular reference to capacity-building for public health, health for poor and marginalized groups and the gender dimensions of health. The Committee is invited to consider follow-up action that the secretariat could pursue as part of its role in advocacy and the promotion of regional cooperation concerning health and development issues.

### **(b) Strengthening public health capacity-building with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to health**

Document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/6 discusses public health capacity-building interventions designed to increase health equity, inter alia, by strengthening primary health care.

In its resolution 61/12 of 18 May 2005 on a “Regional call for action to enhance capacity-building in public health”, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to, inter alia, promote coordinated regional action in strengthening capacity-building in public health, with particular reference to expanding human resource development, as well as supporting primary health care and intersectoral actions to address critical health and development issues in accordance with the Regional Framework for Strategic Action: Promoting Health and Sustainable Development.

Strengthening primary health care is critical to achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals. Inter- and intra-country disparities undermine regional progress in that regard. Where progress has been made, it has been among easily reachable populations, particularly in urban areas, which are usually better served by facilities that have a positive impact on public health.

It is proposed that countries of the ESCAP region address the disparities that result in inequitable access to health services. The Committee is invited to consider the recommendations on regional cooperation in strengthening public health capacity-building with a view to achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals, inter alia, through a renewed focus on primary health care.

**(c) Addressing emerging health risks: strengthening health promotion**

Document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/7 examines the emerging health risks posed by the silent pandemic of non-communicable diseases and injuries in the ESCAP region. It analyses their association with the development determinants of health.

Demographic changes, globalization and urbanization have altered the way people live, work and move. This has in turn transformed the profile of the burden of disease in the ESCAP region. Communicable diseases have traditionally been the main cause of mortality in the ESCAP region. Today, for all ESCAP subregions and for the vast majority of countries in the region, this is no longer the case. Instead, nearly 70 per cent of all deaths in the region are associated with non-communicable diseases and injuries.

Of serious concern is the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases and injuries among poor and marginalized groups. Among the underlying risk factors for this phenomenon are exposure to high-risk working and living conditions, substance abuse and unhealthy diets among poorer groups. Non-communicable diseases and injuries are significant causes of the further impoverishment of individuals and households. Furthermore, the increasing medical costs of treating non-communicable diseases are usurping scarce financial and human resources from efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Indirect costs derived from lower work productivity also undermine national economic development.

Drawing on good practices, the document contains recommendations for the consideration of the Committee with a view to addressing the above-mentioned health risks. Central to the recommendations is the promotion of physical and mental well-being for healthier and longer lives.

**7. Programme planning and evaluation**

**(a) Review of the strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009 in respect of subprogramme 3, social development, including emerging social issues**

Document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/8 details the ESCAP preparations to implement the strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009 in respect of the subprogramme on social development, including emerging social issues. The strategic framework provides the biennial programme plan, which comprises the objectives, expected accomplishments and strategies of the subprogramme for the period 2008-2009. To enable the Commission to ensure that the biennial programme plan is fully aligned with the priorities of its membership, an intergovernmental review process involving the

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thematic Committees, ACPR and the Commission should provide a more responsive approach to the emerging needs of the ESCAP membership. The Committee is therefore invited to review the document and to make suggestions for the further development of the biennial programme plan, especially in terms of the objectives, expected accomplishments and strategies of the subprogramme.

**(b) Monitoring and evaluation**

**(i) ESCAP guidelines for programme monitoring, review and evaluation**

In response to the importance attached by members and associate members to the need for ESCAP to focus more attention on the key roles of monitoring and evaluation in support of results-based management, document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/9 contains an overview of the monitoring, review and evaluation system of ESCAP. This system is in line with global intergovernmental concerns for increased emphasis on evaluation of the overall results achieved by the organization, together with an assessment of the performance of individual subprogrammes. Monitoring and evaluation will enable members and associate members to follow up on the implementation of their commitments, to assess the secretariat's performance in implementing the strategic framework and to provide the secretariat with feedback and direction. The Committee is invited to review the document and provide comments for the further development of the system.

**(ii) Review of a selected flagship project**

Document E/ESCAP/CESI(2)/10 contains a report on the evaluation of one secretariat flagship project, namely "Regional monitoring and implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action of the Decade of Disabled Persons 2003-2012". The report assesses the progress of the secretariat in attaining the objectives of the project, analyses the lessons learned from project implementation and considers the impact of project activities on the target beneficiaries. The Committee is invited to review the implementation of the project and provide further guidance as an input to future project planning.

**8. Other matters**

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

**9. Adoption of the report**

The Committee will adopt the report on its second session for submission to the Commission at its sixty-second session.

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