


Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure
of the Commission, including the work of the regional
institutions**
**Summary of progress in the implementation of
Commission resolutions**
Note by the secretariat
Summary

The present document summarizes the progress made in the implementation of Commission resolutions on which the secretariat is required to report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and to provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance for the effective implementation of the resolutions.

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* E/ESCAP/69/L.1.

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I. Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development

A. Resolution 67/1 Ulaanbaatar Declaration: Outcome of the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and other Development Gaps Faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

1. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 67/1, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist landlocked developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in cooperation with other relevant international entities, in implementing the recommendations of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration;

(b) To continue to assist landlocked developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in cooperation with other relevant international entities, in their pursuance of the Millennium Development Goals;

(c) To provide, in collaboration with relevant international organizations, necessary assistance to the landlocked developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region during the final review of the Almaty Programme of Action,¹ which is scheduled for 2013.

2. Progress made

2. In response to paragraph 7 (a), the secretariat continued to assist landlocked developing countries with advisory services and capacity-building

¹ *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003 (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.*

support in trade and transit policy formulation, trade and transit negotiations and trade and transport facilitation, including the development of single-window and paperless trading systems. The secretariat also continued to furnish a platform for regional, subregional and intra-subregional dialogue and knowledge-sharing under the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNEXT) initiative.

3. To assist landlocked least developed countries in the areas of trade facilitation and preferential trade policies, guides were developed to cover such topics as business process analysis, design, data harmonization and electronic single window legal issues. These guides serve as key tools under the framework of UNNEXT. In addition, a handbook on negotiating services liberalization in preferential trade agreements (PTAs) is being developed for negotiators and policymakers for landlocked developing countries.

4. To assist landlocked least developed countries in building capacity in trade facilitation and PTA negotiations, the secretariat organized training workshops and meetings that covered such areas as development and implementation of a single window system, trade and investment policymaking, and the Aid for Trade initiative.

5. The secretariat has also teamed up with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to undertake studies on trade and transit collaboration among member countries of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) and provided advisory services on the development of the Mongolia Single Window Implementation Master Plan and on creating a Single Window environment in Nepal.

6. To support landlocked developing countries in enhancing transit transport connectivity, the secretariat continued to promote the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and dry ports as the basis for developing an integrated regional transport and logistics system.

7. With regard to the Promotion of Investment in the Asian Highway Network: Prefeasibility Studies of Priority Sections project, ESCAP furnished Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia with technical assistance in conducting prefeasibility studies of selected priority routes. In addition, national training workshops were organized in those countries in 2012 to enhance the capacity of transport officials to prepare investment studies and project proposals.

8. As part of its objective to enhance utilization of transport infrastructure, which is vital for exporting goods from landlocked developing countries, the secretariat has also undertaken a capacity-building activity to promote the use of the Trans-Asian Railway network.

9. Inland dry ports potentially improve connectivity to and accessing the seaports for landlocked developing countries. Thus, the secretariat has been promoting the development of dry ports in the region to enhance transport connectivity as well as to improve transport efficiency at the national and regional levels. The finalized draft of the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports was approved by the Committee on Transport at its third session in October 2012 for submission to the Commission for possible adoption.

10. ESCAP provided members countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including the Lao People's Democratic Republic, a landlocked developing country, with technical assistance in conducting prefeasibility studies on dry ports.

11. Taking an integrated and comprehensive approach to address issues of non-physical barriers in transport operation, the secretariat is implementing the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, which was adopted by member States in March 2012 at the Ministerial Conference on Transport, and subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its sixty-eighth session in resolution 68/4.

12. To accelerate the formulation and implementation of subregional agreements on transport facilitation, the secretariat continued to assist the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member States in negotiating and implementing the terms of the annexes to the SCO Road Facilitation Agreement and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries in implementing the GMS Cross-border Transport Agreement.

13. The secretariat, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), has undertaken a capacity-building activity for control authorities and transport operators with the objective to improve efficiency of cross-border transport in landlocked and transit developing countries.

14. To address operation challenges faced by landlocked and transit countries, the secretariat developed three models for control authorities to use to facilitate cross-border and transit transport.

15. In its efforts to encourage public-private partnerships (PPPs), the secretariat has continued to offer a variety of products, such as on-line capacity-building programmes in PPP and a fully operational diagnostic tool to assess countries' capacity to implement PPP projects. It also organized an expert group meeting on infrastructure PPPs for sustainable development, which was held in November 2012 in the Islamic Republic of Iran in association with the Third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development,

16. The Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for development (APCICT) supported landlocked least developed countries through information and communication technologies for development (ICTD) capacity-building activities, such as the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders (Academy) and the Turning Today's Youth into Tomorrow's Leaders programme. These programmes have contributed to the establishment of an enabling environment for appropriate policy formulation and implementation for all sectors, including trade, transportation and transit, as well as to progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in landlocked least developed countries.

17. In response to paragraph (b), the secretariat as a member of the ESCAP/ADB/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was involved in organizing subregional workshops pertaining to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Among them were a workshop for South Asian countries, which was held in India in February 2012, and subregional consultations on the Goals and the development agenda beyond 2015 for Central Asian countries in Almaty, Kazakhstan in September 2012.

18. In response to paragraph (c), the secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States organized the final regional review of the Almaty

Programme of Action in Vientiane in March 2013. Many stakeholders of the Almaty Programme of Action, including landlocked developing countries, transit countries, development partners and United Nations agencies, participated in the meeting.

