

Agenda item 3: Special Body of Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States

ESCAP Hall, UNCC and online
1530-1700 hours (Bangkok Time UTC+7)
16 May 2023

Concept Note

More than half of the Commission's 62 members and associate members are least developed countries, landlocked developing countries or small island developing States. These countries in special situations face unique challenges owing to their small economic size, limited resources or geographic location.

Seamless and sustainable transport, energy and digital connectivity across countries is central to improving the lives of people. It can therefore be seen as a catalyzer for sustainable development. It is also an important tool to accelerate climate actions in and for these countries. For instance, improved multimodal transport connectivity can allow for the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport; greater energy connectivity can accelerate the cost-efficient deployment and integration of renewable energy, and enhanced digital connectivity can assist them in accessing green and innovative climate adaptation solutions. The long-term benefits of seamless and sustainable connectivity will be especially significant for these countries given the current and future climate impacts and the sustainable development dividends from having a low-carbon and climate-resilient world.

Document ESCAP/79/5, *Summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity*, examines how regional cooperation on seamless and sustainable connectivity can facilitate a long-term transformation towards a net zero carbon emissions future. Recognizing ongoing efforts and existing initiatives, the document underscores the need to seek synergies between transport, energy and digital connectivity initiatives in the region and to develop and adjust national institutional, regulatory, procedural and policy frameworks. It also suggests that the urgency of the climate change response be considered at the core of regional cooperation efforts, providing relevant examples. Development partners, including through South-South cooperation, will continue to be vital given the large and persistent financing gaps in countries in special situations.

Purpose of the session

The Special Body will bring forth policy messages that are specific to these groups of countries. The Commission is invited to deliberate on the policy priorities highlighted in document ESCAP/79/5, *Summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity* and on how countries can collectively address them. It also provides an opportunity for member States to reflect on the opportunities provided in 2023 to craft international agendas that accelerate the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, such as the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (which was completed in March 2023), the Third Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries which will be held in 2024, and will be preceded by a Euro-Asian review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries in the second half of 2023, and the Fourth Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2024 which will be built upon a regional reviews of the SAMOA Pathway, also scheduled for mid-2023.

Tentative programme

1530-1550

Chair

- H.E. Ms. Fekitamoelea Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tonga

Welcome and introduction

- Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP
- Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)

Keynote address

- H.E. Ms. Fiaame Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister, Samoa

1550-1600

Presentation by Executive Secretary of ESCAP of the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity*

1600-1640

Invited statements on the theme “Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity” and/or on the implementation of global programmes of action for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

- H.E. Mr. Mark Brown, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cook Islands
- H.E. Mr. Seve Paeniu, Minister of Finance, Tuvalu
- H.E. Mr. Askar Zhambakin, Vice-Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry, Kazakhstan
- H.E. Mr. Begmyrat Atayev, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Turkmenistan
- H.E. Mr. Ankhbayar Nyamdorj, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mongolia
- H.E. Mr. KORM Ribaun, Secretary-General, National Committee for ESCAP, Cambodia
- H.E. Mr. Sefanaia Nawadra, Director-General, Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- Mr. Taffere Tesfachew, Managing Director of the United Nations Technology Bank for the Least developed Countries, and Member of the Committee for Development Policy for the United Nations
- Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director, International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries (ITLLDC)

1640-1700

Country statements