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Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission

Management issues

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document contains a summary of the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on which the secretariat is required to report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session.

The Commission may wish to review the progress made and provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance on the effective implementation of the resolutions.

I. Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries

Resolution 75/1
Implementation of the outcome of the Euro-Asian Regional Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

1. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 75/1, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) requested the Executive Secretary:

* ESCAP/77/L.1.
(a) To continue to provide capacity-building assistance to member States towards the smooth implementation of the six priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024;

(b) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. **Progress made**

2. In response to subparagraph 3 (a), the secretariat, jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries and the Common Fund for Commodities, organized a side event on impact investing and innovative resource mobilization to foster productive capacities and structural economic transformation in landlocked developing countries, held during the global review of the Vienna Programme of Action in New York in December 2019.

3. A report entitled *Asia’s Landlocked Developing Countries: Structural Transformation, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development* was prepared by the secretariat and launched during the global review of the Vienna Programme of Action. The report was focused on structural economic transformation, which constitutes priority 5 of the Vienna Programme of Action, and included policy recommendations.

4. The secretariat, jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), organized the Fourth North and Central Asian Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, held in September 2020. The discussions at the Forum covered the six priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action as well as gender equality and empowerment of women, girls and the youth.

5. An expert group meeting was held in September 2020 to discuss a framework to support member States in North and Central Asia to identify potential drivers of structural economic transformation, with a particular focus on agricultural transformation and the realization of digital potential in the subregion.

6. In addition, in view of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and to support member States in their efforts to address new challenges associated with the pandemic, the secretariat:

   (a) Organized, in coordination with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum 2020, held online in November 2020. The Forum strengthened partnerships to advance the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to enhance the capacity of policymakers to align their socioeconomic recovery measures with the objectives of the Programme of Action;

   (b) Prepared reports, policy briefs and a web-based policy tracker to provide policymakers with the latest information on policy responses undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region, including containment policies, fiscal and monetary policies, measures taken to support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, and trade and transport measures;
(c) Developed macroeconomic modelling tools and offered capacity-building workshops in that vein to help policymakers in Asia-Pacific countries, including landlocked developing countries, to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and devise recovery policies, and prepared analytical reports on possible strategies for resource mobilization in landlocked developing countries in Asia in view of the pandemic.

II. Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Resolution 75/2
Committing to strengthening the links between national, regional and global follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

7. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 75/2, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to consult member States on how to strengthen the link between the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and invited member States to consider reviewing progress on the implementation of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, as appropriate.

8. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 75/2, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to it at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

9. In response to paragraph 6, the secretariat held four rounds of consultations with member States within the context of the open-ended working group on the review of the conference structure of the Commission, between December 2019 and March 2020.

10. The consultations included a dedicated interactive discussion with member States and other stakeholders, and a briefing by Mr. Kaha Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations in New York, in his capacity as the co-facilitator for the review of the high-level political forum for sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council.

11. The consultations of the open-ended working group were informed by a paper prepared by the secretariat and by the results of a survey of member States and other stakeholders conducted in January 2020 to take stock of how the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development had delivered on its functions as an annual and inclusive intergovernmental forum and a regional platform for supporting countries, in particular those with special needs, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

12. A summary of the discussions was presented at the Seventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the seventy-sixth session of the Commission. Member States were of the view that the formulation of any concrete recommendation for the format of the Forum would need to wait for the completion of the review of the high-level political forum.
While the open-ended working group was able to make good progress in enabling member States to share views and perspectives with regard to the Forum, the exceptional circumstances and unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented it from having in-depth discussions and reaching a clear consensus on specific recommendations.

III. Information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation

A. Resolution 75/6
Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030)

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

14. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 75/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to support the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030);

(b) To carry out, in 2022, an evaluation of the implementation by member States of phase I of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030), and to submit a report with recommendations to the fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific;

(c) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

15. In response to subparagraph 3 (a), through the long-standing Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, the secretariat responded promptly in times of disaster and emergency in 2019 and 2020 by providing over 35 reports and 15 gigabytes of satellite imagery and data products to countries.

16. The secretariat prioritized the capacity-building programmes and knowledge-sharing components of the Plan of Action, with a focus on disaster risk reduction and on addressing air pollution and coastal and marine plastic pollution by integrating georeferenced data from the ground, air, space and from crowdsourcing, by mobilizing resources from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Thailand.