B. Resolution 68/2

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

19. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 68/2, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist the Asia-Pacific least developed countries in implementing the Regional Road Map;

(b) To continue to assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

2. Progress made

20. In response to paragraph 2 (a) of the resolution, the secretariat organized, in cooperation with the Government of Cambodia, a regional review meeting on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action from 17 to 19 December 2012 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, as preparatory for the biennial review of the progress made by Asia-Pacific least developed countries in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, as mandated by the General Assembly. The meeting requested that the Commission, at its sixty-ninth session, support accelerated implementation of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, ensure the inclusion of priority areas of least developed countries in the development agenda beyond 2015, and ensure that the Istanbul Programme of Action is mainstreamed in the development agenda beyond 2015. It adopted the Siem Reap Outcome Document on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, which is being submitted to the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries as part of the biennial review of the Istanbul Programme of Action by member States.

21. The secretariat continued to provide least developed countries with tools and guides for trade facilitation and trade policymaking and conduct studies that focus on issues pertaining to least developed countries, such as *Trade beyond Doha: Prospects for the Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries*.² A reference material was developed for negotiators and policymakers from least developed countries in the area of preferential goods and services liberalization. Findings from the annual *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report* have been used by analysts in government departments, think tanks and members of academia in the region, including those from least developed countries.

² *Studies in Trade and Investment No.76 (ST/ESCAP/2625)*.

22. In support of the objective of implementing the Regional Road Map,³ and contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the secretariat continued to assist member States in improving transport connectivity, including through the Asian Highway, the Trans-Asian Railway and dry ports, in least developed countries.

23. The secretariat provided Bangladesh and Myanmar with technical assistance in undertaking prefeasibility studies of selected priority routes and enhancing the capacity of transport officials in preparing investment studies and project proposals.

24. In an effort to promote the development of dry ports, the secretariat provided Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar with technical assistance in conducting prefeasibility studies on dry ports. All of the least developed countries in Asia, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Nepal, have participated in the negotiation of the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports, which will be considered by the Commission for adoption.

25. With regard to PPP for infrastructure development, many least developed countries participated in the High-level Expert Group Meeting on Infrastructure Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development, which was held in November 2012 in Tehran in conjunction with the Third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development. In addition, the secretariat's PPP readiness assessment tool was used at a workshop in Myanmar as an initial step towards the preparation of an action plan for PPP implementation.

26. In response to paragraph 2 (b) of the resolution, the secretariat has undertaken activities to support Millennium Development Goals-based development strategies. Highlighting the linkage between the Goals and the Istanbul Programme of Action, the secretariat collaborated with the Government of Nepal in 2012 to organize an advocacy training workshop in Nepal for least developed countries in achieving the Goals as part of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

27. During the regional review meeting on the Istanbul Programme of Action (see para. 20), the secretariat organized a special session to solicit the views of least developed countries on the Millennium Development Goals and the development agenda beyond 2015. Input from the meeting will be reflected in the Regional MDG Report (2012/13), a publication of the ESCAP/ADB/UNDP regional tripartite partnership.

28. The secretariat organized the second meeting of the Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment Network for Least Developed and Landlocked Countries, which was held in Bangkok on 29 November 2012. Established to help mobilize domestic and external financial resources, including foreign direct investment (FDI), and enhance support for investments aimed at improving the investment environment, the network aims to become an important regional mechanism for exchanging experiences on policies and strategies to promote, attract and facilitate FDI for development at national and regional levels and identify areas for technical assistance.

³ See E/ESCAP/68/23, annex to the letter dated 14 May 2012 from the Chairman of the National Committee for ESCAP of Cambodia addressed to the Secretary of the Commission.

29. The secretariat is actively assisting least developed countries in GMS through its Business for Development Programme, which includes a series of cross-border value-chain studies and subregional and national workshops and trainings. These activities aim to support the human and institutional capacity development of these countries.

30. In addition, by invitation from the Government of Myanmar, the secretariat participated, in January 2013, in the multidimensional country review of Myanmar, led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to identify the binding constraints to the country's multidimensional development challenges.

31. To assist country efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the secretariat is promoting transport policies that are sustainable, inclusive and provide remote and isolated communities with access to markets, education, health and social needs. Preparation is under way for an expert group meeting on road and rural road maintenance and management to be held in either May or June 2013 to review good examples of road maintenance from the region.

32. The secretariat, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, will take the lead in the implementation of a five-year Asia-Pacific plan of action for applications of space technology and geographic information systems (GIS) for disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, 2012-2017. The plan of action was adopted at the Intergovernmental Meeting on Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Application of Space Technology and Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017, which was held in Bangkok from 18 to 20 December 2012. It includes the use of remote sensing information coupled with GIS to assist developing countries, particularly least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, identify high risk drought-prone areas and feed into effective monitoring and early warning for drought.

33. The secretariat continued to assist least developed countries and landlocked developing countries to strengthen the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters⁴ through the use of standardized statistical and geographic information system tools. Some of the assistance provided is through a set of capacity development activities aimed at delivering knowledge products, dissemination and advocacy and the provision of expert services at regional, subregional and national levels.

34. The secretariat has also continued to undertake capacity-building activities in the area of information and communications technology (ICT) for development. In this context, APCICT offered the Academy programme, which aims to strengthen the capacities of policymakers and government officials in the use of ICTs for socioeconomic development. To build the ICTD capacity of youth, who represent the leadership of the future, APCICT has initiated the Turning Today's Youth into Tomorrow's Leaders programme. In the delivery of these programmes and services, least developed countries have been given high priority. Strategic partnerships with national government agencies, training institutions, academia and the private sector in least developed countries have led to increased interest of the target groups in the programmes as well as contributed to cooperation among local stakeholders in efforts to build capacity.

