



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Sixty-second session
6-12 April 2006
Jakarta

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL:
POVERTY REDUCTION**

(Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY REDUCTION
ON ITS SECOND SESSION**

Addendum

**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS
RELATING TO THE THEME OF POVERTY REDUCTION**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The present addendum provides an overview of the latest progress in the implementation of the resolutions of the Commission relating to the theme of poverty reduction, namely, resolutions 57/4 of 25 April 2001 on regional cooperation in information and communication technologies for development, 60/6 of 28 April 2004 on revitalization of the United Nations ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre, 60/7 of 28 April 2004 on the Pacific Urban Agenda, 61/5 of 18 May 2005 on the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific, 61/8 of 18 May 2005 on the mid-point review of 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 61/10 of 18 May 2005 on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

The Commission is invited to review the progress achieved and provide comments and further guidance for enhanced and effective implementation of these resolutions.

CONTENTS

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| I. RESOLUTION 57/4. REGIONAL COOPERATION IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT | 1 |
| II. RESOLUTION 60/6. REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ESCAP PACIFIC OPERATIONS CENTRE..... | 1 |
| III. RESOLUTION 60/7. PACIFIC URBAN AGENDA | 2 |
| IV. RESOLUTION 61/5. CENTRE FOR ALLEVIATION OF POVERTY THROUGH SECONDARY CROPS DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC | 3 |
| V. RESOLUTION 61/8. MID-POINT REVIEW OF 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 | 4 |
| VI. RESOLUTION 61/10. FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY | 4 |

INTRODUCTION

1. The present document is an addendum to the report of the Committee on Poverty Reduction (E/ESCAP/1364). It provides a brief update on the implementation of six resolutions under the theme of poverty reduction.
2. The Commission is invited to review the progress achieved and provide comments and further guidance for enhanced and effective implementation of these resolutions.

I. RESOLUTION 57/4. REGIONAL COOPERATION IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

3. In its resolution 57/4 of 25 April 2001, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to strengthen the work in official statistical information networking and sharing and exchanging official statistics. In response, ESCAP became a member of the global Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development. A secretariat survey led to the creation of a meta-information base on information and communication technology (ICT) statistics in the region. It contributed feedback and inputs for the preparation of three publications on ICT statistics and on the measurement of the information society, *Core ICT Indicators*, *Measuring ICT: The Global Status of ICT Indicators* and *Guide to Measuring the Information Society*, of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society launched during the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. The secretariat also started hosting a regional website on ICT statistics at <http://www.unescap.org/stat/ict/>.

II. RESOLUTION 60/6. REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ESCAP PACIFIC OPERATIONS CENTRE

4. In its resolution 60/6 of 28 April 2004, the Commission welcomed the decision of the Executive Secretary to establish subprogramme 3, on the development of Pacific island countries. Work to implement the subprogramme started as of 1 January 2006, and is under the responsibility of UN-EPOC. The subprogramme is expected to contribute to building policy and management capacity in the Pacific subregion. To achieve this objective, UN-EPOC plans to focus during the biennium 2006-2007 on (a) strengthening national capacity in policymaking and management to meet internationally agreed development goals; (b) assisting in the implementation of the outcome of the Mauritius International Meeting; and (c) assisting Pacific island developing countries in developing integrated urban and provincial plans based on the Pacific Urban Agenda.
5. In resolution 60/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to mobilize the resources required, within available resources, to relocate UN-EPOC from Vanuatu to Fiji. The date of the relocation initially remained pending the successful conclusion of negotiations on the terms and conditions of a headquarters agreement to be signed between the United Nations and the Government of Fiji. Negotiations on the terms of the agreement took place in 2004 and 2005. Towards the end of

2005, given that, for the most part, negotiations had been concluded, and given also that there was an increasing, pressing requirement to relocate the Centre without further delay in order to start implementing the new subprogramme 3 from 2006, concrete steps were taken to prepare for the relocation of the Centre, in anticipation of the agreement being concluded within a reasonable time.

6. By the end of November 2005, the office in Port Vila was closed and the Professional staff were reassigned to Fiji. On 1 December 2005, UN-EPOC started operations in Suva, using temporary accommodation. The process for the recruitment of longer-term local personnel was initiated, while a short-term staff member was engaged immediately in order to assist in establishing the office. Since then, suitable permanent office accommodation has been decided upon and an architect engaged to carry out designs for the interior partitioning. It is anticipated that the office will relocate to its permanent location by the end of April or early May 2006, at which time UN-EPOC hopes to be able to organize an official opening ceremony, together with the host Government.

7. As of the time of preparation of the present document, a few issues relating to the headquarters agreement remain outstanding. In the meantime, UN-EPOC and its staff are operating in Fiji under the provisions of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, to which the Government of Fiji is a party. With both parties continuing to work in good faith towards a successful conclusion with regard to the outstanding issues, ESCAP remains hopeful that, in the interest of all concerned, the matter will soon be resolved so that the Centre can focus fully on the successful implementation of the substantive programme of work.

