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**MANAGEMENT ISSUES: STRENGTHENING THE UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PILLAR AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: PROPOSED
ESCAP SUBREGIONAL OFFICES**

(Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda)

**PROPOSED ROAD MAP FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW
SUBREGIONAL OFFICES IN EAST AND NORTH-EAST ASIA, NORTH
AND CENTRAL ASIA, AND SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST ASIA**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

In its resolution 63/260 of 24 December 2008 on development-related activities, the General Assembly approved, among other things, additional regular budget resources for the establishment and operations of three new ESCAP subregional offices and the strengthening of the existing office for the Pacific. In this connection, the present document outlines, for the Commission's consideration, the steps to be taken in setting up the new offices, one each for the following subregions:

- (a) East and North-East Asia;
- (b) North and Central Asia (joint office with the Economic Commission for Europe);
- (c) South and South-West Asia.

The present document is intended to be read in conjunction with a separate report by an independent consultant on the strategic and feasible options for the location of the new offices (E/ESCAP/65/20/Add.1).

The Commission may wish to provide guidance to the secretariat on measures to ensure the successful establishment and operations of the new offices, keeping in mind the collective interests of the ESCAP membership and the particular needs and priorities of the subregions concerned.

* The late submission of the present document is due to the need to wait for the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission to review the draft programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, in particular subprogramme 8, Subregional activities for development, which was done on 21 January 2009.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The purpose of the present document is to inform the Commission of the background to and steps to be taken in the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 63/260 of 24 December 2008 on development-related activities, whereby the General Assembly approved additional regular budget resources for the establishment and operation of three new ESCAP subregional offices and the strengthening of the existing office for the Pacific.

2. The report of the Secretary-General on improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of development-related activities and revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/62/708), which was submitted to the General Assembly at its resumed sixty-second session, included, among other things, a proposal for the establishment of four additional offices for ESCAP (three subregional and one for liaison) and the strengthening of the existing ESCAP subregional office for the Pacific.

3. In its consideration of the proposals in the Secretary-General's report, the General Assembly, in its resolution 63/260, approved the establishment of three of the proposed offices and the strengthening of the existing subregional office for the Pacific based in Suva. The three new ESCAP offices are for the following subregions:

- (a) East and North-East Asia;
- (b) North and Central Asia (joint office with the Economic Commission for Europe);
- (c) South and South-West Asia.

4. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/260, the subregional offices would, among other things, promote and support specific subregional priorities and programmes, with each subregional office concentrating on the sectors accorded priority by member States within the subregion as well as by the Commission.

5. The countries covered under the above subregions, as presented by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly (see A/62/708, para. 323), are as follows:

(a) Subregional office for East and North-East Asia: China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea;

(b) Subregional office for North and Central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation,¹ Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan;

(c) Subregional office for South and South-West Asia: Afghanistan,² Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

¹ In view of its geographical location, it is proposed that the Russian Federation be concurrently included under the East and North-East Asian subregion.

² Afghanistan would participate in activities relating to Central Asia as a member of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

6. As noted at the sixty-fourth session of the Commission, the listing of a country by subregion does not preclude that country, or any other member or associate member of ESCAP, from participating in programmes and projects in other subregions, as appropriate, within the overall regional framework of ESCAP (see E/ESCAP/64/38, para. 21).³

II. ACTION TAKEN BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

7. In its resolution 63/260, the General Assembly approved a total of 11 new posts for ESCAP (2 D-1, 4 P-5, 1 P-4, 2 P-3, 1 National Officer, 1 Local level) in addition to non-post resources at minimal levels for the operating costs of the offices.

8. The allocation of posts among the ESCAP subregional offices is shown in the table.

Table. Approved distribution of posts by subregional office

<i>Office</i>	<i>Regular budget posts</i>						<i>Total</i>	<i>Notes</i>
	<i>D-1</i>	<i>P-5</i>	<i>P-4/P-3</i>	<i>P-2</i>	<i>National officer</i>	<i>Local level</i>		
East and North-East Asia	1	1	1	1			4	Among these posts, one P-2 was approved by the General Assembly for redeployment from existing resources.
North and Central Asia		1	1 (ECE post)	1	1		4	Among these posts, one P-2 was approved by the General Assembly for redeployment from existing resources. One P-3 is from the ECE programme budget.
Pacific		1	1				2	These are in addition to the current level of seven regular budget established posts.
South and South-West Asia	1	1	2			1	5	Among these posts, one P-4 was approved by the General Assembly for redeployment from existing resources.

Abbreviation: ECE, Economic Commission for Europe.

9. It is expected that additional posts will be mobilized to the subregional offices for technical cooperation work to supplement the existing core regular budget; each new office is expected to eventually accommodate up to 20 staff members.

³ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 19* (E/2008/39-E/ESCAP/64/39), para. 190.

III. FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW SUBREGIONAL OFFICES

10. Pursuant to the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General (see A/62/708, para. 25) endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/260, the new subregional offices will serve as links between the subregions and ESCAP headquarters, promoting and supporting specific subregional priorities and programmes, operating as subregional nodes for knowledge management and networking, delivering technical assistance activities and establishing close working relations with United Nations country teams within the subregions (see E/ESCAP/64/38, para. 22). The above-mentioned functions are aligned with the functions of the existing subregional offices of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in pursuance of the recommendation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services for harmonization of approaches by the regional commissions (see A/58/785). As requested by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, ESCAP has drawn from the lessons of ECA and ECLAC, on the operation of subregional offices (see A/62/7/Add.40). The experiences of the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) have also been taken into account.