17. In addition, the secretariat facilitated the participation of six young officials in a nine-month postgraduate course on space applications at the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific. The secretariat also sponsored three young professionals from countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to participate in a one-year master’s degree programme jointly organized with the ASEAN Research and Training Centre for Space Technology and Applications.
18. Furthermore, considerable work has been carried out to support the food production sub-theme of the Plan of Action, including by supporting Governments in Central Asia to develop analytical tools comprising a platform, methodologies and indicators for the assessment of drought risk and to integrate the use of statistical and geospatial data for land accounting.

19. Through the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning, the secretariat is also enhancing the capacity of government officials and developing tailored tools for using geospatial information for resilient agriculture in the Lower Mekong River Basin.

20. In addition, the secretariat has promoted regional and subregional cooperation by sharing lessons learned in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The secretariat held two webinars attended by stakeholders from more than 30 countries on how to strengthen regional collaboration to map health risk hotspots and mitigate potential risks using geospatial information and big data. The secretariat is collaborating with the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency of Thailand and the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space of Indonesia to develop procedures and training materials on integrating georeferenced data to support policymaking.

21. With direct contributions from member States and partners, the secretariat published Geospatial Practices for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific 2020: A Compendium, a biennial overview of the regional status and progress in all six thematic areas of the Plan of Action. The compendium, which brings together more than 100 examples of good practices to create a baseline for measuring progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action, serves to demonstrate the diverse and vital contributions of geospatial applications to sustainable development.

B. Resolution 75/7
Advancing the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative through regional cooperation

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

22. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 75/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue support to the ongoing activities on the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative;

(b) To support member countries with policy advice, technical studies and capacity-building, upon request, in relation to the development and implementation of subregional implementation plans for the initiative;

(c) To encourage the participation of various stakeholders, such as United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, regional and subregional organizations, and international financial institutions and partners, as well as the private sector, civil society, research institutes and think tanks, as appropriate, in the development and implementation of subregional implementation plans for the initiative;


(d) To continue to conduct research and analysis and capacity development to identify challenges and opportunities associated with the four pillars of and subregional implementation plans for the initiative;

(e) To report to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation at its third session on the progress made in the development and implementation of subregional implementation plans for the initiative;

(f) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

23. In response to subparagraph 3 (a), substantive policy dialogues were held to strengthen mutual cross-sectoral understanding among government officials and regional stakeholders on the co-deployment of fibre-optic cable along passive infrastructure. In the context of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, policy dialogues were held in South Asia in June 2019 and in East and North-East Asia in November 2019.

24. Feasibility studies and a series of subregional multi-stakeholder consultations were held to enhance the policy knowledge and capacity of government officials in Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam as well as Pacific small island developing States with regard to efficient Internet traffic management and the establishment of shared Internet exchange points. Notable progress was made in the Pacific subregion, where a technical feasibility study yielded substantive proposals on building the Pacific Internet exchange point.

25. In response to subparagraph 3 (b), seven targeted analytical reports were prepared and shared with relevant member States, comprising the following:

(a) Four reports on efficient Internet traffic management in Cambodia; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Myanmar and Viet Nam; and Pacific island countries;³

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(b) Three reports on information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure co-deployment in South Asia, Mongolia and North and Central Asia.4

26. In response to subparagraph 3 (c), the work of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee at its two sessions held in August 2019 and August 2020 provided the secretariat with direction on subregional priorities.

27. The 24th meeting of the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on Information and Communications Technology, co-organized by the secretariat, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity and the International Telecommunication Union, was held in January 2020. It served to promote the coordination and planning of joint activities by international and regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific.

28. In response to subparagraph 3 (d), the secretariat prepared seven analytical reports on broadband connectivity and quality education; measuring the digital divide; and network planning in the context of the four pillars of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative.5

29. In response to subparagraph 3 (e), the secretariat reported to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology, and Innovation at its third session, held in August 2020, on the progress made in the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

30. The Commission may wish to participate in the development of the action plan for the next phase of implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, for 2022–2026.

