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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Seventy-sixth session**

Bangkok, 21 May 2020

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific****Summary of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission held in the period 2019–2020****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The present document contains the matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific or brought to its attention emanating from the Committees that met since the seventy-fifth session of the Commission, namely, the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its sixth session, the Committee on Energy on its second session, and the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development on its second session.

The Commission may wish to provide guidance on these matters and endorse the recommendations brought to its attention.

**I. Introduction**

1. The present document contains the matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) or brought to its attention emanating from the Committees that met since the seventy-fifth session of the Commission, namely, the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its sixth session, the Committee on Energy on its second session, and the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development on its second session.

**II. Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its sixth session****A. Overview**

2. The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction held its sixth session in Bangkok from 28 to 30 August 2019.<sup>1</sup>

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\* ESCAP/76/L.1/Rev.1.

<sup>1</sup> ESCAP/CDR/2019/3.

3. The Committee was informed of efforts to strengthen disaster resilience, including efforts to review and implement national legislation and policies and strengthen early warning systems. It was further informed of country-led efforts to strengthen disaster resilience through international collaboration.

4. The Committee noted the work of the secretariat in strengthening its partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and recognized the importance of further strengthening the cooperation between the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and other regional associations in Asia and the Pacific to promote disaster risk reduction.

5. The Committee reconfirmed its commitment to support the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) and the related Commission resolution 75/6. The Committee requested the secretariat to enhance its efforts to assist member States in improving the use and sharing of geospatial information for resilient and sustainable development and the implementation of the Plan of Action.

6. The Committee welcomed the efforts to share information and strengthen disaster resilience through disaster loss accounting and the regional cooperation activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management.

## **B. Matters calling for action by the Commission**

7. The following recommendations of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction are brought to the attention of the Commission for its consideration and action:

### **Recommendation 1**

The Committee recommends that the Commission scale up regional cooperation to complement national efforts in reducing disaster risk, in recognition of the changing geography and intensification of disaster risks.

### **Recommendation 2**

The Committee recommends that the Commission support the member States in capacity-building, data access and exchange, learning, and access to new services and technologies to respond to the increasing complexity of disaster risk by leveraging regional, North-South and South-South cooperation.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Committee recommends that the Commission take note of the request of the World Meteorological Organization to join the thematic working group on disaster risk reduction and resilience of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism or a similar issue-based regional United Nations coordination group on disaster risk reduction, in order to support the operationalization of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee recognizes the work of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning and its service nodes in the region and recommends the Commission to scale up space applications for

disaster risk reduction and resilience to support high disaster risk, low-capacity countries, including through the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network.

### **C. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission**

8. The following decisions adopted by the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction are brought to the attention of the Commission:

#### **Decision 1**

The Committee notes the operationalization of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network, with priority given to the regional platform for multi-hazard early warning systems for floods and droughts.

#### **Decision 2**

The Committee underlines the importance of the findings of *The Disaster Riskscape across Asia-Pacific: Pathways for Resilience, Inclusion and Empowerment – Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019* with regard to supporting risk-informed policy decisions of member States and requests the secretariat to further deepen its analytical research to respond to the changing geography and intensification of disaster risks.

#### **Decision 3**

The Committee welcomes the offer from the Government of Indonesia to host the fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2022 and requests the secretariat to assist with the organization of the Conference.

#### **Decision 4**

The Committee recognizes that the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) is important to efforts to support disaster risk reduction and resilience and requests the Commission to enhance its collaboration, including with the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific, in the management of geospatial information in the region.

#### **Decision 5**

The Committee recognizes the importance of geospatial information applications for disaster risk reduction and requests the secretariat to enhance its efforts in capacity-building, the sharing of good practices and the provision of technical support on geospatial information applications to countries affected by disasters.

#### **Decision 6**

The Committee notes the results of the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, including the Disaster-related Statistics Framework.

**Decision 7**

Concerning future regional collaboration on disaster-related statistics, the Committee endorses the recommendations made by the Committee on Statistics at its sixth session (ESCAP/CST/2018/6, recommendation 3).

**III. Committee on Energy on its second session****A. Overview**

9. The Committee on Energy held its second session in Bangkok from 9 to 11 October 2019.<sup>2</sup>

10. Representatives attending the Committee reasserted their commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7. The Committee was informed of various strategies for realizing the energy transition, which included passing legislation, increasing renewable energy, enhancing energy infrastructure, improving regional cooperation and energy diplomacy to reduce barriers for trade and increase connectivity, creating a favourable investment environment, supporting new technologies and engaging with civil society.