⁴ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

II. Transport

Resolution 64/4

Implementation of the Seoul Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

35. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 64/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary, in close collaboration with donor countries and development partners:

(a) To assist members and associate members in meeting infrastructure development challenges through: (i) regional and interregional cooperation in the development of public-private partnerships; and (ii) the organization of meetings and regional networking arrangements aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and information;

(b) To assist members and associate members on a mutually agreed basis in their capacity-building programmes, including public-private partnership policy framework formulation, legislative and regulatory reform and the administrative arrangements for public-private partnerships;

(c) To provide technical support, upon request, to help assess the public-private partnership readiness of members and associate members;

(d) To undertake a periodic review of the progress made in infrastructure development through public-private partnerships and to report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

36. As part of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011) and phase II (2012-2016), and under the framework of the United Nations Development Account project entitled "Public-Private Alliance Programme for Capacity-building in Infrastructure Development and Provision of Basic Services", the secretariat organized a series of activities to implement the above resolution.

37. With reference to paragraph 5 (a), the secretariat supported a series of workshops, expert group meetings and study visits which were aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and information on public-private partnerships (PPPs) at the regional level. Among the activities were (a) a workshop and study visit based on developing bankable PPP projects for infrastructure development (Vadodara and New Delhi, India, November 2008); (b) a joint ECA, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and ESCAP interregional expert group meeting on PPPs in infrastructure development (Bangkok, February 2009); (c) the Expert Group Meeting on Financing for Transport Infrastructure (Bangkok, December 2009), which focused on the implementation of projects related to the development of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks; (d) the High-Level Expert Group Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development (Jakarta, April 2010); (e) a regional meeting of PPP units and programmes on institutional development and support for capacity-building in PPPs (New Delhi, February/March 2011); (f) a consultation meeting on

curriculum development for formal training and capacity-building programmes on PPPs (New Delhi, March 2011); and (g) the High-level Expert Group Meeting on Infrastructure Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development (Tehran, November 2012). The secretariat also furnished technical assistance to the Governments of Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran for the organization of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development (Jakarta, April 2010) and the Third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development (Tehran, November 2012).

38. These activities successfully raised awareness among senior government officials on PPPs and provided a valuable platform for fostering cooperation among countries at the regional level. They were complemented by study tours between countries that were embarking on new PPP programmes to countries which have successfully developed PPP programmes for infrastructure development, thereby supporting South-South collaboration. Examples of collaboration between PPP units included the hosting of study visits for officials from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka by PPP units in the Republic of Korea and the Philippines.

39. With reference to operative paragraph 5 (b), the secretariat developed training materials covering such topics as project planning and appraisal, risk identification and management and financial and legal perspectives of PPPs. To disseminate these materials, as well as to facilitate networking among PPP units in governments and regional experts (as requested in paragraph (a), the secretariat created a PPP network using a “Google platform”. This network serves as a platform for discussing PPP-related issues of common concern and sharing information and reports on PPPs. Four online training courses were conducted for 142 participants (including people from outside the ESCAP region), many of whom were senior professionals from PPP units in governments. A survey of governments participating in the United Nations Development Account project confirmed that PPP units and other agencies in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Russian Federation and Sri Lanka were using manuals and resource materials developed by the project. These materials are available on the ESCAP website.⁵

40. With reference to operative paragraph 5 (c), the secretariat helped Bangladesh (2009), Mongolia (2009) and Myanmar (2012) conduct PPP readiness assessment workshops. Also of note, Kazakhstan benchmarked its progress in creating a PPP enabling environment by using an assessment model based on the ESCAP PPP-readiness assessment framework. These workshops and activities enhanced the understanding of government officials about PPPs and helped identify steps to implement them in those countries. Case studies on PPP process flows were also commissioned with a view to contributing towards streamlining the PPP management process in Bangladesh, the Philippines and in the State of Maharashtra in India, while two case studies on PPP road and rail projects in India were also prepared in collaboration with the Asian Institute of Transport Development for use in training workshops.

41. With reference to operative paragraph 5 (d), the secretariat monitored progress on PPPs for infrastructure development through regional meetings and online PPP project information, which was disseminated through policy and information documents prepared for legislative and other high-level

⁵ See www.unescap.org/ttdw/ppp/index.html.

meetings, such as the second session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport (Bangkok, 2012) and the High-level Expert Group Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development (Jakarta, 2010).⁶ Information was also shared with the wider public through the 2009 and 2011 editions of the Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific.

III. Social development

A. Resolution 66/9

Full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its regional and global outcomes in the Asia-Pacific region

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

42. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 66/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To strengthen the role of the Commission in supporting members and associate members in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and to take actions set out in the Bangkok Declaration on Beijing+15;

(b) To continue to ensure that gender dimensions are mainstreamed, where applicable, into the entire programme of work of the Commission;

(c) To provide members and associate members, upon request, with technical assistance to strengthen their capacity for effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and also to mainstream a gender perspective in all programmes, through, among other things, mechanisms and processes, such as gender-responsive budgeting, gender-responsive auditing, development and use of sex-disaggregated data and monitoring and performance indicators;

(d) To encourage members and associate members, as appropriate, that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁷ and its Optional Protocol⁸ to do so, and to provide those members and associate members that have ratified or acceded to the Convention, upon request, with assistance in its implementation;

(e) To enhance the role of the regional coordination mechanism, chaired by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, as appropriate, taking into consideration United Nations gender architecture reform,⁹ to achieve greater synergies among United Nations entities in the region to further develop strategies and plans aimed at the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

⁶ See for example document E/ESCAP/MCT.2/6 on Finance and private sector participation (available at www.unescap.org/ttdw/MCT2011/MCT2011.asp), and Information Paper 1 on the implementation of the Seoul Declaration for the High-level Expert Group Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development (Jakarta, 2010) (available from www.unescap.org/ttdw/ppp/ppp_jakarta2010/info_paper1.pdf).

⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

⁸ General Assembly resolution 54/4, annex.

⁹ See A/64/588.

2. Progress made

43. In response to paragraph 4 (a), the Commission provided members and associate members with an intergovernmental platform for policy dialogues on how to effectively implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the Bangkok Declaration on Beijing +15. The analytical work and technical cooperation work conducted by the secretariat contributed to evidence-based policymaking towards achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. In 2011, the secretariat launched a regional programme focusing on women's economic empowerment, as a key strategy for pro-poor growth and addressing the gender gaps in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The initiative was aimed at building national and local level capacity to support women's economic security and rights through training, building of the regional knowledge base and exchange of innovative practices in five countries, namely Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

44. In 2012, the secretariat undertook a series of national studies in China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia to examine key trends, obstacles and needs with regard to women's entrepreneurship. The findings of these studies will feed into national and regional reviews during 2012-2013 which are aimed at creating an enabling policy and legal environment for women entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region.

45. In response to paragraph 4 (b), the secretariat renewed its efforts to promote the mainstreaming of gender dimensions into the ESCAP programme of work. Policy directives were issued by the Executive Secretary to guide the preparation of the strategic framework and programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, highlighting the need to analyse gender concerns under each subprogramme, with a view to achieving the gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes across the secretariat's work. The secretariat also refined its gender equality strategy and action plan in order to achieve full alignment with the newly adopted United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

46. In response to paragraph 4 (c), the secretariat initiated, in cooperation with United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), a series of capacity-building subregional workshops in Asia and the Pacific for national women's machineries to strengthen their strategic positioning and ability to advocate gender mainstreaming across all areas of national policies, budgets and programmes. Two workshops on coordinating gender mainstreaming within government structures and influencing policies on gender-responsive budgeting and auditing were held (South and South-West Asia, Bangkok, 18-21 January 2011, and South-East Asia, Bangkok, 17-20 January 2012).

47. The secretariat is in the process of developing a regional capacity development programme on gender statistics. A consultative meeting to develop a regional programme on gender statistics in Asia and the Pacific was organized by ESCAP in September 2010. The meeting, which was attended by representatives from national statistical offices and national women's machineries, reviewed gaps in existing gender statistics programmes and activities in the region. The secretariat also organized a regional workshop on strengthening national capacities to collect statistics on violence against women in the Asia-Pacific region on 20 and 21 September 2010 in Bangkok. The workshop brought together representatives from national statistical offices and national women's machineries from nine member States, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. Participants enhanced their knowledge of data collection

methods and understanding of the importance of producing and using reliable data to inform policy development and programme planning in order to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.

48. In response to paragraph 4 (d), the secretariat continued with its efforts to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). As of January 2013, a total of 46 out of 49 countries in Asia and the Pacific had ratified CEDAW. The implementation of the Convention was integrated into the programmes of two capacity-building workshops conducted for the national women's machineries in the region during 2011 and 2012.

49. In response to paragraph 4 (e), under the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), the Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, co-chaired by ESCAP and UN-Women, provided a platform for the development of shared priorities, joint planning and action, and the promotion of synergies among the United Nations entities at the regional level in Asia and the Pacific. Key achievements included the following: launch of the Asia-Pacific UNiTE campaign in November 2010 to foster joint action among governments, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system in addressing violence against women and girls; development of an inter-agency strategy to improve gender statistics in Asia and the Pacific; and the mainstreaming of gender concerns into global and regional agendas through active engagement in activities, such as the Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, and the Millennium Development Goals, which was held in 2011, and the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was held in 2012.

B. Resolution 66/11

Regional preparations for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

50. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 66/11, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to encourage the participation of all key stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities from Asia and the Pacific, in the preparatory process leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

2. Progress made

51. In response to paragraph 3, the secretariat worked with national governments, organizations of and for persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities themselves to secure participation of all key stakeholders in the preparatory process leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. Particular effort was made to encourage the participation of persons from diverse disability groups in the following regional consultations leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting: the Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation to Review the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012: The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (Bangkok, 23-25 June 2010); the Committee on Social Development, second session (Bangkok, 19-21 October 2010); the Regional Stakeholder Consultation for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final

Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012 (Bangkok, 14-16 December 2011); and the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012 (Bangkok, 14-16 March 2012).

52. Throughout the preparatory process, the secretariat made sure that accessible transport, ramps and real-time captioning and sign language interpretation during the discussions were provided at the meetings as well as braille of meeting documents. This was done with the purpose of encouraging and securing wider participation of persons with disabilities.

53. The Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation to Review the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012: The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action was attended by 43 experts from governments and organizations of persons with disabilities as well as representatives of intergovernmental and international organizations. In addition, 45 representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities attended as observers. The meeting recommended the proclamation of a new decade to further promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and disability-inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific.

