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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**Seventy-sixth session**

Bangkok, 21 May 2020

Items 5 (c) and (d) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific:**

**Environment and development**

**Disaster risk reduction**

**Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission\*\***

*Summary*

The present document contains overviews of the annual reports of the following international and intergovernmental organizations: the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia; the Mekong River Commission; the Typhoon Committee; and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

These organizations were established under the auspices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to work on areas under their respective competence to support economic and social development in the region.

The Commission may wish to comment on the work of these organizations and take note of this document.

**I. Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia**

1. The Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia has carried out technical programmes and activities that focus on capacity building, knowledge sharing and technology transfer through a series of workshops, training courses, symposiums, working group meetings and expert visits. The activities carried out were in line with the Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 to cover four aspects as listed in the table, which summarizes the participation of member countries of Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia in its technical activities during 2019. All activities were open to all participants nominated by the permanent representatives of the member countries.

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

\*\* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

### Summary of member countries' participation in technical activities in 2019

<i>Strategic goal</i>	<i>Number of activities</i>	<i>Number of participations</i>
<b>Outreach</b>	1	23
<b>Cooperation and partnership</b>	30	419
<b>Knowledge enhancement and sharing</b>	12	312
<b>Data and information</b>	5	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>880</b>

2. The outreach activities include deliverance of geoscience to the public through its participations in a number of important international meetings with a total of 23 participants. The cooperation and partnership activities of member countries, cooperating countries and organizations include 30 activities with 419 participants. The knowledge enhancement and sharing has 12 activities and 312 participants. Data and information include five activities with a total of 126 participants.

3. Topics of important activities in 2019 include, among others, mineral (unconventional: shale gas and oil) energy resources and sustainable development, geohazards (prediction and mitigation), groundwater (transboundary aquifer), geoheritage (geopark) and geoinformation sharing.

4. Publications in 2019 include proceedings of the thematic session of the fifty-fourth Annual Session of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (Geoscience for future Earth Beyond History Toward Mystery), a report of the joint Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia and Geological Survey of Japan "Groundwater Project Phase III", and the Annual Report 2019, which is available online at <http://ccop.asia/publication-details/93>.

## II. Mekong River Commission

5. The Mekong River Commission continues to implement its core river basin management functions including river monitoring, flood and drought forecasting, basin-wide planning, and coordinating implementation of water utilization procedures for data sharing, consultation on major infrastructure projects on the Mekong mainstream, water quality monitoring and maintenance of river flows. In 2019, Mekong River Commission released its flagship Mekong State of the Basin Report, with detailed data, information and analysis about the conditions of the Mekong river basin, in environmental, social, economic, climate change and cooperation parameters. While the overall economic conditions in the basin are positive with solid economic growth, poverty reduction and productivity improvement, the modification of mainstream flow regime, the reduction in sediment flows, the continuing loss of wetlands, the deterioration of riverine habitats, and pressures on capture fisheries, are some of the major challenges facing the Mekong.

6. Another major highlight for the Commission is the completion of the six month prior consultation process for the proposed Pak Lay mainstream hydropower project, which resulted in agreement on a Joint Statement and Joint Action Plan. This provides ongoing engagement mechanism for the Mekong River Commission and its stakeholders to engage in the process of improving and monitoring the implementation of the mitigation measures for potential negative impacts. Similarly, the Joint Environment Monitoring programme was agreed to be implemented for two operational Lower Mekong mainstream dams which would assist in monitoring, reporting and recommending adaptive management measures should significant negative impacts emerge.

7. In the face of the historical low-flows and drought of 2019, the Mekong River Commission Council of ministers approved the Drought Management Strategy 2020–2025 in order to improve monitoring and forecasting and various measures to cope with and adapt to drought. A central element to respond more proactively to the changing basin is to reinvigorate the Mekong River Commission’s Data, Information, Modelling, Forecasting and Communication systems, which received endorsement from the member countries. Finally, major advances were made for international cooperation and partnerships, including concrete collaboration and relationships have increased with China and the Mekong Lancang Cooperation and with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Fruitful high-level visits and mutual learnings were conducted to Australia/Murray-Darling, China, Japan and United States/Mississippi and Columbia river basins.

