

Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023:

Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and
Sustainable Connectivity

Agenda item 3: Special Body of Least Developed, Landlocked
Developing and Small Island Developing States
1530-1700 hours (Bangkok Time), 16 May 2023

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

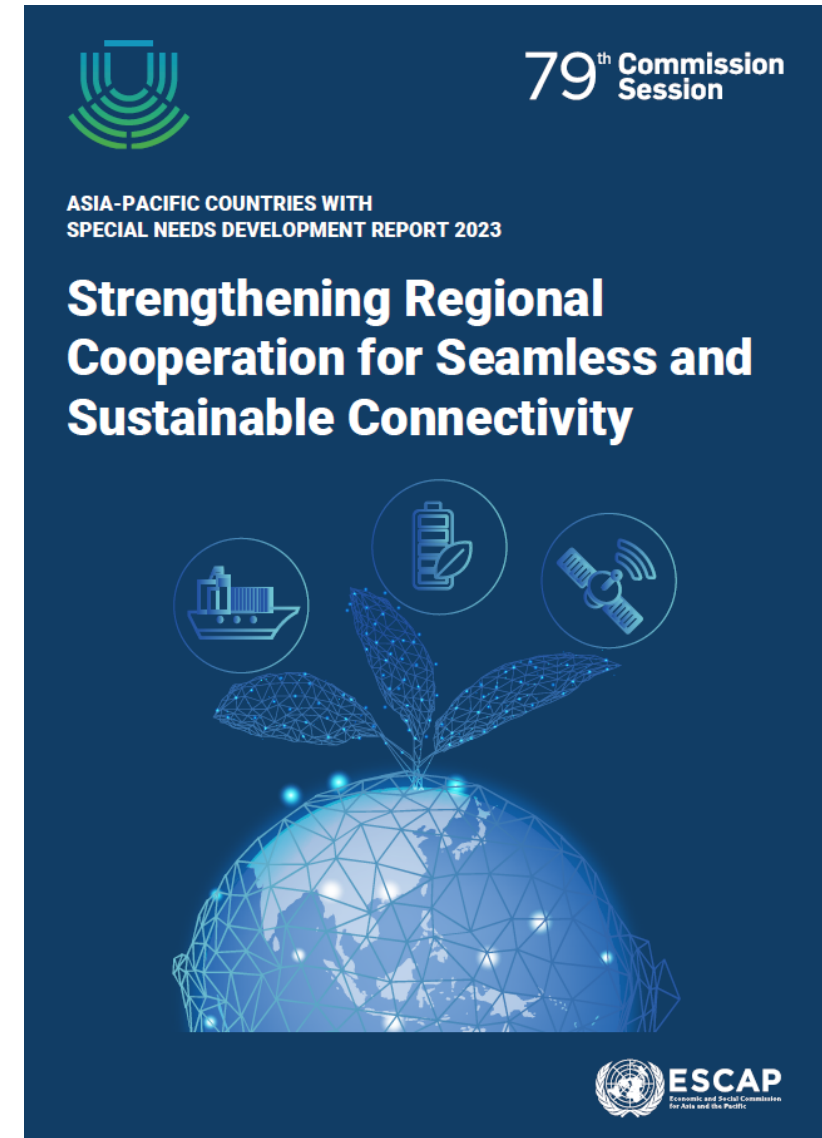
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP





Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity (Document ESCAP/79/5)