11. The Committee noted the importance of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the various strategies for energy transition, which included balancing the development of energy infrastructure, encouraging private sector participation, creating a favourable investment environment, implementing market reforms and improving cyber security.

12. The Committee expressed its willingness to enhance regional connectivity, highlighting the benefits of that approach given the potential power surplus in some countries of the region. The Committee noted the existing cross-border bilateral and multilateral connections across the region.

**B. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

13. The following recommendations of the Committee on Energy are brought to the attention of the Commission for its consideration and action:

**Recommendation 1**

The Committee recommends that the secretariat prepare an analytical paper on international energy security for the third session of the Committee on Energy in 2021.

**Recommendation 2**

The Committee welcomes the work of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity and the draft regional road map on power system connectivity and promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development (ESCAP/CE/2019/3) and invites member States to submit comments on the draft road map before 1 December 2019. The Committee also recommends that the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity review comments on the draft road map, if any, and finalize it for consideration by the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.

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<sup>2</sup> ESCAP/CE/2019/4.

### Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the secretariat carry out capacity-building, training and outreach activities to support member States in their efforts to assess the safety and resilience of energy infrastructure against natural disasters as well as promote understanding of the energy trilemma in the context of the Asia-Pacific region.

### Recommendation 4

The Committee notes the progress of work to develop national road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the development of the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning, based on consultations in three pilot countries, and recommends that the secretariat continue to support member States, particularly least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries, and Pacific Island countries and territories in developing their national road maps using the tool.

## IV. Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development on its second session

### A. Overview

14. The Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development held its second session in Bangkok from 6 to 8 November 2019.<sup>3</sup>

15. The Committee noted the ongoing efforts of member States to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into economic policymaking and recognized that much progress had been made in mapping the Goals into national development plans and various sectoral strategies and in monitoring progress, including at the subnational level.

16. The Committee highlighted that poverty remained the primary challenge in most developing countries, and that the goal of ending poverty required multifaceted interventions, including strengthening of social protection, crop insurance, support for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and export diversification as well as the implementation of major infrastructure projects.

17. The Committee noted the importance of broadening the tax base in order to finance sustainable development and the efforts of and progress made by member States in strengthening tax revenues and improving tax compliance and services. The Committee highlighted the importance of regional tax cooperation to address cross-border and emerging tax challenges and also noted that countries of the region had increased their participation in and contribution to international and regional tax cooperation.

18. The Committee emphasized the need to effectively implement plans and policies that were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Those included the assessment of financing requirements, the development of financing strategies and increasing the fiscal space through tax and budget reforms. The Committee therefore welcomed the secretariat's recent work on estimating the investment needs to achieve the Goals for the Asia-Pacific region

<sup>3</sup> ESCAP/CMPF/2019/6.

as well as the United Nations development system-wide effort to develop integrated national financing frameworks to support member States.

19. The Committee highlighted the critical role of financing in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly for countries with special needs, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The Committee noted, with concern, that the financing gap for the achievement of the Goals was increasing every year and that interest payments associated with an increased reliance on non-concessional borrowing were reducing fiscal space. The Committee highlighted the importance of mobilizing new and innovative financing schemes, including financial technologies, to engage non-State actors, including the private sector, philanthropies and civil society organizations, in order to close the financing gap.

**B. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

20. The Committee requests the secretariat to provide further analysis and capacity-building support on assessing investment requirements and associated financing strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as on aligning national economic policies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

21. The Committee requests the secretariat to continue its support, through research and capacity-building activities, to countries with special needs in the implementation of their relevant programmes of action, including to ensure a smooth transition for countries graduating from the category of least developed countries.

22. The Committee requests the secretariat to continue supporting member States in developing capacities to implement the public-private partnership modality for infrastructure financing through, for example, South-South cooperation, exchanges of experiences and the development of bankable projects.

23. The Committee requests the secretariat to facilitate regional cooperation on innovative finance to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

24. The Committee requests the secretariat to assist member States, through its analytical work and capacity-building activities, in enhancing the access of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to finance by supporting the development of relevant policies, regulations and support mechanisms as well as pertinent information technology and financial technology solutions.

25. The Committee requests the secretariat to continue its support, through research and capacity-building activities, to member States, particularly countries with special needs, in addressing cross-border and common domestic tax challenges.