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C. Resolution 75/8
Advancing science, technology and innovation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

31. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 75/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To raise awareness among member States of the science, technology and innovation dialogues taking place in various forums and international, regional and subregional organizations and frameworks, by acting as a bridge to facilitate cooperation and joint action when necessary;

(b) To encourage, through existing mechanisms, member States to promote public, public-private and civil society partnerships, as appropriate, in order to harness science, technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific;

(c) To assist member States with the process of developing and adopting science, technology and innovation road maps, policies and strategies for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in cooperation with relevant organizations of the United Nations development system and other organizations and frameworks, as appropriate;

32. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 75/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to it at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

33. In response to subparagraph 4 (a), the secretariat has aligned its regional capacity-building activities with global initiatives, to allow policymakers in the Asia-Pacific region to benefit from global expertise, and for expertise in the region to benefit the global science, technology and innovation community.

34. In this context, the secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Technology of China, jointly organized a capacity-building workshop on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development, which was held in Guilin, China, from 9 to 17 December 2019. Furthermore, the secretariat and the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries jointly organized a regional consultation on strengthening national academies of science in the least developed countries in support of the 2030 Agenda, which was held in Bangkok on 3 and 4 February 2020. The secretariat also cooperated with the World Intellectual Property Organization to organize a workshop on partnership for innovation and technological capacity-building in the least developed countries of Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Bangkok from 16 to 18 July 2019.

35. In response to subparagraph 4 (b), the inaugural Asia-Pacific Innovation Forum was held in Tehran from 10 to 12 June 2019 on the theme “Technology Start-ups for Sustainable Development”. The Forum enhanced and facilitated knowledge-sharing and collaboration among member States, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders.
36. In response to subparagraph 4 (c), in 2019, the secretariat supported the Government of Mongolia in designing an inclusive national development strategy entitled “Mongolia in a digital age”. The collaboration included research on national readiness assessment, organization of multi-stakeholder dialogues and contributions to the National Digital Strategy Primer for Mongolia. Also, in 2019, the secretariat supported the Government of the Philippines in developing and adopting a grass-roots innovation for inclusive development framework plan.

37. In 2020, the secretariat supported the development of the national science, technology and innovation policy and strategy in Myanmar. The Science, Technology and Innovation Law (No. 22/2018) was enacted on 25 June 2018. In order to implement the aims of the law, a national-level policy on science, technology and innovation is being developed to support inclusive and sustainable development.

38. At the request of the General Secretariat of the National Science and Technology Council, Ministry of Planning, the secretariat is providing advisory services to Cambodia in developing an action plan to support the implementation of the country’s National Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation 2020–2030 for sustainable and inclusive development.

39. The secretariat, in partnership with ECE, is also supporting the development of a sustainable development innovation strategy for the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

40. The secretariat has supported several countries in the region in developing social enterprise policies, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

41. With regard to inclusive business, the secretariat conducted landscape studies in Cambodia, Malaysia and Viet Nam to inform the design of strategies to support inclusive business and has provided policy advice to the Governments of Indonesia and the Philippines. The support included the organization of national workshops, research and the drafting of analytical studies.

42. As a result of the support provided by the secretariat, during the fifty-second ASEAN Economic Ministers’ Meeting, the Ministers commended the continuing efforts to raise awareness and promote inclusive business approaches in ASEAN and endorsed the regional Guidelines for the Promotion of Inclusive Business in ASEAN.

43. Under the secretariat’s programme on catalysing women’s entrepreneurship, national consultations on enabling environments for women’s entrepreneurship served as forums for policy dialogue, capacity-building and networking for key stakeholders across the public and private sectors to discuss the needs, constraints and actions to foster women’s entrepreneurship in the respective countries of implementation. Country-level events were held in Fiji, Samoa, Nepal, Bangladesh and Viet Nam.
IV. Statistics

Resolution 74/8
Accelerating the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

44. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 74/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

   (a) To continue to support members and associate members, including through technical assistance upon request, in the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific;

   (b) To support the convening of a second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, in 2020, as appropriate;

   (c) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

45. In response to subparagraph 4 (a), the secretariat accorded priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Framework through the work of a dedicated team on civil registration and vital statistics within its subprogramme 7 on statistics. The secretariat continued collaborating with relevant development partners and donors to support member States and associate members in improving their civil registration and vital statistics systems. The collaboration occurred under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Partnership, which comprises multiple United Nations agencies and development partners with mandates to help to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics nationally, regionally and globally.

