

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
4 March 2022

Original: English

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

Bangkok and online, 23–27 May 2022

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific**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-eighth 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. Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific**A. Resolution 74/10
Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Enhancing Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration to Support the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific****1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs**

1. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 74/10, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration;

(b) To continue to accord priority to enhancing economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific in the programme of work of the Commission and through its conference structure;

* ESCAP/78/L.1/Rev.1.

(c) To continue to facilitate member States' efforts with regard to regional economic cooperation and integration in a manner that promotes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(d) To support the convening of a third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific in 2021, as appropriate;

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

2. Progress made

2. In response to subparagraph 2 (a), the secretariat implemented a dedicated cross-sectoral project financed by the eleventh tranche of the United Nations Development Account entitled "Addressing the transboundary dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific". The project contributed to strengthening policy cooperation and mechanisms for promoting transport, energy, and information and communications technologies (ICT) and transboundary infrastructure connectivity within the context of the 2030 Agenda. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia were the main beneficiary countries while other countries of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia also benefited. More than 39 analytical knowledge products were developed and 17 capacity-building workshops were held. Three online interactive tools were also developed to support the identification of economically feasible integrated corridors and the monitoring of e-resilience.

3. The secretariat also developed tools for analysis of the state of play in digital and sustainable regional integration, including an index in cooperation with other regional commissions and an online value chain analysis tool in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank.

4. The secretariat continued to support the implementation of regional frameworks, including the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, which entered into force in February 2021. Furthermore, the secretariat developed capacity-building tools and programmes in support of trade negotiation in times of crisis and for sustainable development.

5. In response to subparagraph 2 (b), the secretariat has promoted regional and subregional cooperation and fostered the sharing of best practices and experiences to assist countries to increase energy connectivity, in particular in the power sector. Expert working groups, the Committee on Energy at its third session and workshops have been utilized to share best practices and experiences. The Regional Road Map on Power System Connectivity: Promoting Cross-border Electricity Connectivity for Sustainable Development, delivered by the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity, was endorsed by member States at the seventy-seventh session of the Commission. The secretariat is now working with member States to implement the nine strategies of the road map and meet the relevant milestones. Furthermore, the secretariat increased the capacity of regulators and utilities in South-East Asia, to support and improve the sustainability of energy connectivity projects.

6. With regard to domestic resource mobilization, the secretariat prepared a technical paper on tax challenges of the digital economy which informed a regional workshop on resource mobilization for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific countries in special situations in December 2021. The paper provided a review of the latest international cooperation on global reforms regarding the tax treatment of the digital economy and discussed potential public revenue mobilization opportunities for developing countries. The secretariat also co-hosted the high-level Asia-Pacific regional consultation with the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda on 12 November 2020 which focused on cooperation on tax matters.

7. In addition, the secretariat implemented a capacity-building project on strengthening subnational public revenue mobilization with a focus on city finance in Asia and the Pacific in 2018, building on the outcomes of a regional review. The project comprised three in-depth case studies on fiscal governance and revenue mobilization in three representative cities of the region – Beijing, Mumbai and Manila – and a training workshop which was held in Bangkok in November 2018.

8. Furthermore, in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards Post-COVID-19 Resilient Economies*, the secretariat highlighted how the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic would heighten the risk of public debt distress in the region in many, especially less developed, Asia-Pacific economies.

9. Considering the needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, during the regional workshop on resource mobilization for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific countries in special situations, the participants discussed lessons learned and policy recommendations on capital market development, digital finance and climate finance. The workshop also included a special event on mobilizing resources to support countries in the smooth graduation from the category of least developed countries.

10. To support discussions on dealing with rising debt distress in developing countries, during the seventy-seventh session of the Commission, the secretariat held a side event on how regional dialogues can help debt relief in the aftermath of the pandemic with ministers and high-level officials from Pakistan, Maldives, Mongolia and Tajikistan.

11. In response to subparagraph 2 (c), the secretariat prepared several publications related to financing needs and strategies. These include: *Financing the SDGs to Build Back Better from the COVID-19 Pandemic in Asia and the Pacific* released in October 2021; *Green and Climate Finance Options to Support the Post COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery and Climate Action*, prepared in collaboration with the Global Green Growth Institute and launched online during the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November 2021; “An introduction to issuing thematic bonds” and *Financing for Development in Asia and the Pacific: Highlights in the Context of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda – 2019 Edition*.