### III. Typhoon Committee

8. The Typhoon Committee is an intergovernmental body under the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) promoting collaboration on addressing typhoon-related disasters of 14 members: Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Thailand; United States; and Viet Nam. In promoting collaboration among members, the Committee has integrated and enhanced regional activities to reduce the loss of lives and minimize social, economic, and environmental impacts by typhoon-related disasters.

9. In 2019, 29 named tropical cyclones of tropical storm intensity or above were formed over the western North Pacific and the South China Sea. This number was above the climatological average of 25.6. 5 tropical cyclones made landfall over China, where Lekima (2019) was the strongest with 71 fatalities. Japan was hit by 5 tropical cyclones, and Hagibis (2019) made landfall on Shizuoka Prefecture and brought record-breaking rainfall to eastern and northern Japan with over 90 deaths. Republic of Korea was affected by 7 tropical cyclones in 2019 and heavy rain was observed during the passage of Mitag (2018) with the accumulated rainfall exceeded 550 millimeters in Uljin city. The Philippines witnessed 3 tropical cyclones including Phanfone (2019) that killed 50 people. Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Viet Nam were also respectively hit by Lingling (2013) in September and Mun (2004) in July.

10. The Committee has implemented the decisions of the 51st session of the Committee which was held from 26 February to 1 March 2019 in Guangzhou, China. In close coordination with the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones, the Committee completed the 2nd phase of the Synergized Standard Operating Procedure project, conducting national workshops in Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Working Group on Meteorology, in its annual meeting held in Tokyo, Japan on 7–9 October 2019,

reviewed and discussed significant tropical cyclone events, recent improvements in data, product and analysis techniques, enhanced cooperation between research and operational fields, and annual priority plans of the working group. The Roving Seminar was organized on 11–13 November 2019 in Beijing, China on quantitative precipitation estimation and forecasting. The 8th annual meeting of the Working Group on Hydrology was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 15–18 October, where members reviewed the implementation of annual operating plans of 2019 and proposed new plans for 2020 and beyond including knowledge sharing on storm surge inundation modelling. The Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction organized its 14th annual meeting in Ulsan, Republic of Korea on 18–20 June and reviewed the status of implementation of joint activities and discussed plans for coming years. Among others, it established a platform in the Typhoon Committee website to facilitate sharing of disaster risk reduction information among members of the working group.

More information about the activities of the Committee can be found at: <http://www.typhooncommittee.org/tc-annual-session/>.

#### **IV. Panel on Tropical Cyclones**

11. The WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones is an intergovernmental regional body jointly established by WMO and ESCAP in 1972. The Panel, evolving into a collaboration of 13 members: Bangladesh, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, has been recognized as an important body that integrates the actions and plans of the meteorological, hydrological and disaster risk reduction components to reduce the impacts of tropical cyclone-related disasters through enhanced regional collaboration.

12. In 2018, there were 7 cyclonic disturbances with Cyclonic Storm intensity over the North Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal), 2 cyclonic storms, 1 severe cyclonic storm, 3 very severe cyclonic storms and 1 extremely severe cyclonic storm. Out of these, 3 formed over the Arabian Sea, which is more than the normal frequency of 1 Cyclonic Storm per year. As of September 2019, 3 Cyclonic Storms formed in 2019, namely CS “Pabuk” over South China Sea and Bay of Bengal (28 Dec 2018 – 7 Jan), ESCS “Fani” over Bay of Bengal (26 Apr – 4 May) and VSCS “Vayu” over Arabian Sea (10–17 Jun). The Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre -Tropical Cyclones in New Delhi monitored, predicted and provided advisories and training to the member States of the Panel for effective management of the impacts of the cyclones.

13. The forty-sixth session of the Panel was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar from 9–13 September 2019. At the session, the Panel thanked the Pakistan Meteorological Department for the secretariat services offered since 2000, decided to invite other members to host the secretariat of the Panel and also to put in place a modality for having rotational secretariat. In addition, the Panel appointed a committee from India, Myanmar, Oman, Thailand and Sri Lanka as its members with a task to come up with a proper mechanism for the secretariat. The Panel also recommended strengthening coordination with Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and initiating a flood committee similar to the same in ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee.

More information about the activities of the Panel can be found at: <https://public.wmo.int/en/events/meetings/ptc-46>.