46. In response to subparagraph 4 (b), the secretariat has continued providing support to the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific by organizing annual meetings and continuously developing substantive documents to facilitate its work. The Regional Steering Group and the 15 co-organizers of the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific held an extraordinary online meeting on 24 April 2020 to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organization of the Second Ministerial Conference and its possible postponement.

47. Considering the uncertainties regarding travel restrictions and bans on large public gatherings as well as the strain the COVID-19 pandemic had placed on many of the key stakeholders involved in civil registration and vital statistics systems, the Steering Group recommended postponing the Ministerial Conference to 2021. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 May 2020, the Commission took note of the report of the 5th meeting of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/76/23/Rev.1), and decided to postpone the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific to 2021. The Ministerial Conference is scheduled to be held from 16 to 19 November 2021.
V. Transport

Resolution 73/4
Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

48. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 73/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

   (a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021);

   (b) To carry out in 2021 an evaluation of the implementation of phase I of the Regional Action Programme and submit a report with recommendations to the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its fourth session;

   (c) To seek cooperation from ECE and other international organizations, and accelerate the ongoing work towards the establishment and full functioning of the interregional coordination committee on transport between Asia and Europe;

   (d) To continue to support the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network signed by China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation during the third session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport;

   (e) To report to the Commission at its seventy-fifth and seventy-seventh sessions on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

49. In response to subparagraph 3 (a), the secretariat has delivered various activities related to regional transport infrastructure connectivity. For example, it organized the meetings of the Working Groups on the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway Network and Dry Ports in 2019. The Working Groups adopted a series of amendments to the routes of highway and railway networks and to the list of dry ports. To date, there are 30 parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, 21 parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and 16 parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports.

50. With regard to transport connectivity for countries with special needs, the secretariat contributed regional inputs to the midterm review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. The secretariat also organized capacity-building workshops to promote the use of new technologies in the landlocked developing countries in Central Asia. In addition, it continued to support small island developing States through the work on maritime connectivity. Furthermore, it held special sessions on sustainable maritime connectivity at the Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean in 2019 and 2020 and highlighted the vulnerabilities of the small island developing States in the theme study for the seventy-sixth session of the Commission.
51. The secretariat continued to facilitate the improvement of urban transport, including by using the sustainable urban transport index, providing advisory services and holding regional workshops. Mobility assessments using the index were conducted in 20 Asia-Pacific cities. The secretariat also updated its index guidelines to include components on gender, renewable energy use in public transport, and the impact of COVID-19. In promoting smart transport systems, the secretariat conducted consultation meetings in three subregions to develop a regional road map in Asia and the Pacific. The secretariat also organized four capacity-building workshops for policymakers on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and an expert group meeting to promote the new concept of smart mobility. In addition, it published the *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific*, No. 88, “Intelligent transport systems”.

52. To promote rural transport connectivity, the secretariat held an expert group meeting on enhancing rural transport connectivity to regional and international transport networks in 2019 and published a monograph series on enhancing rural transport connectivity to regional and international transport networks in Asia and the Pacific as a follow-up to the meeting.

53. With regard to road safety, the secretariat published two study reports and organized a regional seminar on tackling the issues of impaired driving and speed in the Asia-Pacific region. To raise awareness about road safety, the secretariat published the *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific*, No. 89, “Improving road safety”. The secretariat also led the implementation of a project on strengthening speed management in the Philippines funded by the United Nations Road Safety Fund and began implementing a project on improving the driver licensing system in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

54. In response to subparagraph 3 (b), the secretariat will recruit a transport specialist to conduct the independent evaluation of the implementation of phase I of the Regional Action Programme. The Governments will be requested to designate a national focal point to liaise with relevant stakeholders in the evaluation process. The evaluation will be conducted during the first quarter of 2021.

55. In response to subparagraph 3 (c), the secretariat conducted a study on Euro-Asian transport connectivity initiatives, which included contributions from the ECE secretariat. The ESCAP secretariat also held the Interregional Expert Group Meeting on Transport Connectivity, a forum on transport connectivity between Asia and Europe and a joint consultation among ECE and ESCAP member States on the topic.