12. The secretariat also implemented several initiatives on investment needs for the Sustainable Development Goals, including: (a) conducting country case studies in Indonesia and the Philippines on mainstreaming the Goals into planning and budgetary processes; (b) producing and publishing *A Guidebook for Assessing SDG Investment Needs*, together with an online

dashboard on Goal investment trends; (c) presenting main findings at the subregional training on integrated national financing frameworks for North and Central Asia; and (d) providing technical support on Goal costing to the national planning agency of Indonesia, a government think tank of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Thailand.

13. The Commission and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, conducted introductory subregional training workshops on integrated national financing frameworks for countries in North and Central Asia in January 2021 and for the Asia-Pacific region in March 2021.

14. With regard to public-private partnerships, the secretariat published the policy brief entitled “Enhancing the policy environment for public-private partnerships”, as well as the working paper entitled “Public-private partnerships for cross-border infrastructure development”. The secretariat also held a series of thematic capacity-building workshops to address challenges encountered during the implementation of public-private partnership projects. The first workshop was held online on 15 December 2020 and focused on resilient public-private partnerships for infrastructure development for recovery in order to discuss the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in the region. The second workshop was held on 10 March 2021 with a focus on preparing and assessing sustainable and resilient public-private partnership infrastructure projects, to help member States to prepare bankable public-private partnership infrastructure projects with a focus on the health-care and renewable energy sectors.

15. With regard to innovative financing strategies, the secretariat produced a report in 2020 that contained an analysis of factors affecting environmental and social risk management of financial institutions in selected developing countries in Asia and the Pacific and provided policy options to improve innovative finance integration within the region. The report covered Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. In addition, a feasibility study of sustainability bonds in the Pacific islands was published in 2021.

16. The secretariat also held national workshops in 2019 on capital market development in Bhutan, Indonesia and Sri Lanka and consultations on capacity-building regarding green banking in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Similarly, an online webinar on sustainable finance and financing the Sustainable Development Goals in South-East Asia was held in 2020. The webinar was a joint initiative of ESCAP and the Global Reporting Initiative, the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific.

17. To consolidate ongoing stakeholder engagement with innovative finance, the secretariat has also developed sustainable finance e-learning modules and tools to enable stakeholders to continue to engage with innovative finance products and strategies.

18. With regards to capital markets, the secretariat is working with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Capital Markets Forum, regarding the development of green bond markets and taxonomies and to strengthen regional cooperation and integration for sustainable development. The secretariat also continues to provide advisory services for the issuance of sovereign green and Sustainable Development Goal bonds. In 2021, the secretariat also held a policy dialogue on sustainable and innovative finance

for the 2030 Agenda in South-East Asia to exchange views and experiences among prospective investors and financial institutions on the potential of green bonds issued by South-East Asian countries to access the European Union market.

19. In the context of COVID-19, the secretariat contributed to the pandemic response by providing an analysis of the impact of the pandemic and exploring the potential role of innovative financing instruments to build back better. In 2020 and 2021, the secretariat held a series of high-level regional discussions on how the Asia-Pacific region could build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic through regional cooperation. In 2021, the secretariat also held a workshop on innovative climate financing instruments and supporting post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery in Asia-Pacific small island developing States. Participants examined the potential of green and Sustainable Development Goal bonds and debt-for-climate adaptation swaps in combating the effects of the pandemic and in supporting the achievement of the Goals.

20. With regards to financial inclusion and financing for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, the secretariat published national studies for Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and Samoa in a series on financing for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, ESCAP is part of the global initiative towards post-COVID-19 resurgence of the micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises sector, led by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and with the participation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the five regional commissions, which published a book on the topic with recommendations that illustrate new and potential avenues of intervention to enhance access to finance by micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in the region.

21. During 2021, the secretariat also implemented a technical cooperation project on supporting the digital adaptation of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The project included two technical reports, one for each country, and a survey on the use of digital economy tools. Both reports and the survey results were presented at a capacity-building meeting held simultaneously in Phnom Penh, Vientiane and online.

22. In response to subparagraphs 2 (a) and (b), the secretariat held the first Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration from 10 to 12 March 2021. The Regional Review was supported by the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific. Representatives of more than 30 members and associate members of the Commission, the Secretariat and other United Nations entities, as well as more than 40 stakeholder groups participated. Participants reiterated their commitment to the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. The report of the meeting, including the Chair's summary and pre-session documents, will be forwarded to the International Migration Review Forum in May 2022. In preparation for the regional review meeting, 21 member States completed a voluntary survey on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and five consultations with stakeholders were held. Moreover, ESCAP, with support from the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific issued the *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020: Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration*.

