

Video Message by the President of ECOSOC

79th Session of ESCAP (15 May)

“Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to deliver these remarks at the opening of the seventy-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The regional commissions are part of the bedrock of the ECOSOC intergovernmental system. Your role is fully enshrined in the UN Charter and I am delighted to recognize ESCAP’s contributions to advancing regional sustainable development.

The Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide the best framework for tackling today’s most pressing challenges, including climate change, poverty eradication, inequality, as well as recovery from crisis and disasters.

Climate change poses major challenges to all strands of sustainable development in the region of Asia and the Pacific. The region includes 13 of the 30 countries most vulnerable to its impacts; without concerted action, the region could see an additional 7.5 million people fall into poverty by 2030 due to climate impacts.

Yet, despite increasing efforts and commitments over the past few years, we are off-track to achieve the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

According to the latest SDG Progress Report, just 12 percent of the SDG targets are on track. Progress on 50 percent is weak and insufficient. We are also off-track with the climate goals, with 1.1 degrees Celsius of warming above pre-industrial levels already reached.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are at the Mid-point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The IPCC clearly demonstrates that the lower the emissions in 2030, the lower the challenge in limiting global warming to 1.5°C after 2030.

The Asia -Pacific region plays a critical role in the global efforts to combat climate change and accelerate sustainable development. The region can provide an example of

synergistic action towards ramping up ambition on both the SDGs and climate action. Integrated planning, coherent policies, and economic stimulus investments designed to meet both the SDGs and climate challenges can generate significant co-benefits and speed up progress.

The upcoming intergovernmental processes can provide a useful platform to highlight some of the challenges and opportunities associated with carbon markets and enact priority actions to address them.

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July will be a critical opportunity to review in detail the development challenges the world is facing now. We must turn the tide. As ECOSOC President, I am committed to making the session a key milestone on the way to the SDG Summit in September.

The SDG Summit must become a turning point in global efforts to rescue the SDGs. We must raise political commitment, mobilize action and strengthen multilateral partnerships.

The Secretary-General's Climate Ambition Summit in September, the UNFCCC COP28 in the United Arab Emirates and the Global Stocktake later in the year will all shine a light on actions to address some of the most critical challenges posed by climate change, while driving sustainable development.

I wish you productive deliberations.

Thank you.