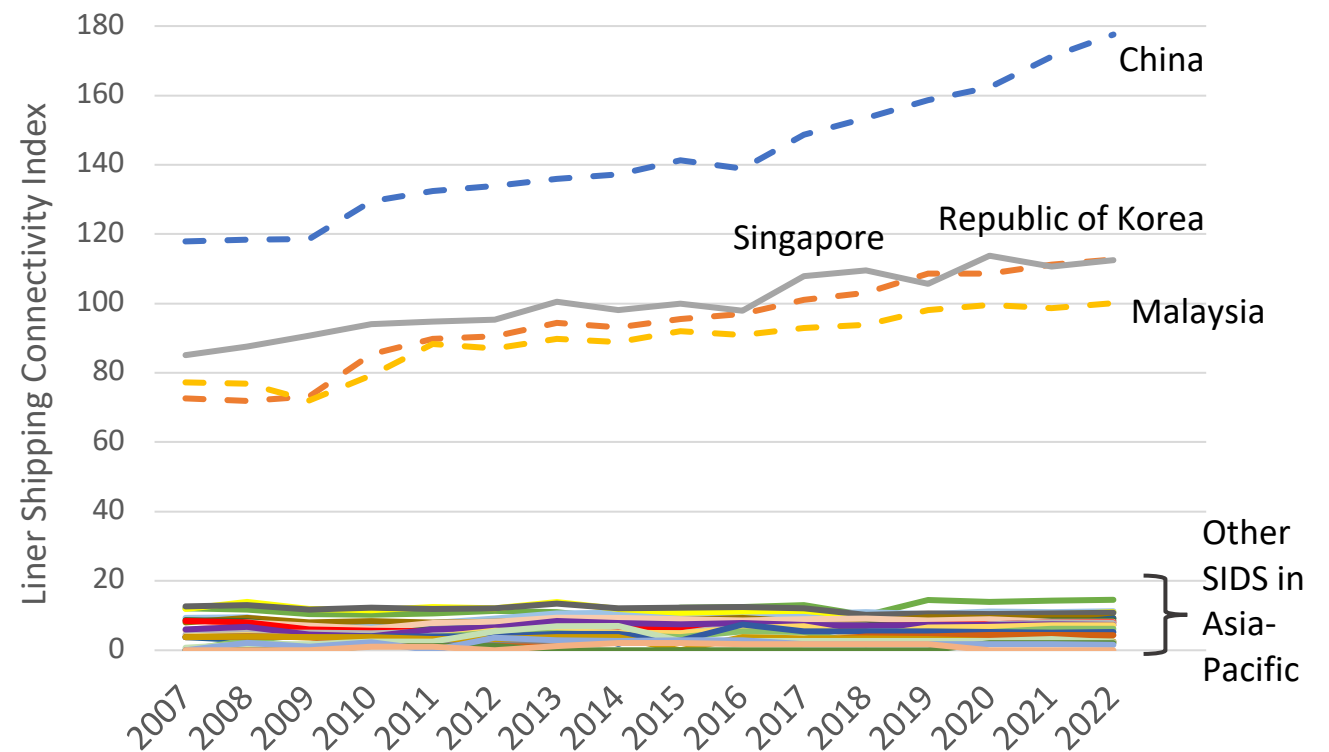
- Examines the role of transport, energy and ICT connectivity in achieving sustainable development and a low-carbon, resilient economy
- Focuses on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in Asia and the Pacific
- Discusses how the recent connectivity shocks have affected these countries
- Provides examples of how regional cooperation can facilitate a long-term transformation towards a net-zero emission future



Transport connectivity: current status and challenges

- LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are poorly connected in the region, with widening gaps compared to other countries
- Systemic factors are key bottlenecks
 - Unbalanced modal split
 - Infrastructure shortages
 - Insufficient operational connectivity
 - Unrealized transit potential

Maritime connectivity levels in selected States in Asia and the Pacific as measured by the Liner Shipping Connectivity Index



Source: UNCTADstat.

Note: The solid lines represent SIDS, and the dashed lines represent other selected countries in the region.



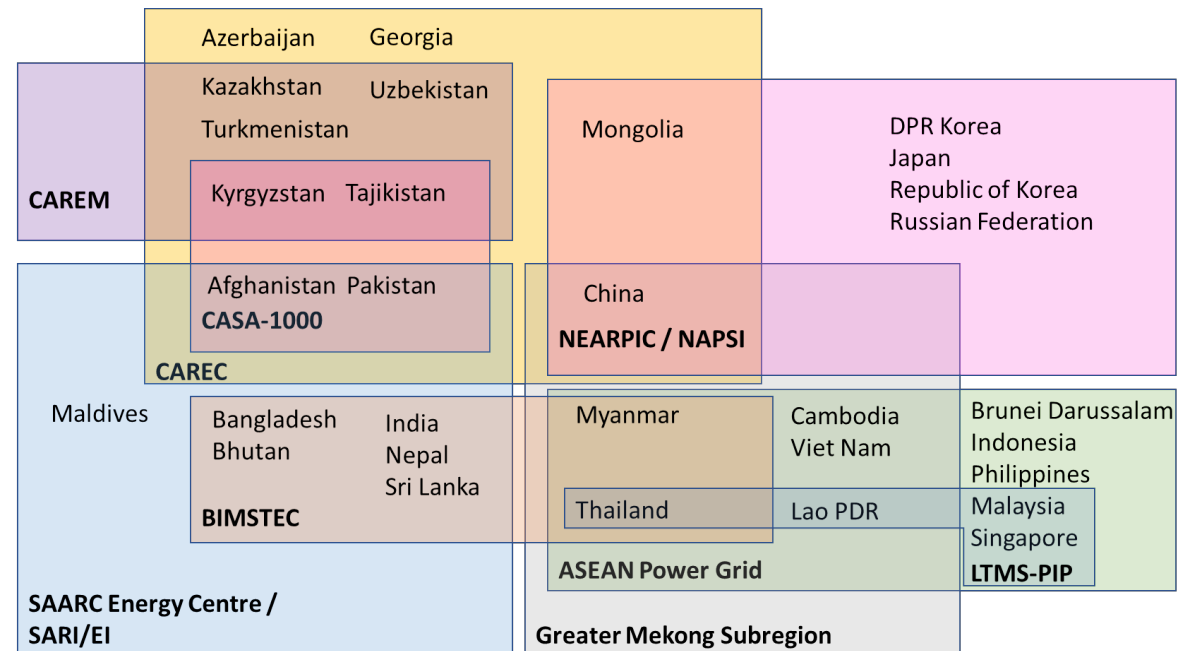
Transport connectivity: opportunities for policy actions and regional cooperation