54. Disability was selected as the theme of the second session of the Committee on Social Development. The session was attended by some 200 participants from 23 member States and civil society organizations, the majority of which were representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities. In addition, at least 6 member States included persons with disabilities in their delegations. The Committee affirmed the road map leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting and recommended that the Commission at its sixty-eighth session proclaim a new decade to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. The Committee also launched the ESCAP regional campaign to “Make the Right Real”.

55. The Regional Stakeholder Consultation for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012 was attended by 41 experts from governments and organizations of persons with disabilities as well as representatives of intergovernmental and international organizations. In addition, 67 representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities attended as observers. The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012 was attended by 82 experts designated by 27 member States as well as 42 experts from 15 civil society organizations, and eight representatives of intergovernmental and international organizations, including the United Nations system. Both meetings reviewed the status of the implementation of the road map leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, and considered the framework of the draft outcome document of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

56. A survey was conducted in 2011 on the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five to present governments with an assessment of the implementation of the Second Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, and to provide inputs for the drafting of the outcome document for the meeting. The survey results represented the responses received from 51 governments and 95 organizations of and for persons with disabilities. The unprecedented high

response rate is a reflection of the strong engagement by key stakeholders and the inclusiveness of the process.

57. The secretariat also conducted participatory action research on disability, livelihood and poverty in Asia and the Pacific in 2011, in partnership with eight organizations of persons with disabilities from Fiji, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. This report provided important inputs on poverty and livelihoods of persons with disability for the draft outcome document.

58. The High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 29 October to 2 November 2012. The meeting was attended by 186 delegates from 38 member States as well as 102 observers from 47 civil society organizations, the majority of which were organizations of persons with disabilities. Among the member States, about one-third included persons with disabilities in their delegations. The meeting reviewed, among other things, the progress achieved in the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. During the meeting, participants exchanged views and experiences on successful policies, experiences and good practices related to the building of disability-inclusive societies in Asia and the Pacific. The meeting adopted the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. The Incheon Strategy provides the region, and the world, with the first set of regionally agreed disability-inclusive goals and targets for the new Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.

C. Resolution 67/7

Role of cooperatives in social development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

59. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 67/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist members and associate members, upon request, in preparing for and observing the International Year of Cooperatives;

(b) To facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices of cooperatives at the regional level.

2. Progress made

60. In response to the request from the Commission in paragraphs 3 (a), while the secretariat did not receive requests for assistance in observing the International Year of Cooperatives, the Year was observed in many countries in the region through the organization of activities, such as seminars and conferences, which were aimed at promoting cooperatives and raising awareness of their contribution to social and economic development.

61. In response to paragraph 3 (b), ESCAP has been facilitating the sharing of experiences and good practices on cooperatives at the regional level. As part of this effort, ESCAP implemented a project to empower rural women by encouraging entrepreneurship, including through promoting the capacity of women to better market green products and organic food, and gain access to vital resources needed for businesses through the formation of

women's cooperatives and the development of their capacities in entrepreneurship. This was done through the sharing of good practices and lessons learned among countries in the region. As an outcome of the regional exchange of experiences, a guidebook had been produced on promoting entrepreneurship among women, and enhancing rural women's capacity to apply ICTs in developing e-business in the niche area of agriculture cooperatives in developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region. The guidebook provides policymakers and entrepreneurs with background information and guidelines on developing women's cooperatives, entrepreneurship and e-business.

62. Building upon the above work, ESCAP organized a regional workshop to strengthen national capacity to address gender concerns in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific in Kunming, China, from 16 to 19 July 2012. The participants, which included policymakers from national and subnational levels as well as national women's machineries, identified successful strategies and good practices in promoting gender mainstreaming and women's economic empowerment in various contexts. Rural cooperatives were identified as playing an important role in promoting women's economic empowerment, particularly women's entrepreneurship.

D. Resolution 67/8 Strengthening social protection systems in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

63. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 67/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To support members and associate members in their capacity-building by mainstreaming social protection concerns into diverse development sectors in support of fulfilling internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in the region;

(b) To provide a regional platform for the sharing and dissemination of knowledge related to social protection;

(c) To undertake analytical studies and comprehensively document good practices on social protection in order to develop a toolbox of policy and programme options for social protection, for use by member States, as appropriate, which is adaptable to the specific conditions of each country, including data collection, monitoring and evaluation tools, and support regional cooperation for further country-level initiatives;

(d) To promote South-South and triangular cooperation, which complements North-South cooperation, as well as effective public-private partnerships in order to enhance the affordability, scope and depth of social protection;

(e) To undertake advocacy on investing in social protection in order to create enabling environments for programmes based on universal principles and within a rights-based framework.

2. Progress made

64. Since the adoption of resolution 67/8, the secretariat has focused on several areas which are central to mainstreaming social protection into national policies, including in the areas of ageing, health promotion and disability.

65. In response to paragraph 2 (a), the secretariat undertook activities to build capacity among government officials and other stakeholders in the context of mainstreaming social protection concerns in various sectors. As part of the secretariat's programme on persons with disability, capacity development was carried out to enhance access to services and render social protection programmes more inclusive by taking into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities. In the area of ageing, the secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized a capacity-building workshop to support national policy responses to issues of ageing in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok from 28 February to 1 March 2012. This workshop was held as part of regional preparations for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. In addition, the Asia-Pacific Capacity Building Workshop on Elderly Care Services, which was held in Nanjing, China on 13 and 14 November 2012, highlighted the significance of social protection for older persons, especially through the adoption of a life course approach. ESCAP, in collaboration with partners, has also been supporting members and associate members in efforts to enhance the health dimension of their social protection initiatives. In this context, the secretariat delivered training on social health insurance at workshops held in Seoul from 27 June to 8 July 2011 and from 1 to 22 June 2012.

