



**Executive Board of the  
United Nations Development  
Programme, the United Nations  
Population Fund and the  
United Nations Office for  
Project Services**

Distr.: General  
24 June 2025

Original: English

**Second regular session 2025**  
25 to 28 August 2025, New York  
Item 16 of the provisional agenda  
**Regional programme documents, 2026-2029**

**Regional programme document for Asia and the Pacific (2026-2029)**

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## I. Programme rationale

### A. Regional context

1. Asia and the Pacific remains a global engine of growth and human development. Sustaining this trajectory, however, will require macroeconomic and political stability, the acceleration of digital and green investments and fostering public trust, while navigating demographic change, a triple planetary crisis and geopolitical uncertainty.

2. Countries in the region have achieved historic development gains – albeit with diverse trajectories shaped by the region’s geographic, demographic, political and economic diversity. Between 1981 and 2019, 1.5 billion people were lifted out of extreme income poverty,<sup>1</sup> and the region recorded the highest human development index (HDI) increase of any region from 1990 to 2023.<sup>2</sup> Yet, interregional and in-country disparities persist. An estimated 495 million people still live in multidimensional poverty.<sup>3</sup> Wealth remains heavily concentrated, with the top 10 per cent accounting for half of the region’s income.<sup>4</sup> Youth unemployment surged to 13.9 per cent in 2023<sup>5</sup> in a region where youth make up some 19 per cent of the population, and systemic barriers continue to exclude women, youth, persons with disabilities, informal workers and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) from economic security, increasing their exposure to shocks. Nearly 45 per cent of the population are without social protection,<sup>6</sup> and over 1.6 billion lack access to health coverage.<sup>7</sup> The widening gap between the HDI and the planetary pressure-adjusted HDI underscores an unsustainable trajectory,<sup>8</sup> with 63 per cent of the region’s gross domestic product (GDP) at risk due to nature loss.<sup>9</sup>

3. Effective governance has been pivotal in advancing human development in the region, with strong institutions, digital public infrastructure, public-private collaboration and an engaged civil society contributing to progress. However, challenges such as corruption,<sup>10</sup> weak oversight and shrinking civic space<sup>11</sup> continue to undermine institutional effectiveness. When combined with weak rule of law, barriers to justice and civic participation, and inequitable service-delivery, these issues erode legitimacy, undermine public trust and heighten the risk of instability and crisis.

4. Gender equality has been central to human development in Asia and the Pacific. While effective policies have enabled progress and women increasingly stand at the forefront of change, progress is stalling, and no country has achieved full parity. Nearly 770 million women are out of the labour force,<sup>12</sup> and women continue to be underrepresented in the region’s governments.<sup>13</sup> In the context of democratic backsliding, gender equality gains are particularly at risk. Women’s participation in rapidly evolving economic and public spheres remains constrained by persistent

<sup>1</sup> UNDP. *2024 Regional Human Development Report: Making Our Future – New Directions for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific*. New York: UNDP, 2024. p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> UNDP. *Human Development Report 2025: A Matter of Choice – People and Possibilities in the Age of AI*. New York: UNDP, 2025. p. 286.

<sup>3</sup> UNDP. *2024 Regional Human Development Report: Making Our Future – New Directions for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific*. New York: UNDP, 2024. p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO). *Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2024: Promoting Decent Work and Social Justice to Manage Ageing Societies*. Geneva: ILO, 2024. p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). *Social Outlook for Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: UNESCAP, 2024. p. ix.

<sup>7</sup> ILO. *Extending Social Health Protection: Accelerating Progress Towards Universal Health Coverage in Asia and the Pacific*. Geneva: ILO, 2021. p. xiv.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP. *Update of the 2024 Asia-Pacific Regional Human Development Report, UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific*. 13 March 2024. p. 12-13.

<sup>9</sup> Temasek, World Economic Forum, and AlphaBeta. *New Nature Economy: Asia’s Next Wave*. Singapore: Ecosperity, 2020). p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2024*. Transparency International, Berlin, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Freedom House. *Freedom in the World 2025: The Uphill Battle to Safeguard Rights*. Washington, D.C.: Freedom House, 2025. p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> UNESCAP. *Female Labour Force Participation and the Care Economy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: UNESCAP, 2022. p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> UN-Women. *Snapshot of Women’s Leadership in Asia and the Pacific. UN-Women Asia and the Pacific*. Accessed 21 March 2025.

challenges, including disproportionate unpaid care work, unequal access to decent work, skills (particularly in digital and artificial intelligence) and finance, as well as discriminatory laws and gender-based violence.<sup>14</sup> Gender equality is both a human rights imperative and a socioeconomic necessity – achieving greater gender equality has the potential to boost the region’s GDP by up to 4.7 per cent by 2030.<sup>15</sup>

5. Digital and artificial intelligence transformation is reshaping human development in Asia and the Pacific, with countries demonstrating its catalytic potential to broaden access to financial and essential services, employment opportunities and civic engagement, especially for the region’s youth. However, without deliberate efforts to close digital divides, including between and within countries, and between men and women,<sup>16</sup> digital transformation risks deepening, rather than reducing, inequality. The evolving digital landscape also introduces risks like algorithmic bias, privacy and rights concerns and online harms, highlighting the need for strong safeguards, regulatory frameworks and corporate accountability.