- The polycrisis exacerbated these challenges but also gave rise to new opportunities
- Suggested actions include:
 - Continuing support to connectivity initiatives involving LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
 - Scaling up multimodality
 - Promoting transport corridor cooperation
 - Supporting resilient and sustainable maritime connectivity in SIDS

Energy connectivity: current status and challenges

- Power system connectivity can bring significant economic and social benefits
- Several connectivity initiatives exist, but most remain at the study stage or at best bilateral
- Political will and strong institutional frameworks are fundamental

Selected existing power system connectivity initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region





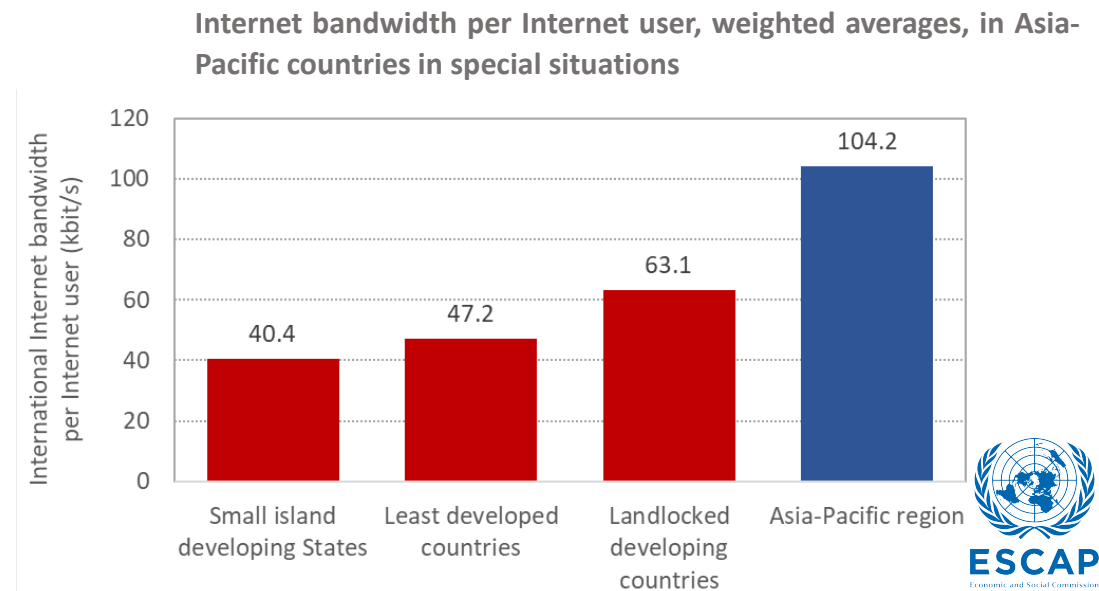
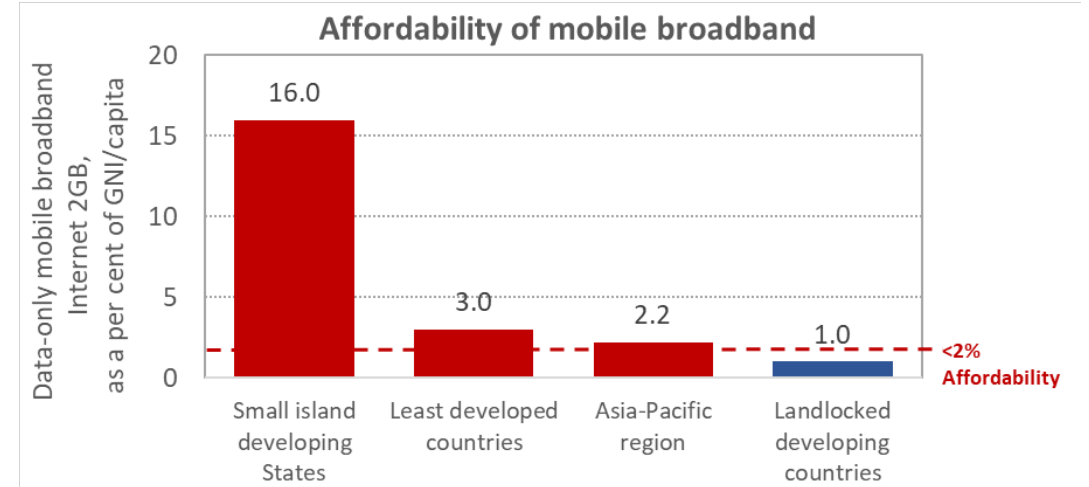
Energy connectivity: opportunities for policy actions and regional cooperation