56. In response to subparagraph 3 (d) and under the area of regional transport operational connectivity, the secretariat continued to facilitate the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network by holding a series of expert group meetings. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat also conducted three online meetings to review national policy responses along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and in ASEAN.
VI. Environment and development

A. Resolution 74/4
Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific, 2017

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

57. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 74/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific, 2017;

(b) To seek cooperation from and ensure coordination with UNEP and other United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in line with their respective mandates;

(c) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

58. In response to subparagraph 3 (a), the secretariat accorded priority to the Ministerial Declaration through its programme of work on environment and development.

59. The secretariat has structured its activities to focus on cooperation for the sustainable management of natural resources. The secretariat and UNEP conducted analysis on opportunities for regional collaboration to address ocean pollution for the theme study of the seventy-sixth session of the Commission and are co-leading an issue-based coalition on climate change mitigation and air pollution in the context of the United Nations regional collaborative platform in Asia and the Pacific.

60. In addition, the secretariat has facilitated the development and operation of regional networks, including the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership, the ASEAN Resources Panel and the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization.

61. Furthermore, the secretariat has developed analytical products and tools, including a resource efficiency simulation tool. It has conducted analysis to develop future scenarios to enable a shift towards a greener, more resilient and more equal Asia-Pacific region and identified opportunities for a greener and more equal COVID-19 recovery. In collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the secretariat published The Future of Asian and Pacific Cities: Transformative Pathways towards Sustainable Urban Development, in which it identified policy pathways to guide future urbanization.

62. The secretariat also provided technical support and capacity-building to member States that are vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation, including by organizing an executive training session on environment and development. With support from the Government of Sweden, the secretariat has built the capacity of member States to strengthen

6 ESCAP/74/10/Add.1, para. 21.
environmental governance. It created the Stakeholder Planning and Assessment Tool and published *Environmental Change through Participation and Partnering for Sustainable Development: Guidelines for Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Implement the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific*. With support from the Government of the Russian Federation, the secretariat is implementing a project to raise the climate ambitions of member States in their nationally determined contributions. With support from the Government of China, the secretariat is supporting member States to forecast and manage the impact of urbanization on resources. With support from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the secretariat is developing methodologies and action plans on mitigating urban air pollution and on using satellite data to monitor air quality and inform clean air policies. The secretariat is also implementing a project, supported by the Government of Japan, to apply technology solutions to marine plastic pollution generated in urban areas. With support from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the secretariat hosts the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth, which facilitates capacity-building for member States on green growth. In addition, the secretariat has supported the Government of Bhutan to develop *The Middle Path: National Environment Strategy 2020*.

63. At its fifth and sixth sessions, the Committee on Environment and Development reviewed progress at the regional level on the priorities in the Ministerial Declaration. The Committee provided guidance to the secretariat on priorities to enhance regional and subregional cooperation on environmental issues and reported on progress to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session. The Committee at its sixth session established the Technical Expert Group on Environment and Development to share knowledge and regional expertise to further enhance regional cooperation and accelerate environmental actions.

64. In response to subparagraph 3 (b), the secretariat has engaged with United Nations bodies in activities, including the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Asia-Pacific Climate Week, Asia-Pacific Urban Forum and Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean as well as joint projects.

**B. Resolution 75/4**

**Strengthening regional cooperation to tackle air pollution challenges in Asia and the Pacific**

1. **Requirements of the operative paragraphs**

65. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 75/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To facilitate the voluntary exchange of experiences of subregional and regional cooperation, including the promotion of voluntary scientific and technological cooperation to tackle air pollution in Asia and the Pacific, to facilitate the collection and dissemination of information, and to conduct analytical studies related to air pollution in the region to support policies, as appropriate, taking into account in-house expertise and the mandate of the Commission;

(b) To collaborate with regional and subregional programmes on air pollution, relevant United Nations bodies, including WHO and UNEP, and multilateral and bilateral donors to tackle air pollution challenges in Asia and the Pacific, in accordance with their respective mandates;
(c) To provide, upon request of member States, technical support for the development of policies on mitigation of air pollution;