6. The triple planetary crisis – climate risks, biodiversity loss and pollution – represents a systemic threat to human development across Asia and the Pacific. In 2023, 146 natural hazards affected 47 million people,<sup>17</sup> while rising sea levels and extreme temperatures respectively threaten the region’s coastal mega-cities and vital sectors such as agriculture and fisheries.<sup>18</sup> Deforestation and land degradation impact 28 per cent of the region’s land area,<sup>19</sup> undermining food security and heightening vulnerability to climate shocks. Environmental risks exacerbate economic fragility, especially for the poor, women and marginalized communities. Despite growing commitments, fossil fuel dependence and weak enforcement and underinvestment in adaptation<sup>20</sup> and biodiversity impede progress. Momentum for change is nevertheless growing, driven by rising interest in financing alternatives – such as carbon markets and biodiversity credits – and by communities and youth demanding accountability and a role in shaping solutions.

7. Unlocking sustainable finance is crucial for placing Asia and the Pacific on a transformative and resilient development pathway and for accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, persistent fiscal pressures – high interest rates, currency volatility and rising debt – are limiting countries’ ability to invest in the structural drivers of human development. In countries where debt servicing consumes growing portions of national budgets,<sup>21</sup> governments face difficult trade-offs that weaken essential service-delivery and social protection, deepening inequality and eroding resilience to future shocks. Geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts in, for example, international trade, investment and development cooperation, are creating new uncertainties for the countries in the region and for regional cooperation.

8. Crises are increasingly systemic, recurrent and interconnected, driven by natural hazards, economic shocks and unresolved social and political grievances. In some contexts, these shocks converge with weak institutions and eroding public trust, escalating risks of instability and undermining peace. Climate change is a key crisis accelerator for the region, fuelling disasters, displacement, unsafe migration and food insecurity. In 2022, the region accounted for 70 per cent

<sup>14</sup> ILO. *Gender Equality in the Labour Market in Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States: Progress and Challenges*. Bangkok: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Beirut: ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, 2016. p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> ILO. *Gender Equality in the Labour Market in Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States: Progress and Challenges*. Bangkok: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Beirut: ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, 2016. p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> UNDP. *2024 Regional Human Development Report: Making Our Future – New Directions for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific*. New York: UNDP, 2024. p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> UNESCAP, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and UNDP. *People and Planet: Addressing the Interlinked Challenges of Climate Change, Poverty and Hunger in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations, 2024. p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 20 and 21.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> Gloria Li. *Asia Has ‘Enormous’ Shortfall of Funds to Adapt to Climate Change, Warns ADB*. Financial Times. 21 October 2024. Accessed March 25, 2025.

<sup>21</sup> UNDP. *2024 Regional Human Development Report: Making Our Future – New Directions for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific*. New York: UNDP, 2024. p. 69.

of global climate-induced displacements.<sup>22</sup> Crises disrupt local economies and job markets, disproportionately affecting MSMEs, which often operate with limited buffers and are vital sources of livelihoods. The cumulative impact of successive crises risks triggering development reversals and a crisis-trap, where each shock compounds the next, and recovery becomes slower, costlier and more uneven. Women, while disproportionately affected, are also central to resilience and recovery.

## B. Results and lessons learned

9. The regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2026-2029, is informed by: (a) findings and recommendations from the independent evaluation of the previous regional programme; (b) findings from regional project and outcome evaluations; (c) priorities identified in UNDP country programme documents of the region; (d) programmatic directions of regional partners; (e) consultations with stakeholders and partners in the Asia-Pacific region in preparation of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2026-2029; (f) programmatic gains made in previous regional programming cycles; and (g) internal reflection and sensemaking exercises.

10. The independent evaluation of the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2022-2025, confirmed the significant value-add of UNDP to advancing regional development priorities and cooperation. Despite declining core funding, the programme mobilized 141 per cent of its resource target. Programme effectiveness is credited to UNDP convening power, thought leadership, ability to scale solutions through partnerships and strategic investments and capacity to address sensitive and transboundary issues better served by regional entry-points. Flagship portfolios such as on climate finance, youth empowerment, and business and human rights have matured, unlocking new programming opportunities and reinforcing the collaborative advantage of UNDP. An emerging portfolio of transboundary programming on natural resource management is demonstrating complementarity between regional and country programming, while regional work on judicial integrity, and the prevention of violent extremism have delivered notable results. Systemic and inter-linked approaches around circular economy, waste management, plastics and pollution, and the climate-health nexus show potential for scaling.

11. The evaluation recommends to build on these strengths and investments, while: (a) designing the new programme as a strategic and integrated instrument focused on fewer, higher impact results; (b) adopting portfolio approaches to unlock synergies internally and with partners; (c) strategically leveraging partnerships with regional organizations and multilateral development banks and diversifying partnerships with the private sector and foundations; (d) further strengthening synergies between regional and country-level programming; (e) fully leveraging the role of governance as an accelerator; (f) increasing the ambition in advancing women's empowerment and leaving no one behind; (g) centring just energy transition through more strategic approaches; (h) strengthening work on social protection; (i) positioning UNDP to support digital and artificial intelligence transformation; and (j) positioning the regional programme as a platform for innovation and cross-thematic work.

12. Extensive consultations informing the UNDP Strategic Plan reinforce UNDP comparative advantages both globally and in the region. Combining global expertise with deep country-level presence and leveraging long-standing, trusted partnerships with diverse stakeholders, UNDP is uniquely positioned to serve as a credible convenor and interlocutor, facilitating dialogue and cooperation across government, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system. Its mandate and ability to craft governance-focused development solutions enable UNDP to navigate complex development landscapes. Tested UNDP approaches to managing risk, fostering inclusion and promoting accountable, rights-based institutions further strengthen its role as a strategic partner for anticipatory, resilient and sustainable development. Stakeholders from Asia and the

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 58.

