



Agenda item 4(b): Review of regional progress and opportunities for achieving the SDGs - Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the subregional level

ESCAP Hall, United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok

22 February 2024 (14:20-15:30 hrs, UTC +7)

Background

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic and social challenges in the Asia-Pacific region spanning over three years, subregions have observed the exacerbation of pre-existing disparities and a surge in climate-induced calamities. People's and communities' livelihoods and way of life have been profoundly impacted. At mid-point since the adoption in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda, the world is not on course to accomplish any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate change is disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable countries and populations with among the lowest carbon emissions. COP28 once again raised alarm bells to world leaders and business community that climate action is vastly slow and inadequate. Ambitious climate action and SDG transitions will be a critical agenda for the Summit of the Future.

This session will take stock of the key messages from the five subregional multistakeholder SDG forums, then engage stakeholders in a collaborative deep-dive discussion on **Ambitious and Poverty-Reducing Subregional Solutions** in two urgent climate action areas – ***sustainable energy transition*** and ***water resource management***.

Sustainable energy transition - Current NDC targets by 2030, even with the most recent updates of the Asia-Pacific region's "pace-setters", continue being off-track compared to both IPCC emission reduction trajectories recommended to contain global warming within 1.5°C: the 45 per cent reductions relative to 2010 levels and the 43 per cent reductions relative to the 2019 levels. Although the region has shown immense potential to provide/harness renewable energy, it is heavily characterized by fossil-fuel locked-in economies, as fossil fuels continue



to be the main driver for greenhouse gas emissions, and those from coal are on the rise. Robust investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy production are needed to boost economic diversification and support the implementation of NDC, LT-LEDS and carbon neutrality pledges. Furthermore, among the 24 countries that have updated their NDCs since 2021, 79 per cent have integrated gender aspects with 37 per cent including them for the first time, yet their commitments lack detailed action plans that are essential for achieving gender equality in climate action. ¹

Sustainable Water Resource Management - The Asia and the Pacific region being one of the most prone to climate-related disasters in the world, making climate and disaster risk reduction a key priority for water resource management. Water resources are increasingly under threat owing to overuse and pollution, an increasing population, growing and competing water demands, climate change, rapid urbanization, inadequate sanitation services and a lack of transboundary cooperation. Key challenges include: a deep divide between urban and rural areas with regards to access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene services; growing water contamination and stress including saltwater intrusion, water scarcity and inefficient use of water exacerbated by disasters; lack cooperation of key stakeholders at all levels and of integrated approaches for water management. ² In fact, fragmentation is a key constraint for water security. Many water basins are transboundary and provide freshwater flow to people across countries. Likewise, aquifers systems are transboundary in nature, supplying groundwater for people across national and subregional borders. Yet, the management of depleting water sources are fragmented country-by-country and often replicated within countries at national scale. In this regard, subregional and inter-subregional cooperation and coordinated management is absolutely vital to achieve optimal water resources management and development solutions for all. ³

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¹ [2023 review of climate ambition in Asia and the Pacific : just transition towards regional net-zero climate resilient development | ESCAP \(unescap.org\)](#)

² Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028 Report of the Secretary-General [A 77 249 Water.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

³ [Water Resources Management Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank](#)