(d) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

66. In response to subparagraph 4 (a), the secretariat has conducted analysis on sources of air pollution and the application of solutions, including those identified in a report on air pollution in Asia and the Pacific prepared by UNEP. The analysis informed the sixth session of the Committee on Environment and Development, held on 9 and 10 December 2020, during which member States exchanged experiences and deliberated opportunities for enhanced regional cooperation. The secretariat is working with subregional institutions and partnerships on air pollution. Through the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation and the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership, the secretariat facilitated the exchange of information on air pollution and multilateral cooperation by governments and experts. The secretariat also facilitated the adoption of the Partnership’s workplan for the period 2021–2025 at the twenty-fourth Senior Officials Meeting of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation in October 2020. The plan is focused on promoting policy measures and technology cooperation to tackle air pollution and on supporting dialogue on emerging technologies. The secretariat is working with ASEAN to establish a science-based resources panel that will provide relevant policy guidance on air pollution. In September 2020, the secretariat organized a regional conversation on air pollution in the Asia-Pacific region in conjunction with the first International Day of Clean Air for blue skies, which the General Assembly designated in its resolution 74/212.

67. In response to subparagraph 4 (b), the secretariat and UNEP co-lead the issue-based coalition on climate change mitigation and air pollution of the United Nations regional collaborative platform in Asia and the Pacific, mobilizing United Nations bodies including WHO, United Nations Children’s Fund, FAO and others to better coordinate the regional assets of the United Nations to strengthen regional cooperation, increase capacity-building and develop joint advocacy around issues related to air pollution. The issue-based coalition works with resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to identify support that the United Nations system can provide to member States.

68. In response to subparagraph 4 (c), the secretariat is implementing a project funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea to assist city authorities to develop air pollution mitigation plans. The project is developing methodologies that utilize satellite data and machine learning to identify local and remote sources of air pollution, allowing city authorities to identify policy interventions that they can implement with the help of subnational and national entities. The secretariat launched a project on building the pan-Asia partnership for geospatial air pollution information in countries covered by the Geostationary Environment Monitoring Spectrometer in South-East Asia, South Asia and North-East Asia, in collaboration with the National Institute of Environmental Research of the Republic of Korea, to share the

Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants and UNEP, Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific: Science-based Solutions (Bangkok, 2019).
satellite-derived air quality monitoring data and provide technical support and capacity-building in the utilization of the data.

VII. Energy

Resolution 74/9
Implementation of the outcomes of the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

69. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 74/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) To seek cooperation from and ensure coordination with United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in line with their respective mandates;

(c) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

70. In response to subparagraph 3 (a), the secretariat accorded priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration. For example, it promoted regional and subregional cooperation through existing and new international platforms and fostered the sharing of best practices and experiences to assist member States in taking the actions and fulfilling the commitments highlighted in the Ministerial Declaration. Best practices and experiences have been shared at expert working groups, the second session of the Committee on Energy and various workshops.

71. The secretariat has assisted member States in developing national road maps for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and in mainstreaming the global targets related to energy into national policies, plans and strategies. It has continued to develop and deploy the national expert Sustainable Development Goal tool for energy planning, which is used to support the preparation of Goal 7 road maps and policy advice based on national contexts in 10 developing countries.

72. The secretariat has followed up on and reviewed progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 7 targets at the regional level in light of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda. It analysed the status of implementation efforts related to Goal 7 in countries in South-East Asia and Central Asia and is preparing a regional progress report on the topic.

Fossil Fuels held thematic sessions during the Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, in 2019, including on natural gas, clean cooking, electricity access, and strengthening national capacities to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the nationally determined contributions.

74. The secretariat has conducted analytical studies on key energy trends and emerging issues in the Asia-Pacific region and compiled and disseminated relevant energy information and data, including through the Asia Pacific Energy Portal, to ensure informed intergovernmental deliberations, including at Commission and Committee sessions. The secretariat prepared an analytical paper on international energy security including the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for submission to the Committee at its third session, in 2021. In addition, the Asia Pacific Energy Portal has been further developed with a collection of more than 200 data sets and more than 3,000 official policy documents. The Portal has been used to support the preparation of a publication entitled Regional Energy Trends Report 2020: Tracking SDG 7 in the ASEAN Region.

75. In addition, the secretariat has initiated the necessary preparatory work for the third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum in a timely manner. The secretariat prepared an information document on preparatory work for the third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, to be held in 2023, for submission to the Committee at its third session.

