

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
AND
THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) (each individually an "Organization" and together the "Organizations") having benefitted from a fruitful collaboration under a previous memorandum of understanding signed between the two Organizations on 7 July 1993, reaffirm their desire to work together in areas of mutual interest in the service of developing countries of common membership through the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which supersedes the MoU signed between the two Organizations on 7 July 1993.

II. PURPOSE OF ESCAP-ECO COOPERATION

2. As both ESCAP and ECO have the mandates to promote resilient, inclusive and sustainable economic development and regional cooperation and integration as primary goals, ESCAP and ECO plan to work together:

- (a) to raise the standard of living and quality of life in the countries of common membership through mobilization of economic and social capital of the region towards achieving internationally agreed development goals enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ECO Vision 2025;
- (b) to promote regional cooperation, integration and connectivity as means to strengthen resilience to shared vulnerabilities of landlocked countries, and to support initiatives that help to transform land-locked countries into land-linked countries;
- (c) to enhance cooperation through project-oriented activities aimed at mainstreaming sustainable energy transition and combating climate change, global warming, land degradation and its impacts as a crosscutting phenomenon;

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- (d) to strengthen resilience against both economic shocks, such as financial crises and trade shocks, and non-economic shocks such as natural disasters and health pandemics amongst member States;
- (e) to draw synergy on the areas of common interests in the region, particularly through joint projects by means of mutual support as well as acquiring technical and financial partners in execution of joint projects; and
- (f) to promote regional cooperation and connectivity with a focus on special challenges and needs of landlocked developing countries, so that they are recognized and given appropriate consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and green post-COVID-19 recovery.

III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ESCAP-ECO COOPERATION

3. The ESCAP-ECO cooperation will be guided by the following general principles:
 - (a) add value, develop and share experiences and work as partners in mutual respect;
 - (b) respect the primary responsibility of the people, institutions and governments of developing countries of common membership for their own progress, and support their efforts in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, based on shared interests;
 - (c) commit to work together, ensure coordination and consistent collaboration to reinforce national, regional/subregional efforts of developing countries of common membership in pursuit of resilient, inclusive and sustainable development policies; and
 - (d) facilitate full stakeholder participation in consultative processes.
4. ESCAP and ECO will:
 - (a) focus on shared strategic and operational priorities of the two Organizations;
 - (b) use the comparative strengths and advantages of each Organization;
 - (c) produce analytical work, implement capacity building initiatives and organize conferences/policy dialogues at the regional and subregional levels;
 - (d) share knowledge, lessons learned and evaluations on developments in Asia and the Pacific; and
 - (e) hold consultations and policy dialogue at the regional and subregional levels.

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IV. AREAS OF ESCAP-ECO JOINT ACTIVITIES

5. The priority areas for joint activities would include those listed in the Appendix to this MoU, which may be amended from time to time with the mutual written consent of the Organizations.

V. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

6. ESCAP and ECO will cooperate through an open, comprehensive and regular exchange of information at the institutional level. They agree to make appropriate arrangements to:

- (a) exchange information and online links of published material, including flagship reports, and other public-access documents with the view of building a repository of relevant materials for this subregion; and
- (b) exchange information about:
 - conferences, seminars and workshops being organized or sponsored;
 - regional, country, sector and thematic policy/strategy documents;
 - programme and project documents; and
 - regional programme, country programme, sectoral, other projects and evaluations.

VI. RECIPROCAL INVITATIONS

7. ESCAP and ECO agree that, in the areas of common interest and in accordance with the Organizations' respective rules, policies, procedures and practices, they will extend each other reciprocal invitations to:

- (a) annual meetings of ECO and the ESCAP annual sessions; and
- (b) other meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops relevant to cooperation in the priority areas set out in the Appendix to this MoU will be shared, where appropriate.

VII. PERIODIC CONSULTATIONS

8. ESCAP and ECO will convene periodic consultations to review what is being planned, what is being implemented, and what is being achieved in terms of results as well as to discuss new challenges, opportunities and problems. They agree to hold such consultations periodically as required and not less than once every two years.

