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Introductory Statement (as prepared for delivery)

Agenda Item 5: Management Issues

Friday, 19 May 2023
10:00-12:00 hrs.
ESCAP Hall, UNCC

Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a pleasure to be with you during these deliberations on management issues. Allow me to say a few words about each of the documents you are considering today.

(a) Proposed programme plan for 2024

The proposed programme plan of ESCAP for 2024 (Document ESCAP/79/21) provides the overall strategic orientation and a programme of work for each of the nine subprogrammes.

It outlines how ESCAP will work with member States and partners to advance regional cooperation in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Developed in accordance with General Assembly resolutions on programme planning, an earlier draft of the plan was circulated to the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR). The comments received from the ACPR were incorporated into the current document.

Following the Commission's endorsement, the proposed programme plan will be reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and will then be considered by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly as part of the Secretariat's overall programme budget document.

The Secretariat seeks your endorsement of the proposed programme plan for 2024. And we count on your governments' support as it goes through the approval process with the CPC and the Fifth Committee.

(b) Overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development

Allow me to now turn to the overview of ESCAP partnerships and the outcomes of capacity development activities funded by extrabudgetary contributions received in 2022 (Document ESCAP/79/22).

The hold of the pandemic on the region gradually eased last year, and regional cooperation hastened with travel and in-person meetings.

ESCAP was honoured to co-host last September with the Government of Thailand and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation the eleventh Global South-South Development Expo under the theme "Advancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable COVID-19 Recovery: Towards a Smart and Resilient Future." The Expo brought together 1,000 participants to the UN Conference Centre (UNCC), making it the largest meeting in the UNCC since the onset of the pandemic, and it was attended online by over 4,000 more.

Indeed South-South and triangular cooperation has been key in enabling the secretariat to support the region in COVID-19 recovery and the acceleration of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The secretariat has worked with countries in and outside the region to implement its technical cooperation programmes in support of its member States.

In addition to newly established partnerships, the secretariat expanded and extended partnerships with the Korean International Cooperation Agency and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Further, negotiations for revamping partnerships began with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) in 2022.

ESCAP has also seen an increase in demand for short-term and targeted technical assistance delivered through the UN Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC). All subprogrammes have ensured close cooperation with United Nations Development Entities, including UN Country Teams, in delivering such support.

Nevertheless, total contributions received for technical cooperation fell by around \$3 million to \$21.1 million in 2022 with the closing of large projects.

The secretariat is intensifying its resource mobilization efforts to ensure continuity in areas such as women's empowerment and public-private partnerships.

I would like to express the secretariat's deep appreciation to member States, donors and development partners, many of whom are represented here, for their continuous support to ESCAP.

Thank you very much, Chair.