76. In response to subparagraph 3 (b), the secretariat has worked with relevant subregional organizations, in particular the ASEAN Centre for Energy and the Energy Centre of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. The secretariat has also been working with various other partners including UNEP, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, International Renewable Energy Agency, Sustainable Energy for All, Global Energy Interconnection and Development Organization and International Solar Alliance.

VIII. Disaster risk reduction

Resolution 75/5
Implementation of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration of the 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

77. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 75/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to strengthen inter-agency coordination with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other United Nations bodies to enhance regional cooperation in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, recognizing that the Office serves as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction, taking into account the Action Plan 2018–2020 of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and to contribute to the periodic assessment of the progress in its implementation;

(b) To provide member States, upon request, with capacity-development assistance in support of their efforts to implement the Sendai Framework, taking into account the Action Plan 2018–2020;
(c) To report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

78. In response to subparagraph 6 (a), the secretariat signed memorandums of agreement with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in May and September 2019, respectively. In addition, the secretariat supported the strengthening of multi-hazard early warning systems and early actions in South-East Asia by holding multiple joint workshops with WMO and FAO in February 2020, and by jointly organizing the 2020 World Tsunami Awareness Day with the Office on 5 November 2020. Furthermore, as a co-leader of the workstream on climate resilience of the Asia-Pacific issue-based coalition for building resilience, the secretariat participated in the development of joint knowledge products, including the 2020 UNDP-led paper entitled “Recovering from COVID-19: lessons from past disasters in Asia and the Pacific” and a policy paper on climate-resilient infrastructure.

79. In response to subparagraph 6 (b), the secretariat carried out a variety of capacity-building activities. For example, it published the joint ESCAP-ASEAN series entitled Ready for the Dry Years: Building Resilience to Drought in South-East Asia. The aim of the publication series is to support ASEAN member States in preparing for future droughts. The findings, including those contained in the second edition, which was launched on 27 November 2020 at the Eighth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management, helped to shape policy at the subregional and regional levels and provided the evidence base for the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on the Strengthening of Adaptation to Drought. The ASEAN then informed the development of the third work programme of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response 2021–2025, in particular its priority programme 1 on risk assessment and monitoring and priority programme 2 on prevention and mitigation.

80. In addition, the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries received new contributions from the Governments of Switzerland and Thailand in 2020. Between May 2017 and November 2019, the Fund supported training on synergized standard operating procedures for multi-hazard early warning systems in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam and capacity development for near-field tsunami hazard assessment and warning services in India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

81. Furthermore, the secretariat collaborated with the ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Centre (hosted by the Government of Singapore) and the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia to build national capacities in the region to produce and apply subseasonal-to-seasonal forecasts for disaster management. In addition, with funding support from the contribution made by the Government of Canada to the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative, the secretariat is working with WMO to extend capacity development support to the National Meteorological and Hydrological Administration of Viet Nam in the areas of impact-based forecasts and warning services.
82. Furthermore, the secretariat is supporting the Brunei Climate Change secretariat of the Ministry of Development of Brunei Darussalam to strengthen adaptation elements in its climate change policies. The secretariat is also working with the Information and Research Institute of Meteorology Hydrology and Environment of Mongolia to enhance the capacity to use data from the Geostationary Environment Monitoring Spectrometer of the Republic of Korea to improve the accuracy of air quality monitoring and forecasting and the understanding of the long-range transport of air pollutants.

IX. Management issues

Resolution 75/3
Advancing partnerships within and across regions for the sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

83. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 75/3, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To strengthen cooperation, with subregional, regional and interregional organizations and frameworks in (i) identifying complementarities between their development strategies and priorities and the 2030 Agenda; (ii) the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific; and (iii) identifying and analysing business models, best practices and home-grown approaches for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and sharing them within and across subregions and regions;

(b) To explore, in consultation with member States, options for establishing networks to support the capacities of countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific;

(c) To strengthen cooperation with the other United Nations regional commissions in the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in sharing business models, best practices and home-grown approaches for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) As convener of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, to strengthen and promote communication, cooperation and collaboration among the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in the Asia-Pacific region and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in support of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by member States, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Pacific island developing countries;

(e) To assist with implementing in the Asia-Pacific region the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 73/291, taking into account regional and subregional specificities, including by harnessing the human and other resources of relevant knowledge networks, partnerships, technical and research capacity by exchanging experiences on best practices on issues related to sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda and by convening regional forums in which developing countries can exchange experiences and coordinate their own South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, including by discussing non-binding voluntary methodologies and building upon existing experiences for accounting and evaluating South-South and triangular cooperation.
84. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 75/3, the Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to report to it at its seventy-seventh session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

85. In response to subparagraph 5 (a), the secretariat has further strengthened its collaboration with regional and subregional organizations. The annual subregional forums in preparation for the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development provide a platform for engaging with subregional organizations and sharing good practices.