- Understanding the benefits associated with power system connectivity is key to accelerating the implementation
- Countries looking to connect need a level playing field to enable the development of political, technical and institutional standards required for power system connectivity
- For SIDS, cooperation needs to include harmonization of regulatory frameworks and technical collaboration



ICT connectivity: current status and challenges

- Access to broadband in countries in special situations lags behind the regional average
- Mobile broadband Internet is several times more expensive in these countries, especially in SIDS, than the Asia regional average
- Internet usage increased significantly during the pandemic, although large gaps remain in Internet bandwidth capacity





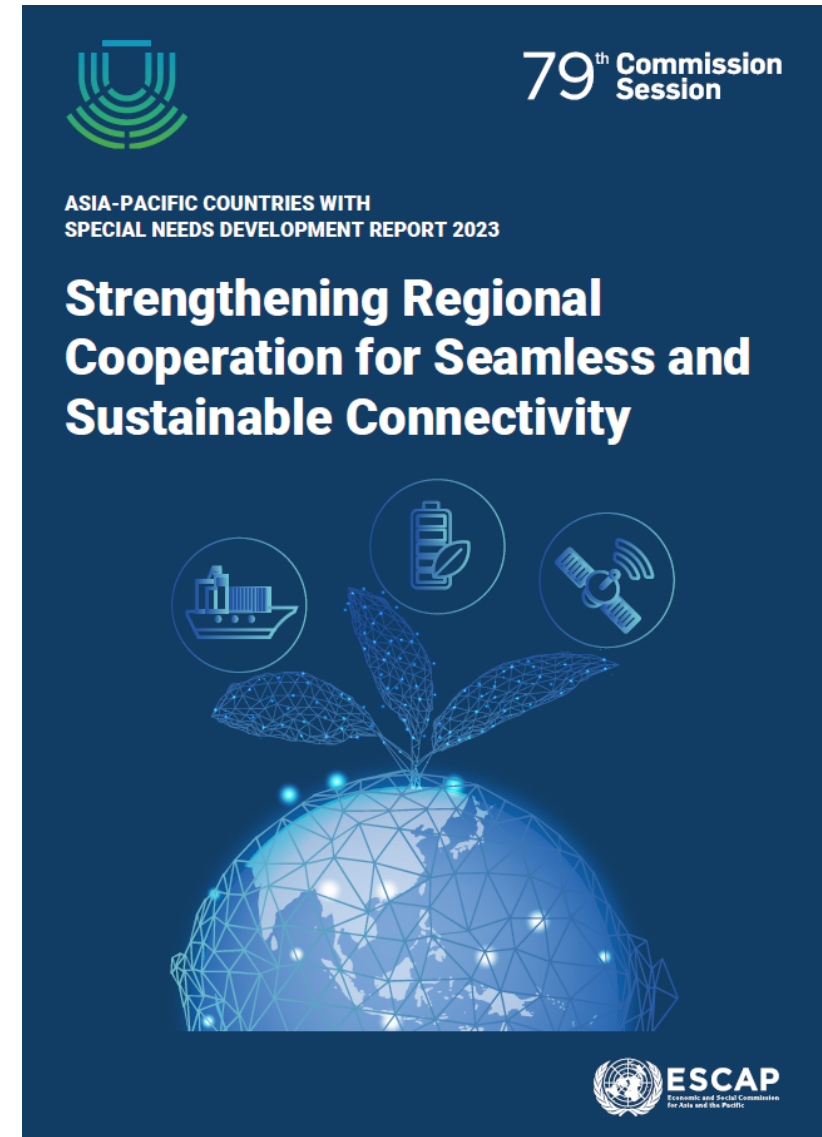
ICT connectivity: opportunities for policy actions and regional cooperation

- Suggested areas for policy actions and regional cooperation include:
 - Promoting public-private partnerships (PPP) for digital infrastructure
 - Strengthening digital capacity and adopting digital technologies and applications
 - Promoting the safe and secure use of data through capacity building and regulatory policies



Ways forward

- Supporting decarbonization efforts along the Trans-Asian Railway, Asian Highways and dry ports, and with green shipping corridors initiatives
- Promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development through the implementation of the Regional Road Map on Power System Connectivity
- Promoting regional ICT connectivity through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway platform
- Maximizing synergies across the three sectors through co-deployment and management





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