Pacific emphasized governance as a key value-add of UNDP. Regional respondents identified support needs that closely align with outlined global priorities, including economic development and diversification, climate change mitigation, digital transformation, governance and rule of law, and social protection. The analysis of UNDP country office priorities aligns with these stakeholder priorities and needs, increasingly highlighting: (a) youth as a key demographic for economic transformation, social stability and innovation; (b) artificial intelligence governance, cybersecurity, fintech integration and cross-border data regulation, in addition to basic digital inclusion; (c) gender-responsive finance and women's economic participation; and (d) resilience-building.

## II. Programme priorities and partnerships

13. In line with UNDP regionality principles, the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2026-2029, will focus on developing and deploying systems level and integrated solutions to development issues of regional importance that are best addressed at subregional and regional levels and that complement work at country and global levels. The support provided through the regional programme will be future-oriented: (a) recognizing the shifting development landscape shaped by existential risks such as climate change, demographic shifts, technological disruption, growing governance risks and the evolving geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape; and (b) responding to deepening structural transformations, including aging populations, rapid urbanization and accelerating migration. Partnerships, innovation, digitalization and scaled-up development finance lie at the heart of efforts to address these challenges.

14. In its programmatic scope, focus, delivery approaches and results reporting, the regional programme aligns with and adapts the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, and its integrated results and resources framework, to the demands and challenges of programme countries in Asia and the Pacific. The UNDP Strategic Plan recognizes advancing human development while reducing the planetary pressures associated with socioeconomic progress as humanity's next frontier and sets forth a framework of four strategic objectives: (1) prosperity for all; (2) a healthy planet; (3) effective governance; and (4) crisis resilience. These four strategic objectives are powered by three accelerators of progress: (a) digital and artificial intelligence transformation; (b) gender equality; and (c) sustainable finance. These objectives and accelerators are deeply intertwined, find strong reflection in the diverse development agendas in Asia and the Pacific and invariably also dominate the UNDP country programmes in the region.

15. With the overall goals of catalysing regional cooperation and systemic transformations that enable countries in Asia and the Pacific to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs and to achieve high human development in balance with planetary boundaries, the regional programme adopts the strategic objectives and accelerators outlined in the UNDP Strategic Plan and focuses on levers that have the potential to catalyse change across outcomes, capitalizing on the UNDP mandate to work across sectors. This includes a focus on governance – not only as a strategic objective but as an engine of sustainable development – that is integral to addressing institutional inefficiencies, exclusion and impunity, which often erode public trust and contribute to the onset of crises.

16. The theory of change underpinning the regional programme aims to facilitate strategic shifts away from dominant but often unsustainable development models toward approaches better suited to the complexity of future challenges and opportunities, while acknowledging that one size does not fit all. Aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan and reflected as regional priorities, the four strategic shifts embedded in the regional programme are directed towards:

- (a) More inclusive economic systems that address structural inequalities, expand decent work and social protection and enable marginalized groups to thrive in green and digital transitions (“prosperity for all”);

- (b) More integrated development pathways that align environmental stewardship with economic and social goals and enable countries to manage climate and nature transitions (“healthy planet”);
- (c) More people-centred, accountable and digitally enabled governance systems that can deliver equitable services, anticipate complex risks and enable inclusive participation (“effective governance”); and
- (d) A more anticipatory, gender-responsive and integrated crisis response that prevents risk escalation, accelerates recovery and embeds resilience into long-term development (“crisis resilience”).

17. The regional programme integrates the three Strategic Plan accelerators across its four regional priorities to reinforce systemic change and enable scaled impact, while also recognizing them as important priorities in their own right:

- (a) Digital and artificial intelligence transformation will be harnessed to expand economic opportunity; improve public service delivery; strengthen civic participation, oversight and enhance environmental monitoring; and reach underserved populations, including in crisis contexts. The regional programme will work to bridge access and capability gaps, strengthen governance and safeguards and promote digital by design approaches;
- (b) Gender equality will be advanced through efforts that address structural barriers to women’s access to decent work, skills development, finance, productive assets and leadership; promote inclusive decision-making; and improve disaggregated data for responsive policymaking;
- (c) Sustainable finance will be promoted by supporting the development of integrated financing systems; aligning financing instruments with social protection, climate risk and crisis response priorities; strengthening national capacity to unlock blended finance and domestic resources; and promoting financial inclusion for marginalized groups.

18. The regional programme will deliver on its priorities through: (a) targeted and integrated co-funded initiatives at regional, multi-country and subregional levels that are co-designed with regional partners and programme countries; (b) integrated programmes and policy advisory services; and (c) regional and multi-country platforms and impartial spaces for partners and stakeholders to address regional, subregional and transboundary development issues, as well as common and emerging regional challenges, that benefit from multi-country perspectives and the sharing of experiences and solutions. It promotes innovation to help overcome institutional, financial and informational barriers that may be too high for an individual country to surmount. It facilitates knowledge generation and sharing of experience and expertise, including through South-South and triangular cooperation for collective benefit and action.

19. Aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan, the regional programme seeks to support a systemic, adaptive and integrated perspective to development, applying new policy and implementation approaches and tools to respond dynamically to complex challenges and to support financially sustainable and locally driven transitions that engrain public-private action with rights-based governance. Across all its priorities, the regional programme places strong emphasis on leaving no one behind by being responsive to the differentiated needs of population segments and sectors. It seeks to reduce pre-existing structural inequalities of different groups, reduce their exposure and vulnerability to shocks, equip them to thrive in green and digital transitions, and enhance their potential to contribute more impactfully. Through the regional programme, UNDP will work with governments, regional institutions and development partners to identify untapped resources and mobilize investments that match the complexity of long-term challenges beyond traditional silos and sector-based approaches.