66. In response to paragraph 2 (b), the secretariat organized the Regional Forum on Elderly Care Services in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Nanjing, China, on 21 and 22 January 2011. The Forum provided a platform for the exchange of good practices related to the provision of social protection schemes to older persons. In addition, a series of policy recommendations were developed which emphasized the need for governments across the region to establish comprehensive social protection systems for providing income security and health care at old age. Social protection for older persons was also one of the main focus areas at the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing organized by the secretariat in Bangkok from 10 to 12 September 2012. The meeting identified, among other things, progress, priorities and key areas for cooperation to include older persons in the development agenda, and to strengthen social protection initiatives to advance health and well-being into old age.

67. In response to paragraph 2 (c), the secretariat is working with other regional commissions in coordinating a project on strengthening social protection to enhance national capacity to develop effective social protection policies and programmes under the United Nations Development Account. The project objectives include the development of innovative tools and approaches for tackling emerging social challenges through social protection. The secretariat is also implementing the project "Analyzing Social Protection Policies: A Focus on Income Support Schemes", which is aimed at promoting effective income support policies and programmes for the poor and other vulnerable groups in the Asia-Pacific region. One of the project's activities entails conducting research on income support policies and programmes in order to analyse their impact and contribute to the formulation of more effective social protection strategies.

68. In response to paragraph 2 (d), ESCAP organized seminars and forums to strengthen regional cooperation and government capacity to effectively promote social protection in the context of population ageing. The Asia-Pacific Policy Forum on Ageing, which was held in Nanjing, China, on 15 and 16 November 2012, focused on enhancing South-South cooperation through the exchange of national experiences and good practices. The Forum served as a platform for the compilation of key resources and sharing of experiences and good practices related to the provision of health and social services as a key element of providing social protection to older persons. It addressed the critical issue of involving the private sector and civil society in delivering services to older persons by using the principle of PPPs. The secretariat also organized, in collaboration with HelpAge International, a regional workshop on promoting community-based disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and emergency response for older people and other vulnerable groups in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan in Bangkok in October 2012. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to share good practices and agree on action points for promoting disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and emergency response among vulnerable groups by working through community-based institutions of older people in ASEAN countries and Japan.

69. In response to paragraph 2 (e), the secretariat worked closely with the International Labour Organization, and other organizations within the United Nations system, to promote the Social Protection Floor, a nationally defined set of basic social security guarantees to ensure that, as a minimum, over the life cycle, all persons in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.

E. Resolution 67/9

Asia-Pacific regional review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

70. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 67/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To bring the present resolution to the attention of the high-level meeting on AIDS to be convened by the General Assembly from 8 to 10 June 2011 as a basis for the preparation of a draft declaration which could serve as an outcome document of that meeting;

(b) To coordinate with other relevant United Nations agencies to produce an overview of the progress made in achieving universal access.

2. Progress made

71. In response to paragraph 2 (a), the Executive Secretary submitted the resolution on 3 June 2011 to the President of the General Assembly requesting that it be brought to the attention of Member States attending the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on AIDS, which was held from 8 to 10 June 2011. The resolution, in turn, was well received and had an impact on the outcome of the Meeting, including the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS. The Meeting took note of the experiences of the Asia-Pacific region, including the significant progress made in addressing HIV and AIDS,

while acknowledging that some barriers still existed in accessing HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

72. In response to paragraph 2 (b), the secretariat, in consultation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and other partners of the United Nations Regional Interagency Team on HIV and AIDS, is undertaking a comprehensive survey to chart the progress made towards achieving universal access in the Asia-Pacific region. This survey is expected to be completed by early 2014. In addition, in cooperation with the United Nations country teams, support is being provided to member States, on request, in creating enabling policy and legal environments for HIV responses in Asia and the Pacific. The support extended includes facilitating reviews and national consultations on legal and policy barriers to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

F. Resolution 68/7 Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

73. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 68/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support members and associate members upon request, including through capacity-building and technical assistance, in developing and pursuing national programmes and international cooperation during the forthcoming Decade.

2. Progress made

74. In response to paragraph 4, member States at the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, launched the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.

75. At the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, which is held every ten years, member States adopted the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

76. The Incheon Strategy charts the course of regional action for the new Decade and provides the Asian and Pacific region, and the world, with the first set of regionally agreed disability-inclusive development goals. The Strategy comprises 10 goals, 27 targets and 62 indicators. The goals in the Incheon Strategy include reducing poverty and increasing employment for persons with disabilities, enhancing political participation among persons with disabilities, ensuring disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction, promoting gender equality for women and girls with disabilities, improving disability data and accelerating the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Strategy enables member States to track progress in fulfilling the rights of the region’s 650 million persons with disabilities.

77. To further raise awareness of the importance of disability-inclusive development and catalysing the implementation of the Incheon Strategy, the High-level Meeting, honoured 10 Asia-Pacific Champions of Disability Rights, who will help to advocate for the Decade.

78. To recognize businesses that demonstrate excellence in engaging and/or catering to the needs of persons with disabilities in their business operations, the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting also launched the Asia-Pacific Disability-inclusive Business Award. The award will facilitate international cooperation to engage the private sector in disability-inclusive development. It will support member States in their efforts to increase the employment of persons with disabilities by harnessing the resources and outreach of the private sector. The first award is expected to be conferred on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2013.

79. To support implementation of the Incheon Strategy by member States and to advance regional and subregional cooperation, the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting established the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities. The first meeting of the working group is expected to take place in the first half of 2013.