IV. ROAD MAP

11. The secretariat has prepared a road map for the establishment of the three new subregional offices, covering five components: (a) initial review; (b) recruitment of staff; (c) conclusion of agreements with the host Governments; (d) identification and selection of office premises; and (e) opening of offices.

A. Initial review (January-June 2009)

12. The Executive Secretary sent letters dated 15 January 2009 to ESCAP seats of government informing them of the decision of the General Assembly to establish the three new ESCAP subregional offices. The letters also invited interested Governments in the respective subregions to express their interest in hosting the new offices. With regard to member States of SPECA covered under the North and Central Asian subregion, the Executive Secretaries of ESCAP and ECE sent a further communication to seats of government dated 26 February 2009.

13. To ensure impartiality, the secretariat engaged an independent consultant to review and recommend the most strategic and feasible location (city and country) for each of the three subregional offices. A report summarizing the consultant's review and recommendations will be presented as a separate document (E/ESCAP/65/20/Add.1) for the consideration of the Commission.

14. On the basis of the recommendations of the consultant and taking into account the views of the Commission at its sixty-fifth session, the secretariat will undertake further consultations with prospective host Governments and also consult with the relevant authorities at United Nations Headquarters before taking a decision on the specific location of each of the new subregional offices. It is expected that the determination of the locations for the three new offices will be made by mid-2009.

B. Recruitment of staff (January-December 2009)

15. Preparatory work on the job descriptions for the 11 posts approved by the General Assembly is under way; steps to complete them will be taken pending the decision on the location of the subregional offices, which will need to be indicated as the duty station of the post. Of these 11 posts, two are earmarked for EPOC. Those

two posts have been advertised and a competitive review and selection process in accordance with established United Nations policies and practices will be undertaken.

16. New staff members recruited to the new posts will be provided with training in the areas of programme management, administration and other relevant fields to enable them to function effectively in their assignment.

C. Conclusion of agreements with host Governments (June-August 2009)

17. Once the city and country of each subregional office have been determined, the secretariat and host Governments would need to initiate the process of negotiations in order to conclude the relevant agreements, which include a headquarters agreement and an agreement on the financial and administrative arrangements for each office. The agreements would set out the framework within which the ESCAP subregional offices would operate, including, as appropriate, facilities to be provided by the host Government, as well as privileges and immunities accorded to the United Nations and its personnel, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.⁴

D. Identification and selection of office premises (July-December 2009)

18. During this phase, the secretariat would conduct assessments of, among other things, the facilities, security and safety of the office, in order to identify, in consultation with the host Government, an exact office location. Once the premises for the subregional offices have been selected, a review of the facilities, safety and security set-ups would be completed to ensure that the office meets United Nations standards. This includes, among other things, office space management, the arrangement of recurrent contracts (water, electricity, telephone and Internet) and meetings with fire and police chiefs in the local areas.

E. Opening of the offices (late 2009)

19. Once the specific office premises have been determined, the facilities and security set-ups are complete, and the staff recruited, the official opening of the subregional offices would be announced in consultation with the host Governments. It is expected that the subregional offices would be ready to deliver the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011.⁵

V. ENSURING EFFECTIVE DELIVERY

20. The establishment of the new subregional offices will enhance ESCAP machinery and its capacity to deliver the programme of work by, among other things: (a) supporting the Commission's work with regular analysis of the priorities of countries in the ESCAP subregions; (b) ensuring a more balanced delivery of the ESCAP technical cooperation programme; (c) promoting closer cooperation with subregional organizations, Governments and United Nations country teams; (d) improving the monitoring and evaluation of the work of ESCAP; and (e) increasing the visibility of ESCAP throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

21. In its resolution 63/247, the General Assembly adopted, among other things, the strategic framework for 2010-2011 for ESCAP, which includes a new subprogramme 8 on subregional activities for development. The objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement of subprogramme 8, as approved by

⁴ General Assembly resolution 22 A (I).

⁵ To be issued as A/63/6/Rev.1.

the General Assembly, will guide the programme of work of the new subregional offices. The Commission, at its sixty-fifth session, will have the opportunity to review and endorse the specific outputs proposed to be included in the programme of work for 2010-2011 for subprogramme 8 (see E/ESCAP/65/18), which would be delivered by the new subregional offices as well as EPOC.

22. As suggested by a number of member States, it is important to involve governments closely in determining the priorities to be addressed in the work programme of the new subregional offices. The secretariat has thus included three ad hoc intergovernmental meetings in the programme of work in 2010 for this specific purpose for the following subregions: East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia and South and South-West Asia. These proposed one-time meetings, if endorsed by the Commission, would be held at ESCAP headquarters, with no additional financial implication, and would be open for participation by members and associate members of the Commission. With regard to EPOC, the Commission, in its resolution 64/1, provides for the convening of the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries in alternate years during the Commission session. This is to ensure appropriate intergovernmental review of subregional priorities.

23. It is expected that the substantive priorities of the respective subregional offices would be based, when possible, on agreed plans of action for the respective subregions, including the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,⁶ the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, and the Tumen River Area Development Programme. The secretariat would be further guided by the member States of the respective subregions and the Commission in identifying priority activities and programmes to be implemented by the subregional offices.

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⁶ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.