## Regional priority 1: Prosperity for all

20. The regional programme will leverage UNDP trusted partnerships with governments, convening power and the momentum around transitions to advance prosperity for all. It will be anchored in strategies that promote data-driven policymaking, foster cross-country learning and cultivate innovation ecosystems, complementing country-level efforts and accelerating systemic change. The regional programme will be responsive to women, youth, migrants and persons with disabilities as well as to MSMEs and informal sectors. Change pathways include: (a) strengthening integrated planning and financing; (b) expanding economic opportunities; and (c) strengthening social protection and health systems.

21. To strengthen integrated planning and financing, the regional programme will:

- (a) Advance future-ready development planning and fiscal systems, through adaptive policymaking, real-time policy monitoring, leveraging foresight, big data and artificial intelligence tools;
- (b) Promote nature-based and circular economy models, green value chains and local economic solutions, particularly in climate-affected and high-mobility contexts;
- (c) Facilitate access to development financing through blended finance, green bonds and climate risk insurance.

22. To expand economic opportunities, the regional programme will:

- (a) Position countries to respond to transitions through future-ready employment, entrepreneurship and workforce development strategies;
- (b) Support informed decision-making by bridging evidence gaps on labour market data and diagnostics;
- (c) Enhance opportunities for MSMEs and vulnerable groups through capacity-development, innovation and access to finance, productive assets and markets;
- (d) Promote strategies to enhance investments in care systems and informal economies.

23. To strengthen social protection and health systems, the regional programme will:

- (a) Advance social protection systems by enhancing their coverage, shock-responsiveness and improving accountability, regional alignment and cross-border portability;
- (b) Position social protection and health systems as core instruments of resilience by embedding them in crisis preparedness, response planning and sustainable financing frameworks;
- (c) Improve targeting, monitoring and accountability of social protection and health systems, including through adaptable digital solutions.

24. The regional programme will collaborate with international financial institutions and the private sector to derisk investments, while engagements with governments will support integrated planning and the co-design of services and employment pathways. Partnerships with regional bodies will strengthen policy alignment and cooperation, while public-private collaboration will bolster skills, entrepreneurship ecosystems and accountable business models. Academic partnerships will provide evidence-based diagnostics, and collaboration with United Nations system partners – including with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) – will ensure coordinated support.

## Regional priority 2: Healthy planet

25. The regional programme will leverage global frameworks, regional cooperation platforms and trusted UNDP partnerships with governments to advance a healthy planet. It will be anchored in strategies that promote regionally coordinated and transboundary approaches, tailor solutions to diverse ecological and socioeconomic contexts, strengthen the health-environment nexus and other integrated policy strategies and ensure equitable benefit and burden-sharing in transitions. The regional programme will be responsive to women, youth, informal workers and indigenous communities. Change pathways include: (a) supporting just and inclusive transitions; (b) addressing climate and nature risks and cascading impacts on health; and (c) accelerating financing for the green and blue economies.

26. To support just and inclusive transitions, the regional programme will:

- (a) Support countries to decouple growth from carbon emissions by scaling renewable energy, nature-based infrastructure and affordable energy;
- (b) Promote green transitions by upskilling and protecting workforces with employment and skills development strategies, alongside adaptive social protection and health systems;
- (c) Strengthen women's leadership, entrepreneurship and policy influence in green transitions through platforms, networks, capacity development and access to finance.

27. To address climate and nature risks and cascading health impacts, the regional programme will:

- (a) Support governments in operationalizing policy commitments through actionable nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and land degradation neutrality targets;
- (b) Advance action on transboundary issues – watershed management, air and plastic pollution, disaster risk reduction and ocean governance – through regional cooperation and coordination.
- (c) Support countries in improving environmental resource management and address challenges of geographic dispersion by leveraging digital and artificial intelligence tools;
- (d) Promote One Health approaches by strengthening integrated planning, financing and coordination and by embedding climate resilience into health infrastructure.

28. To accelerate financing for the green and blue economies, the regional programme will:

- (a) Support the development of sustainable climate finance ecosystems by mobilizing public, private and philanthropic capital, leveraging instruments such as green bonds, debt-for-nature swaps and climate taxation;
- (b) Promote equitable benefit-sharing, transparency and responsible investment through regional cooperation on carbon pricing and nature markets and the development of safeguards;
- (c) Support countries in catalysing green industrialization in sectors such as green steel, electric transport and green manufacturing and in enhancing investments in green digital infrastructure.

29. The regional programme will engage with line ministries, civil society and communities to ensure national ownership and drive whole-of-society approaches. Collaborations with United Nations system partners – such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – will ensure coordinated support. Engagement with regional platforms, such as the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, will drive policy alignment, while continuing partnerships with vertical funds – such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Global Fund to Fight

AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – alongside private investors will help mobilize financing for transformative outcomes. Partnerships with regional organizations – such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) – will strengthen transboundary governance of shared ecosystems.

### **Regional priority 3: Effective governance**

30. The regional programme will leverage UNDP global thought leadership, convening power, trusted relationships and the strong regional demand for governance solutions to advance effective governance. It will be anchored in strategies that improve regional coherence, promote digital-by-design solutions and respond to the governance demands of digital and green transitions as well as crises. The regional programme will be responsive to women, youth, persons with disabilities and migrant and crisis-affected populations. Change pathways include: (a) strengthening inclusive and accountable governance and service delivery; and (b) promoting human rights and meaningful civic participation.

31. To strengthen inclusive and accountable governance, the regional programme will:

- (a) Promote institutional accountability by strengthening oversight institutions – anti-corruption bodies, national human rights institutions, parliaments and judiciaries;
- (b) Enhance the delivery of security and justice by strengthening institutional capabilities, expanding justice services and addressing legal and structural barriers to accessing justice;
- (c) Accelerate digitally enabled governance by testing, adapting and scaling digital public infrastructure, promoting equitable access and strengthening regulatory frameworks and safeguards.