8. In the resolution, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to mobilize resources to augment the Centre's Professional staff, within available resources, in the biennium 2006-2007. The establishment of a new post of Economic Affairs Officer at the P-4 level was approved in the United Nations programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 and the recruitment process for this post has been initiated.

III. RESOLUTION 60/7. PACIFIC URBAN AGENDA

9. The activities of UN-EPOC in implementation of resolution 60/7 of 28 April 2004 on the Pacific Urban Agenda have been geared to increasing the capacity of members to address urban poverty at the request of Pacific island countries, including Fiji, the Marshall Islands and Vanuatu, and to strengthening regional collaboration.

10. Following its endorsement by the meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Economic Ministers in June 2004, the Pacific Urban Agenda was endorsed by Pacific Leaders in 2005 and included in the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration as a priority area for implementation. A number of subregional and United Nations agencies and donors have responded to the call to address the issues identified in the Agenda and are using it as an overarching framework to guide projects.

11. Consultations with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, following the Regional Symposium on Local Government held in Suva in December 2004 resulted in UN-EPOC contributing to the Forum's Technical Advisory Panel on the regional project to promote good governance and build capacity to deliver better local government services in the Pacific, in 2005. The Pacific Urban Agenda is an integral element of the regional project and will involve collaboration between UN-EPOC and the Forum on its implementation over the life of the project (2005-2010).

12. Further consultations with the Pacific Islands Forum and other regional agencies and donors are planned for early 2006 with a view to UN-EPOC collaborating with them on urban development and local governance programmes in specific Pacific island countries and in preparation for a second subregional urban development workshop, to be held in early 2007 to review progress in implementing the priorities outlined in the Pacific Urban Agenda, as called for in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's Pacific Plan.

13. A Pacific urban management and poverty alleviation project profile was developed and discussed with some donors in the biennium 2004-2005. A revised profile, reflecting the above initiatives in the subregion, has now been developed and submitted for funding. The main objectives of the project are to assist Pacific island developing countries in the formulation of a common plan of action to manage the transition from predominantly rural to urban societies in Pacific island countries and to ensure effective regional coordination and collaboration. Project implementation activities scheduled for the biennium 2006-2007 are the provision of technical assistance and the organization of national-level workshops to build planning and policy capacity (particularly housing policy for the urban poor).

IV. RESOLUTION 61/5. CENTRE FOR ALLEVIATION OF POVERTY THROUGH SECONDARY CROPS DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

14. In pursuance of the request in Commission resolution 61/5 of 18 May 2005 that the Executive Secretary seek regular budget resources for the Centre, including posts, within the proposed ESCAP programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, the secretariat submitted a request to the General Assembly for the establishment of a regular post at the P-5 level. In December 2005, the General Assembly approved the establishment of the post, which the secretariat will utilize for the Centre.

15. In the resolution, the Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to seek additional voluntary resources. In response to that request, the Executive Secretary and the Director of the Centre made visits to member States of ESCAP. As a result, the host country, Indonesia, expanded its contribution to the Centre in 2005, while some countries pledged to resume their contributions and other countries made commitments to contribute. However, substantially more, and higher, contributions are necessary to put the Centre on a solid financial footing.

V. RESOLUTION 61/8. MID-POINT REVIEW OF 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 PACIFIC¹

16. In its resolution 61/8 of 18 May 2005, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to provide Governments in the region with technical support for the continued monitoring of the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework in advance of the mid-point review in 2007. In response, the secretariat implemented a project on improving disability measurement, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Data collection tools, based on the new International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, were developed and piloted, and a training manual on disability statistics was prepared. The project created a pool of skills on disability measurement in participating national statistical offices and prompted the development of national strategies and action plans for the collection of disability data. Internationally comparable information on demographic characteristics and living conditions of the disabled will be collected through various surveys and the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.

VI. RESOLUTION 61/10. FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY²

17. In its resolution 61/10 of 18 May 2005, the Commission called upon all members and associate members to strengthen and improve the collection, processing and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics at the local, national, regional and international levels for the effective monitoring and assessment of gains and gaps. It also requested the Executive Secretary to mainstream gender assessments into all programmes, as a means for assistance to member countries, enabling them to involve women in economic, social and political decision-making. As the lead agency, ESCAP secured funding for the 2006-2007 interregional Development Account project on improved data on the informal sector and informal employment for the promotion of evidence-based social policies at national and international levels. The informal sector employs a large number of women in developing countries, but its size, conditions of employment, social protection and contribution to the economy are largely unknown. The project aims to create capacity for measuring and understanding the informal sector and supports the assessment of the inherent linkages between gender, empowerment and poverty issues. This in turn strengthens informed policymaking in related areas.

.

¹ See also Commission resolution 59/3 of 4 September 2003 concerning the Biwako Millennium Framework.

² See also Commission resolution 57/3 of 25 April 2001 relating to the same subject.