80. To facilitate the implementation of the Incheon Strategy, the secretariat will develop a regional road map for the new Decade, which will be reviewed by the above working group and submitted to the Commission at its seventieth session.

81. The outcome document of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting will be submitted, through the President of the General Assembly, to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities, which is scheduled to take place on 23 September 2013.

IV. Statistics

Resolution 67/12

Improvement of civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

82. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 67/12, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary, where practicable and in accordance with the domestic law and policies of the respective countries:

(a) To convene a high-level regional meeting of decision makers from national statistical organizations, civil registration offices, ministries of health and other relevant stakeholders to raise awareness and foster increased commitment to improving civil registration and vital statistics;

(b) To facilitate the formation of a regional platform aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and information on strategies and plans to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems, which would, through the secretariat, report on its accomplishments, compile lessons learned and foster South-South and peer-to-peer cooperation for improving civil registration and vital statistics;

(c) To take a lead role in the region, in partnership with regional knowledge hubs and technical agencies, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Statistics Division and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in developing and disseminating standards, evidence, tools and guidelines for civil registration and vital statistics;

(d) To facilitate, in close collaboration with technical partners and United Nations agencies, technical assistance, including training and advisory services, to build national capacity in civil registration and vital statistics;

(e) To mainstream attention to civil registration into the subprogrammes on social development and subregional activities for development of the ESCAP programme of work, as appropriate, and work with relevant stakeholders to support and enhance commitment for civil registration and vital statistics;

(f) To consider collaborating closely with relevant partner agencies, especially the World Health Organization, the Health Metrics Network, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, to coordinate and harmonize support and mobilize global, regional and country resources for civil registration and vital statistics;

(g) To enhance the capabilities and capacity of the secretariat to respond to the requests of members for technical assistance and support in their efforts to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(h) To support members and associate members in the region, in partnership with countries and drawing on regional resources, in monitoring progress in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems upon countries' requests, if any.

2. Progress made

83. In response to paragraph 7 (a), the secretariat co-hosted, with the World Health Organization, the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Bangkok on 10 and 11 December 2012, immediately before the third session of the Committee on Statistics, which was held in Bangkok on 12 to 14 December 2012. It was well-attended, with 232 senior officials from 43 ESCAP members and associate members, three countries from outside of ESCAP and 23 international organizations taking part.

84. At the meeting, the Executive Secretary launched the "Make Every Life Count" initiative to raise awareness of the importance of improving CRVS for safeguarding rights, producing better statistics and supporting good governance. Participants of the meeting demonstrated their commitment to improving CRVS by reaching consensus on the Regional Strategic Plan for the Improvement of CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, which was subsequently endorsed by the Committee on Statistics at its third session. Echoing the outcome of the meeting, the Committee on Statistics at its third session also strongly recommended a regional meeting of relevant ministers and development partners in order to attain an adequate level of intergovernmental commitment and scope for the successful implementation of the regional strategic plan.

85. In response to paragraph 7 (b), the secretariat drafted the regional strategic plan, which contains regional activities driven by the secretariat and partner organizations to establish regional platforms to facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge between CRVS stakeholders and experts. The plan includes a monitoring framework and proposes the establishment of a regional support office to engage and coordinate its regional activities. It was presented at several regional events, including the Regional Workshop on

Good Practices in Birth Registration. This workshop, which was held in Bangkok on 9 December 2012, was co-hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

86. In response to paragraphs 7 (c) and 7 (f), the secretariat formed and chaired three CRVS working groups comprising 19 organizations from within and outside the United Nations system.¹⁰ The three working groups carried out the respective duties of organizing and pooling funds for the High-level Meeting, guiding communications and advocacy activities and contributing to the drafting of documents, such as the Regional Strategic Plan. The meetings and regular communication of these working groups have become an effective platform for concerned regional actors to update each other on CRVS-related activities, to disseminate materials and to harmonize and coordinate actions and resources, including the ongoing assessments of CRVS systems of members and associate members.

87. In response to paragraph 7 (d), the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific increased its efforts to build skills and exchange knowledge on vital statistics production, compilation and quality assessment in the region. These efforts included a regional workshop on the production and use of vital statistics, Ten member States participated in the workshop, which was held in September 2012 in the Republic of Korea.

88. In response to paragraphs 7 (d) and 7 (h), the secretariat facilitated comprehensive assessments of CRVS systems in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Thailand by using a tool developed by the World Health Organization and University of Queensland. The secretariat and partner organizations also invited member States to undertake a rapid self-assessment of their CRVS systems by using a supplementary tool. As of December 2012, some 51 members and associate members had conducted the rapid self-assessment. Additionally, the secretariat has supported the assessment of the completeness of birth and death registration in a selected sample of islands in the Maldives.

89. The results of the assessments serve as a suitable baseline for effectively monitoring and measuring progress in improving CRVS systems in the member States that had conducted the assessments. The monitoring framework of the regional strategic plan is linked with those assessments. The secretariat will continue to encourage members and associate members to conduct rapid and comprehensive assessments of their CRVS systems and support their efforts in this endeavour so that a region-wide baseline can be formed.