32. To promote human rights and meaningful civic participation, the regional programme will:

- (a) Promote participatory governance models through mechanisms for public participation in policymaking, civic engagement and social accountability, leveraging digital tools;
- (b) Strengthen responsible business practices and private sector accountability by enhancing state and non-state redress mechanisms, engaging youth and media;
- (c) Promote inclusive public discourse and accountability by strengthening access to information, participation and dialogue between civil society, communities and governments, including during transitions and crises, leveraging digital tools;
- (d) Advance the representation and leadership of women and youth in governance by strengthening their capacities, expanding networks for collective action and enhancing access to decision-making spaces.

33. The regional programme will engage with government institutions at all levels to promote the integration of effective governance approaches, while engagements with regional organizations – such as ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum – will drive cross-country collaboration and policy alignment. Partnerships with civil society, academia and the private sector will facilitate comparative learning and broaden the reach of governance strategies, while collaboration with United Nations system partners – including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Global Compact and international financial institutions – will facilitate joint programming and leverage collective expertise.

#### **Regional priority 4: Crisis resilience**

34. The regional programme will leverage the UNDP operational presence, trusted access to governments and community networks, and its long-standing disaster risk management support to advance crisis resilience. It will be anchored in strategies that position country offices to “stay and deliver,” improve anticipation and response capabilities and promote regional cooperation on transboundary risks. Programming will be responsive to women, youth, persons with disabilities, displaced and migrant populations and MSMEs. Change pathways include: (a) strengthening anticipation, prevention and peacebuilding approaches to address multidimensional risks and risk-proofing development; and (b) advancing resilient recovery.

35. To strengthen anticipation, prevention and risk-proof development, the regional programme will:

- (a) Enhance regional and national risk anticipation capabilities by integrating early warning and risk analytics into planning and financing frameworks and strengthening regional data systems on transboundary risks;
- (b) Improve regional and national disaster risk management frameworks and systems, while leveraging them as platforms for integrated crisis management;
- (c) Promote crisis resilience by fostering inclusive dialogue, participatory problem-solving and trust-building, and strengthening the leadership of women and youth in peacebuilding;
- (d) Expand countries’ access to flexible and layered crisis financing by integrating climate, health, loss and damage instruments and private capital into cohesive financing strategies, linking them with social protection services and recovery assistance.

36. To advance resilient recovery, the regional programme will:

- (a) Expand recovery assistance for crisis-affected populations by promoting MSME resilience, inclusive access to livelihoods and finance and digitally enabled service delivery;
- (b) Promote gender-responsive recovery by supporting expanded care systems, equitable access to services, gender-responsive livelihoods and women’s leadership in recovery efforts;
- (c) Support institutions to address root causes of fragility by integrating climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, disaster resilience and conflict sensitivity into recovery strategies.

37. The regional programme will catalyse partnerships with international financial institutions (including the Asian Development Bank) and United Nations system partners (including the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and UN-Women) to scale solutions for risk-informed development and resilient recovery. Engagements with regional organizations will leverage their convening power and trusted government networks to drive coherent responses to transboundary risks. Partnerships with the private sector will focus on mobilizing financing for recovery, while engagements with local civil society and communities will ensure ownership and sustainability.

### **III. Programme and risk management**

38. This regional programme document outlines UNDP contributions to regional results and serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme. Accountabilities of managers at the country, regional and headquarters levels with respect to regional programmes are prescribed in the organization’s programme and operations policies and procedures and the internal control framework.

39. The Regional Director of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific exercises direct oversight and holds accountability for the implementation of the regional programme. Under delegated authority, the Deputy Regional Director will exercise oversight, including through direct supervision of the Regional Programme and Global Policy Network Manager. Quality assurance for the regional programme will be the responsibility of the Regional Director or his/her delegate with support from the Strategic Planning and Oversight Team. Working with the Programme Management Support Unit, Global Policy Network teams and project managers, the Regional Programme and Global Policy Network Manager will be responsible for ensuring effective day-to-day management, monitoring and quality assurance of the regional programme and projects.

40. The Bangkok Regional Hub advisory board – chaired by the UNDP Deputy Regional Director and comprising resident representatives, deputy resident representatives and senior officers in the region – will guide the regional programme’s implementation, validating its relevance vis-à-vis country and global priorities and supporting effective risk management. It will review programmatic priorities and propose adjustments as needed in line with adaptive management principles.

41. The regional programme will be primarily directly executed, utilizing agency and non-governmental organization implementation where appropriate. It will capitalize on continuing UNDP efforts to optimize operational effectiveness and efficiency, including on corporate investments in digital and artificial intelligence tools and platforms, and use of cross-sectoral and portfolio-based approaches, to maximize impact, reduce duplication and align investments for greater value.

42. A systems lens provides the “how” of the approach, aligning capabilities, institutions, resources and incentives, and involving continuous adaptation to feedback to shape resilient, inclusive and future-oriented development pathways. The interconnected nature of the SDGs and the unprecedented challenges facing human development demand continuous learning and adaptation. To remain effective, the programme will integrate complexity-aware and adaptive approaches into planning, evaluation and decision-making. Aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan, the regional programme will utilize portfolio and systems-based approaches to drive impact at the system transformation level, while utilizing the full range of implementation modalities available to respond rapidly to emerging needs, to innovate and iterate and to partner effectively. Programming will be co-designed with country offices and partners to ensure relevance to different contexts, alignment with country priorities, and opportunities for synergies. All regional programming will be quality assured and appraised following corporate guidelines.