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VIII. FOCAL POINTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE MOU

9. ESCAP and ECO agree to designate as focal points for the activities under this MoU:
- (a) for ESCAP: Head, Subregional Office for North and Central Asia
 - (b) for ECO: Head of Section for International Relations

IX. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF JOINT ACTIVITIES

10. ESCAP and ECO will prepare at the outset of the term of the MoU and thereafter annually:

- (a) a list of all current operational cooperation activities between the two Organizations and their status of implementation;
- (b) a list with a brief description of all planned cooperation activities for the next year; and
- (c) an indicative list of planned cooperation activities for the two subsequent years, and annual joint reports on the status of implementation of the cooperation activities, including an assessment of results achieved.

11. ESCAP and ECO agree that:

- (a) the Organizations will conduct a joint review of the ESCAP-ECO cooperation annually or every 18 months after signature of this MoU, in consultation with the evaluation offices of the respective organizations; and
- (b) these assessments will be reviewed by ESCAP and ECO in considering further cooperation activities, including any necessary amendments to this MoU.

X. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND USE OF INSTITUTIONAL EMBLEMS

12. ESCAP and ECO agree that:

- (a) there will be public acknowledgment of the role and contribution of each Organization to cooperation projects in all public information documentation related to such cooperation; and
- (b) the use of emblem(s) of each Organization in documentation related to cooperation will be in accordance with the rules, policies and procedures of each Organization.

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XI. MISCELLANEOUS

13. The term of this MoU will be from the date of signature by both Organizations until 31 December 2025.
14. Any specific activities under this MoU will be covered by a project document or written agreement.
15. This MoU may be amended by mutual written consent of the Organizations.
16. This MoU may be terminated by either Organization on six months' notice in writing.

For the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

Place: Bangkok, Thailand

Date: 27 November 2021

For Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

Khusrav Noziri

Secretary General
ECO

Place: Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Date: 27 November 2021

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APPENDIX

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ESCAP-ECO COOPERATION

1. Trade including structural transformation related to enhanced productive capacity development, competitiveness and diversification.
2. Trade facilitation including:
 - (i) Supporting the formulation of a Joint Strategy for Digital/Paperless Trade;
 - (ii) Facilitating effective participation of member States in the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, including through targeted capacity building activities; and
 - (iii) Cooperating in the conduct and dissemination of the subregional results of the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (untfsurvey.org).
3. Transport infrastructure projects, operationalizing transport corridors, enhancing their sustainability and transforming them, where appropriate, into competitive economic corridors.
4. Transit transport facilitation and modernization of border points of the common member States. In this regard, joint activities/projects may be initiated in the following areas:
 - (i) upgrading/modernizing of existing border crossing points;
 - (ii) promoting electronic information exchange among the stakeholders involved in border crossing operations;
 - (iii) harmonizing customs transit formalities in line with international best practices;
 - (iv) encouraging digitalization of cross border transport including through use of smart road and rail solutions; and
 - (v) promoting sustainable freight transport policies in common member States.
5. Mainstreaming sustainable energy transition and addressing climate change, global warming, land degradation and their impacts as a crosscutting phenomenon.
6. Disaster risk reduction through building resilience to reduce the risk and negative impacts of disasters including transboundary and biological hazards within the scope of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and ECO Regional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Regional Priorities for Action. ESCAP-ECO cooperation in this area can be implemented through various initiatives such as exchange of data, information and knowledge, organizing joint regional consultative and technical meetings, providing capacity development support to member States, and conducting

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regional risk assessment on transboundary hazards based on priorities of the region and availability of resources.

7. Operationalizing and scaling-up ECO's Regional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (ECORFDRR) through following activities:

- (i) Review the existing ECORFDRR to scale up the framework to include risks from cascading impacts of natural and biological hazards;
- (ii) Develop training materials and organize training workshop on scaling up the ECORFDRR to address risks from cascading hazards;
- (iii) Conduct joint activities on building resilience to reduce the risk and negative impacts of disasters including transboundary and biological hazards within the scope of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and ECO Regional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Regional Priorities for Action.

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