Agenda item 4: Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States

Harnessing a New Generation of Programmes of Action for Sustainable Development Ambitions

ESCAP Hall, UNCC
1400-1600 hours (Bangkok Time UTC+7)
22 April 2025

Concept Note

Countries in special situations, encompassing least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing States (SIDS), face unique vulnerabilities and development challenges. These countries comprise 30 of 53 members and 7 of 9 associate members of ESCAP. Their often-small populations and limited domestic markets hinder the viability of productive sectors and limit their ability to achieve economies of scale. For many, geographic remoteness from major economic centres constrains access to regional and global markets.

Recognizing these challenges, the international community has adopted a new set of global programmes of action: the Doha Programme of Action for LDCs (2022-2031), the new Programme of Action for LLDCs (2024-2034), and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (2024-2034). Developed in the context of pandemic recovery and heightened climate change challenges, these programmes are closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and offer updated actions and targets focused on resilience, sustainability and digitalization. Their successful implementation is therefore critical for these countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and realize national development aspirations.

The Special Body, deliberating on Document ESCAP/81/5, *Summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2025: Harnessing a New Generation of Programmes of Action for Sustainable Development Ambitions*, will explore successful examples in implementing previous programmes of action and discuss current implementation plans, challenges encountered and specific areas where stronger regional cooperation and support from the international community, including ESCAP and their development partners, are needed. The Commission may also wish to take note of Section I of Document ESCAP/81/6, *Summary of progress made in the implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*, and provide guidance on the future work of the secretariat in that regard.

Guiding Questions

1) **Successes and Lessons Learned**: What key achievements resulted from implementing the previous programmes of action (i.e., Istanbul, Vienna, and SAMOA Pathway)? What policies or partnerships contributed to these successes, and what lessons can be applied to the new programmes of action?
2) **Implementation and Challenges**: How do you plan to implement the new programmes of actions? What are the anticipated challenges, and what strategies, policies or capacity building are needed? Are there synergies between these programmes and the 2030 Agenda?
3) **Regional Cooperation and ESCAP's role**: How can regional cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, help implement the new programmes of action? What specific ESCAP support (e.g., technical assistance, capacity building, knowledge sharing or convening platforms) would be most valuable? How can ESCAP best coordinate with other UN agencies and development partners to maximize its impact for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS?

Tentative programme

1400-1415 **Opening and introduction** (5-7 min each)

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

1415-1440 **Keynote addresses** (5-7 min each)

- **H.E. Mr. Rexon Ramofafia,** Minister of National Planning and Development Coordination, Solomon Islands
- **H.E. Mr. Bremity Lakjohn**, Minister in Assistance to the President and Environment, Marshall Islands
  H.E. Mr. Allakbayev Begmyrat, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy, Turkmenistan

1440-1445 **Introductory video** of the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2025: Harnessing a New Generation of Programmes of Action for Sustainable Development Ambitions.*

1445-1600 **Country statements** (3 min each)