43. Successful implementation of the regional programme will depend on managing several interconnected risks. UNDP programming is geared towards identifying, mitigating and managing risks that threaten to curtail the regional programme’s ability to act, adapt and innovate, including uncertainty regarding the availability of core and non-core resources, lack of co-investments at country level, and insufficient regional capacities to meet the demand for support. To manage risks effectively, the regional programme will adopt flexible, agile and adaptive approaches that anticipate and plan for funding volatility, invest in regional capacities and knowledge systems to ensure sustainability, and leverage partnerships to navigate uncertainty and maintain operational space. To improve financial resilience, the regional programme will diversify its funding base, forging strategic partnerships with international financial institutions, philanthropies and the private sector, while developing and strengthening partnerships with longstanding and new bilateral donor partners.

44. The regional programme will identify risks, in compliance with UNDP well-established enterprise risk management framework, to manage and mitigate risks and ensure course correction as required. All regional programming will follow UNDP policies on due diligence, social and environmental safeguards and anti-money laundering. It will systematically assess environmental risks – regularly accounting for climate-induced disasters, extreme weather events and pandemics regularly – with appropriate risk treatments. The harmonized approach to cash transfer will be used in coordination with United Nations system partners to manage financial risks. Project-level grievance mechanisms are established in line with the relevant guidance to enhance accountability to beneficiaries and partners. For regional and multi-country programming implemented at the country level, UNDP country offices will play a vital role in ensuring mutual accountability to national and local partners.

45. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2013/9, all direct costs associated with project implementation should be charged to the concerned projects.

#### **IV. Monitoring and evaluation**

46. The regional programme adopts a robust results-based management approach, aligned with UNDP policies and procedures, emphasizing measurable results at both output and outcome levels, and complemented by real-time learning and rapid and regular feedback loops, to enable results-oriented, adaptive and impact-driven programming.

47. To ensure alignment, the regional programme draws many of its indicators from the UNDP Strategic Plan. Informed by the evaluation of the last programme, it places stronger emphasis on improving data collection and analytics, using both traditional and innovative methods, including digital analytics. The regional programme will emphasize gender-sensitive and target group-focused data-collection and analysis, utilizing the UNDP gender marker to monitor programme expenditures and meet commitments to gender equality and attention to specific groups.

48. UNDP will ensure that projects under the regional programme have robust monitoring and evaluation systems, with budget allocations and technical guidance for results monitoring and reporting. Close collaboration with United Nations organizations and regional development partners will help address data gaps, while capacity-development opportunities for both UNDP personnel and partners and data-sharing efforts, will strengthen regional capabilities to analyse, reflect and learn.

49. The regional programme includes a comprehensive evaluation plan, incorporating evaluations at the programme, portfolio and project levels, with cost estimates and funding sources, as well as provisions for annual reviews and updates, to ensure accountability and facilitate continuous learning.

50. The regional programme will draw on lessons from ongoing programmes and partner insights to contribute to regional development analysis, deepening shared understanding of key issues and identifying actionable policy responses. It will contribute to the UNDP multi-year policy research and knowledge management agenda by promoting peer learning and South-South and triangular cooperation and by leveraging monitoring and evaluation findings to support adaptive management and continuous learning.

## Annex. Results and resources framework

Related SDGs: 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 17				
REGIONAL PROGRAMME OUTCOME 1: Inclusive, shock-resilient and sustainable economic systems that expand decent work and livelihoods, strengthen social protection, reduce inequalities and enable women, youth and marginalized groups to thrive.				
RELATED STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME 1: By 2029, prosperity is increased for all, strengthening people's agency, capabilities and dignity to thrive.				
OUTCOME INDICATOR(S)	DATA SOURCE AND FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES	INDICATIVE REGIONAL/GLOBAL PROGRAMME OUTPUTS	MAJOR PARTNERS / PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORKS	INDICATIVE RESOURCES BY OUTCOME (United States dollars)
<p><b>Outcome indicator 1.1.</b> Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training (integrated results and resources framework (IRRF) outcome indicator 1.2).</p> <p><b>Outcome indicator 1.2.</b> Proportion of individuals using the Internet by sex and geographical location (urban/rural) (IRRF outcome indicator 1.7).</p>	<p><i>Source:</i> ILO (SDG 8.10.2) Bangkok Regional Hub to output data annually</p> <p><i>Source:</i> International Telecommunication Union (ITU) DataHub, Bangkok Regional Hub to output data annually</p>	<p><b>Output 1.1.</b> Economic opportunities are expanded through regional support for integrated, future-oriented planning, building country capacities to mobilize domestic and innovative financing for sustainable development and the empowerment of youth and marginalized groups to access productive assets, decent work, skills and markets in emerging growth sectors.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1.1.</i> Number of inclusive employment initiatives implemented through regional support, targeting: (IRRF G.1.1.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Women;</li> <li>(b) Youth;</li> <li>(c) People with disabilities;</li> <li>(d) Migrants.</li> </ul> <p><i>Source:</i> Project monitoring reports and government documents.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1.2.</i> Number of regional partnerships launched to promote equitable access to productive assets and skills in digital or green economies, and micro, small and medium enterprise development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Digital economies;</li> <li>(b) Green economies;</li> <li>(c) Micro, small and medium enterprise development.</li> </ul> <p><i>Source:</i> Project monitoring reports and partnership agreements.</p>	<p>Line ministries at the national level, municipalities and local actors;</p> <p>United Nations organizations, such as ESCAP, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF and ILO;</p> <p>Regional intergovernmental bodies (e.g., ASEAN, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) private sector and other development partners.</p>	<p><b>Regular</b> 3,000,000</p>
		<p><b>Output 1.2.</b> Social protection and health systems are made more resilient and adaptive, through regional support that promotes universal, inclusive, and shock-responsive systems, harnesses digital innovation, and enables cross-border learning for risk-proofing poverty reduction for all, particularly for women, youth, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.2.1.</i> Number of countries supported to integrate climate or crisis risk into social protection and health systems through regional tools, data, or advisory</p>		<p><b>Other:</b> 15,500,000</p>