90. In response to paragraph 7 (e), the secretariat created the “Make Every Life Count” initiative in collaboration with 19 relevant organizations from

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank; Australian Bureau of Statistics; Health Metrics Network; International Organization for Migration Asia and Pacific Regional Office; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century; Plan International; Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women; Government of Thailand (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Health, and National Statistical Office); Secretariat of the Pacific Community; United Nations Statistics Division; United Nations Children’s Fund; United Nations Development Programme Asia-Pacific Regional Centre; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Bangkok; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Population Fund; University of Queensland; and World Health Organization.

within and outside of the United Nations system. By highlighting the significant relationships between CRVS systems and rights, statistics and governance and the benefits of improving CRVS systems for inclusive and sustainable development, the initiative mainstreams attention to improving CRVS systems in the region and thus establishing links with relevant subprogrammes.

91. With respect to social development, the secretariat has emphasized the importance of good quality, sex disaggregated statistics, including through CRVS systems. In the secretariat's work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, attention has been given to the link between CRVS and improving access of women and girls to services, education and legal rights. The secretariat also worked to mainstream CRVS into advocacy and capacity development activities in all of the ESCAP subregions, particularly the ESCAP Pacific Office, which has been working to improve coordination and ensure synergies with the Brisbane Accord Group, a group of organizations established to implement the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan. The secretariat is actively engaging with Brisbane Accord Group members and Pacific members and associate members.

92. In response to paragraph (g), the secretariat has worked closely with the World Health Organization and the University of Queensland to increase in-house CRVS capacities, such as to conduct assessments of CRVS systems, through workshops and peer-to-peer learning. Extra budgetary resources for implementing the meeting and responding to the requests of members and associate members for assistance were successfully secured, primarily from the Health Metrics Network and through the tripartite ADB/ESCAP/UNDP Millennium Development Goals programme.

V. Management issues

Resolution 68/8

Enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with regional organizations for promoting regional development

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

93. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 68/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To work, through the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and in consultation with member States and other relevant organizations operating in Asia and the Pacific at the regional and subregional levels, towards the implementation of the recommendations so that the United Nations system's engagement with such organizations is coherent and strategically coordinated, and is geared to support regional integration efforts.

2. Progress made

94. The secretariat disseminated the findings and recommendations of the study entitled *The Regional Dimension of Development and the UN System*¹¹ to the members and associate members of the Commission through the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representative Designated by Members of the Commission.

¹¹ See www.regionalcommissions.org/PrintRegionalDimensionStudy.pdf.

95. In response to paragraph 3 (a), the secretariat collaborated with other entities in the United Nations system through the Asia-Pacific RCM.

96. In 2012, the Asia-Pacific RCM held 10 ad hoc meetings and one annual session involving ESCAP and the United Nations regional agencies. The meetings, which were chaired by the Executive Secretary or Deputy Executive Secretary, as the convener of the coordination mechanism, concentrated mainly on identifying challenges facing Asia and the Pacific and common solutions at the regional and subregional level. A particular focus of RCM discussion in 2012 was on regional perspectives of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the development agenda beyond 2015.

97. At its annual session in December 2012, RCM agreed to develop a joint strategic framework for development cooperation in Asia and the Pacific between RCM and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Asia-Pacific with the aim to further strengthen inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

98. In parallel, six thematic working groups (TWGs) of RCM continued to collaborate on making progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the region. Some of the joint activities and deliverables included: (a) the setting of a new inter-agency strategy for the improvement of gender statistics in Asia and the Pacific under the auspices of the Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women; (b) a regional inter-agency publication, *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience: Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific*,¹² for the Rio+20 Conference; (c) regional implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics; (d) implementation of the Secretary-General's Joint Action Plan for Women's and Children's Health; (e) *Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia 2012*;¹³ and (f) the Asia-Pacific Regional Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which was held in Bangkok on 7 December 2012.

99. In addition, the RCM-UNDG Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth was established to jointly undertake advocacy for implementing policies that offer opportunities for youth to build their capacity and contribute to development in the face of social, economic and environmental challenges. It will also facilitate information sharing and networking, enhancing cooperation and coordination and the dissemination of innovative or good practices and lessons.

100. To enhance knowledge-sharing, the secretariat improved the RCM website (www.rcm-asiapacific-un.org/) and created a repository of events and sources related to the work of all United Nations agencies with regard to Rio+20 and the development agenda beyond 2015.

¹² Asian Development Bank, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Environment Programme, *Green Growth Resources and Resilience, Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, United Nations and Asian Development Bank publication, 2012).

¹³ International Organization for Migration and United Nations, *Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia, 2012*.

101. Strengthening collaboration with regional and subregional organizations was further pursued. The secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is aimed at enhancing cooperation in several areas, including trade, energy, transport, environment, information and communication technologies, and social development.

102. The secretariat, through its headquarters office in Bangkok and subregional office in South and South-West Asia, engaged with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. It also engaged with the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Eurasian Development Bank and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia through the Bangkok headquarters and the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia. Discussions to formalize partnership arrangements and agree on joint cooperation areas with these organizations are under way.

103. The secretariat has stepped up its work with ASEAN in selected areas, in particular ASEAN connectivity and energy. For example, the Regional Action Programme on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), which was adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its second session, in March 2012, supports several strategies of the Master Plan of ASEAN Connectivity. ESCAP is also collaborating with the ASEAN Centre for Energy on a number of issues, including energy security and planning, energy efficiency and renewable energy. In addition, the secretariat and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs have been working together on implementing the ASEAN-United Nations Comprehensive Partnership.

104. In addition, the secretariat held its annual consultations with the Asian Development Bank in July 2012 from which the two organizations agreed to sharpen the focus of their joint work and deliverables in the Asia-Pacific region by building on each others' strengths and synergies. In this regard, some of the areas cited were progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, water, environment, statistics, social development and connectivity.