86. In South-East Asia, the secretariat stepped up its collaboration with ASEAN and engaged in several key areas of work, including disaster risk reduction and environment. As lead coordinator for the United Nations on economic, sociocultural and cross-sectoral cooperation in ASEAN, ESCAP contributed to the formulation of the second Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations for the period 2021–2025.

87. In North and Central Asia, the secretariat has renewed memorandums of understanding with the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Eurasian Development Bank and is in the process of renewing agreements with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Economic Cooperation Organization. The secretariat also supports the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia, which recently adopted the Bishkek Declaration, entitled “Strengthening regional cooperation to support socioeconomic recovery in the wake of COVID-19”.

88. In North-East Asia, the secretariat has collaborated with the Greater Tumen Initiative to improve subregional transport connectivity and cross-border trade facilitation, including through the annual joint International Seminar on Trade Facilitation in North-East Asia and a new annual seminar on transport issues in North-East Asia. The secretariat also worked with the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat to hold a webinar in July 2020 to share experiences, best practices and national COVID-19 responses from China, Japan and the Republic of Korea and to discuss regional cooperation.

89. In South and South-West Asia, the secretariat has strengthened its collaboration with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, including organizing a series of dialogues and events to promote building back better in response to the pandemic, such as the high-level policy dialogue on COVID-19 and South Asia, with a focus on socioeconomic impacts, national strategies and subregional cooperation for building back better, held on 9 July 2020.

90. In the Pacific, the secretariat continued to strengthen collaboration with the agencies involved in the Council of the Regional Organizations of the Pacific for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway in the Pacific subregion. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Pacific Community have been key partners and important contributors to the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, held annually by ESCAP.
91. In response to subparagraph 5 (b), the secretariat has supported the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue on the implementation of the complementarities road map for the period 2020–2025, and a workplan is being developed with the ASEAN Studies Centre of Chulalongkorn University.

92. In response to subparagraph 5 (c), the ESCAP secretariat and the secretariats of the other regional commissions organized “voluntary national review labs” at the high-level political forums on sustainable development in July 2019 and July 2020. The labs brought together national representatives, regional organizations and stakeholders from the five regions to exchange experiences and identify good practices to inform the follow-up to the voluntary national reviews and accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, a ministerial lunch was organized at the high-level political forum in July 2019 by the secretariats of the five regional commissions and the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council, to provide a space for the exchange of lessons learned and experiences from different regions.

93. The secretariat also provided platforms for the intraregional and interregional sharing of good practices through its Sustainable Development Goals Help Desk and the South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals.

94. In response to subparagraph 5 (d), the Executive Secretary, initially in her role as convener of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and later as Co-Chair of its replacement, the Regional Collaboration Platform, has continued to promote communication, cooperation and collaboration among the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in the Asia-Pacific region and other stakeholders in supporting members States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The secretariat has also mobilized contributions from across the United Nations development system in Asia and the Pacific, both at the regional and national levels, in the preparations, servicing and follow-up to the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

95. In response to subparagraph 5 (e), the secretariat, jointly with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the Government of Indonesia and the Thailand International Cooperation Agency, held the third Asia-Pacific Directors General Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, on 25 November 2020. The Forum provided an opportunity for the heads of development cooperation and South-South cooperation agencies across the region to discuss how to better leverage South-South and triangular cooperation in building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific.

96. In early 2020, prior to the imposition of restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation jointly organized two additional capacity-building events on South-South and triangular cooperation: a seminar on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, held on 31 March 2020, and a student competition on South-South and

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9 Additional information on the South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals is available at www.unescap.org/projects/sans.
triangular cooperation, held on 25 February 2020. Graduate and undergraduate students from six universities in Thailand engaged in the competition and made their voices and perspectives heard, in particular with regard to how such cooperation among developing countries could help to shape the future of Asia and the Pacific and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.