		<p>support. <i>Data source:</i> Project reports.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.2.2.</i> Number of regional public goods including knowledge products and tools to promote resilient and adaptive social protection and health system. <i>Data source:</i> Knowledge products and project reports.</p>		
		<p><b>Output 1.3.</b> Increased economic opportunities for women through regional support that strengthens gender-responsive fiscal policy reforms, entrepreneurship, job creation, digital skills and investing in care systems.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.3.1.</i> Number of measures implemented with regional support to (IRRF A.1.1.1, adjusted)</p> <p>(a) Eliminate gender-based discrimination and segregation in labour market; (b) Increase women’s access to and use of digital technologies, digital finance and e-commerce.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Government documents, project monitoring reports.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.3.2.</i> Number of economic policies or fiscal reforms conducted to advance women’s economic empowerment with regional support (IRRF A1.1.2) <i>Data source:</i> Government documents, project monitoring reports.</p>		
Related SGDs: 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17				
REGIONAL PROGRAMME OUTCOME 2: Integrated and inclusive pathways to protect nature, reduce emissions and climate risk and align public and private finance to unlock green, blue and nature-positive solutions are adopted across the region – safeguarding planetary health for present and future generations.				
RELATED STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME 4: By 2029, international environmental agreements are mainstreamed into national development frameworks to drive sustainable development.				
Outcome indicator 2.1. International and domestic financial flows to developing countries in the region in support of climate change (IRRF outcome indicator 4.1).	Source: Progress and monitoring reports under the regional programme (to be aligned with IRRF) Bangkok Regional Hub to collect data annually	Output 2.1. Integrated and inclusive development pathways that protect nature, reduce emissions and climate risk, and strengthen countries’ ability to manage environmental transitions are advanced through regional support for embedding global environmental commitments into policies, institutions, and planning systems, addressing climate and health related impacts and enabling just transitions.  Indicator 2.1.1 Number of countries supported to integrate commitments of inter-governmental environmental agreements into national policies, development plans or budgets. (IRRF G.4.1.1, adjusted) Data source: Project monitoring and advisory service provided.  Indicator 2.1.2. Number of countries benefiting from regional initiatives that strengthen country capacities to assess and respond to climate-health or nature-related systemic risks. Data source: Project monitoring reports.	National line ministries and subnational government entities;  United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UNEP, GEF, Global Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Fund, alongside private sector financiers and bilateral donors;	Regular 3,000,000
				Other: 60,000,000

		<p><b>Output 2.2.</b> Public and private financing ecosystems are expanded while inclusive finance instruments and digital innovations enable low-carbon industries, nature-based businesses and marginalized populations to benefit from green and blue economy.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.2.1.</i> Number of public and private climate finance measures (debt swap, gender and climate sensitive budgeting, cost benefit analysis, etc.) supported by the regional programme:</p> <p>(a) Public; (b) Private.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project monitoring reports.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.2.2.</i> Number of system enhancement tools, financing instruments and frameworks with regional support, developed to strengthen green finance governance and/or to leverage investments for blue and/or green economy.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project reports.</p>	<p>Regional coordinating mechanisms and intergovernmental organizations, including the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA);</p> <p>WHO, UNICEF, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), UNFPA and UNAIDS</p> <p>ASEAN, Pacific Island Forum, and Brazil, BRICS Plus, as well as key collaboration platforms, including the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) for gender and the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action;</p>	
		<p><b>Output 2.3.</b> Environmental transitions are made more inclusive and equitable through regional support that promotes gender equality, women's leadership, participation and entrepreneurship in climate and nature action, and harnesses digital technologies to enhance environmental governance, accountability and access to services.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.3.1.</i> Number of policies, strategies, regulations and laws informed by regional support, pertaining to the development and application of digital technologies and/or data that promote sustainable and green practices through inclusion of environmental sustainability goals (IRRF I.4.2, adjusted)</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Government documents, project monitoring reports.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.3.2.</i> Number of women with access to clean energy and increased women-led MSMEs in the renewable energy sector through regional support (IRRF G.4.2.4 adjusted):</p> <p>(a) women with access to clean energy; (b) women-led MSMEs.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Progress and monitoring reports under the regional programme</p>		

Related SGDs: 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17				
REGIONAL PROGRAMME OUTCOME 3: Governance systems are more inclusive, participatory, accountable and digitally enabled to uphold the rule of law and human rights, deliver quality public services equitably, and foster trust and resilience by meaningfully engaging people, particularly women, youth and marginalized populations.				
RELATED STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME 2: By 2029, governance systems are more effective, inclusive and accountable, enabling people, societies and economies to thrive.				
<p><b>Outcome indicator 3.1.</b> Number of countries with a score lower than 0 on worldwide governance indicator:</p> <p>(a) Voice and accountability;</p> <p>(b) Government effectiveness.</p>	<p><i>Source:</i> Worldwide governance indicators, Bangkok Regional Hub to output data annually</p>	<p><b>Output 3.1</b> National and local public institutions have enhanced capacity to co-create with stakeholders, test and scale people-centred, transparent, digitally enabled public policies, service-delivery solutions and accountability mechanisms, benefiting from regional support.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.1.1.</i> Number of national or local public institutions supported to adopt co-creation, foresight and/or human-centred design approaches in developing public policies or service-delivery solutions (to be disaggregated by type of public institutions).</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project monitoring reports.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.1.2.</i> Number of measures to strengthen accountability (including social accountability) with regional support, prevent and mitigate corruption risks, and integrate integrity and anti-corruption in the management of public funds, service delivery and other sectors at: (IRRF G.2.1.1)</p> <p>(a) Regional level;</p> <p>(b) National level;</p> <p>(c) Sub-national level;</p> <p>(d) Sectoral level.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project reports and government documents.</p>	<p>Government, subnational government entities, parliament, the judiciary across programme countries, multilateral collaborations with United Nations organizations such as OHCHR</p> <p>UNODC and UN-Women as well as the United Nations Global Compact, collaborative platforms, civil society groups, private sector actors and business networks,</p>	Regular 3,000,000
				Other: 15,000,000

		<p><b>Output 3.2.</b> Democratic processes, rule of law, and human rights are strengthened to enable meaningful civic participation, rights-based digital and green transitions, and people-centred access to justice through regional support, especially for women, youth and marginalized groups.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.2.1.</i> Number of stakeholders engaged through regional or subregional platforms that convene diverse actors to influence legal and policy reforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Youth;</li> <li>(b) Civil society;</li> <li>(c) Private Sector;</li> <li>(d) Other.</li> </ul> <p><i>Data source:</i> Monitoring reports.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.2.2.</i> Number of countries supported to strengthen legal or regulatory frameworks, policies or strategies in line with human rights standards to enable public participation, enhance access to justice, safeguard civic space, or promote responsible business conduct.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Monitoring reports.</p>	women-led and youth-led organizations and networks, international financial institutions, development partners and private sector partners.	
		<p><b>Output 3.3.</b> Governance systems become more inclusive, gender-equal, responsive and future-ready through regional support that strengthens public or private digital infrastructure, capabilities and skills, and embeds equity and rights in digital governance.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.3.1.</i> Number of public institutions that have benefited from targeted measures designed to enhance digital, data and/or artificial intelligence capacities with regional support at (IRRF A.2.1.1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Regional level;</li> <li>(b) National level;</li> <li>(c) Subnational level.</li> </ul> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project reports and government documents.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.3.2.</i> Number of regional initiatives promoting gender-sensitive digital governance or digital innovation in public or private sector benefiting marginalized groups.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project reports.</p>		

Related SDGs: 3, 5, 11, 13, 16, 17				
REGIONAL PROGRAMME OUTCOME 4: Strengthened anticipatory and gender-responsive crisis governance to prevent and mitigate risks, reduce reliance on humanitarian relief, and enable timely recovery-protecting development gains and fostering sustainable peace, stability and social cohesion, especially in fragile, climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected settings.				
RELATED STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME 3: By 2029, institutions and people are better prepared to prevent, respond to and recover from crises while sustaining long-term development.				
<p><b>Outcome indicator 4.1.</b> Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population reduced (in Asia-Pacific region)</p> <p><b>Outcome indicator 4.2.</b> Number of countries whose vulnerability to crisis and disaster risk has improved (IRRF outcome indicator 3.2)</p>	<p><i>Source:</i> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (SDG 1.5.1 b), Bangkok Regional Hub to output data annually</p> <p><i>Source:</i> INFORM risk index, European Commission, Bangkok Regional Hub to output data annually</p>	<p><b>Output 4.1.</b> Countries are better able to anticipate, prevent and manage multidimensional risks through regional support that strengthens inclusive crisis governance, fosters social cohesion and peacebuilding, and embeds foresight, early warning and risk-informed planning into development pathways to build resilience.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.1.1.</i> Number of risk-informed development strategies and plans regionally supported and in place that operationalized or integrated foresight, early warning and anticipatory action systems to address interconnected disaster, conflict and climate risks, at (IRRF I.5.1 adjusted):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Regional level;</li> <li>(b) National level;</li> <li>(c) Subnational level;</li> <li>(d) Sectoral level.</li> </ul> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project monitoring reports.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.1.2.</i> Number of regional public goods (such as risk dashboards, foresight reports, or integrated risk maps) produced regionally to support countries in national risk governance, resilience-building, social cohesion and peacebuilding.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Knowledge products and project reports</p>	<p>Government, subnational government entities, humanitarian actors, private sector, local communities;</p> <p>international financial institutions, other United Nations organizations, including UNDRR</p> <p>Regional entities such as ASEAN, Pacific Island Forum, BIMSTEC, and ICIMOD.</p>	<p><b>Regular</b> 3,000,000</p>
		<p><b>Output 4.2.</b> Crisis-affected communities recover more sustainably through regional support for inclusive gender-responsive recovery, strengthened service delivery and livelihoods, and transitions from humanitarian response to long-term resilient development, while reducing displacement-related vulnerabilities.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.2.1.</i> Number of initiatives supported by the regional programme for conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive and risk-informed resilient recovery strategies, programmes, or plans in post-crisis settings.</p> <p><i>Data source:</i> Disaster and pandemic integrated plans.</p>		<p><b>Other:</b> 15,400,000</p>
		<p><b>Output 4.3.</b> Crisis governance is strengthened through regional support that expands access to risk-informed and flexible crisis financing, de-risks investments in fragile and crisis-affected settings, leverages digital solutions for real-time risk monitoring/responding and inclusive service delivery, and ensures the leadership and participation of women, youth, displaced persons and marginalized groups.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.3.1.</i> Number of regional digital or real-time risk monitoring/responding</p>		

		<p>solutions supported to strengthen inclusive service delivery, crisis early actions and resilience-building, targeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Women;</li><li>(b) Persons with disabilities;</li><li>(c) Disaggregated data unavailable.</li></ul> <p><i>Data source:</i> Project monitoring reports and government data.</p>		
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