23. With regard to gender equality, the secretariat delivered a series of analytical work, regional dialogues and technical assistance to encourage and support member States to promote gender equality and to identify and address the barriers to women's full economic participation, especially in view of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The secretariat produced a regional report on *COVID-19 and the Unpaid Care Economy in Asia and the Pacific* which provided recommendations for gender-responsive and care-sensitive policies, and a subregional report on *Addressing Unpaid Care Work in ASEAN*. A regional forum was held online on 23 and 24 November 2021 to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences and ideas and explore potential partnerships among member States and stakeholders in the region related to the care economy. The subregional report for ASEAN was launched at the Fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women, further strengthening United Nations-ASEAN collaboration in providing policy guidance to members of ASEAN in this area. The secretariat continues to make progress on the programme on catalysing women's entrepreneurship. The programme successfully contributed to the review of national legislation in Viet Nam with specific provisions for women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, two regional consultations were held in October and November 2021 to facilitate exchanges and dialogues on scalable solutions and innovations for supporting women's entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific, during and beyond the pandemic.

24. The secretariat supported countries in special situations (comprising least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States) through the effective use of intergovernmental platforms. For example, the secretariat convened the High-level Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries in September 2021 in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Government of Bangladesh. Ministers of Asia-Pacific least developed countries and their development partners deliberated on lessons learned in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and highlighted the need for reinvigorated global partnerships and strengthened regional cooperation, especially in financing for development in these countries, including through new and innovative financing mechanisms.

25. The support the secretariat provided to landlocked developing countries focused on accelerating the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024. Intergovernmental meetings, such as the high-level midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries in December 2019, provided Governments, development partners and other stakeholders with unique opportunities to discuss the implementation of group-specific priorities.

26. For small island developing States, *the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2020: Leveraging Ocean Resources for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States* contains an assessment of how these States can leverage their vast ocean resources for sustainable development.

27. With regard to addressing shared vulnerabilities, risks and challenges by developing multi-hazard early warning systems, innovative tools and institutional mechanisms to mitigate the impact of disasters, environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change, the secretariat has convened an annual regional learning platform series. The series focuses on addressing unmet needs for current early warning systems in the context of multi-hazard

risk hotspots of transboundary disasters in the region. The 2021 platform was held to understand the nature of cascading hazards and systemic risks. In addition to sharing good practices, the learning platform presents innovative tools and approaches, such as integrated hazard and risk information systems, integrated multi-hazard early warning platforms and integrated analytics to support building back better from COVID-19.

28. In response to subparagraph 2 (c), in the framework of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, subregional preparatory meetings included focused sessions on regional economic cooperation where member countries and other stakeholders shared perspectives and experiences on how to strengthen regional economic cooperation.

29. The secretariat supported member States through the promotion of knowledge and capacity-building by developing three online interactive tools, namely the “E-resilience monitoring dashboard” and its methodological toolkits, the “Infrastructure co-deployment partnership portal”, and the “Infrastructure corridor simulator” to find promising infrastructure development corridors.

30. In response to subparagraph 2 (d), the third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific will be held from 28 to 30 September 2022 in Bangkok and online, pursuant to Commission decision 77/14, in which it decided to postpone the conference from 2021 to 2022.

B. Resolution 77/1

Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

31. In paragraph 14 of its resolution 77/1, the Commission encouraged member States to work regionally and interregionally with the view to build back better, aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the support of the Executive Secretary, as appropriate, and in cooperation with other concerned United Nations bodies and relevant stakeholders by, inter alia:

(a) Promoting discussions on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, including by taking note of the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework and other relevant regional and subregional frameworks and initiatives, by convening a thematic meeting in conjunction with the seventh session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and reporting on its outcomes at that session of the Committee, with a view to strengthening post-COVID-19 resilience and disaster preparedness in the region;

(b) Promoting COVID-19 recovery strategies and policies at the national level in support of the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda and, inter alia, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, as appropriate, including by harnessing the benefits of the different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, as appropriate, in line with national circumstances and priorities, as well as by sharing experiences, best practices and locally driven development approaches;

(c) Further enhancing national social protection systems, including through the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific;

(d) Furthering regional cooperation on trade and investment, tourism and creative economy, connectivity and energy and promoting the digital economy, including through the Commission's regional cooperation mechanisms, frameworks and agreements;

(e) Enabling all countries to have universal, equitable, timely access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable diagnosis, therapeutics, medicines, vaccines and essential health technologies, and their components, as well as equipment, for the COVID-19 response.

32. In paragraph 15 of its resolution 77/1, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to assist member States, upon request, in further enhancing national social protection systems, including through the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific.

33. In paragraph 16 of its resolution 77/1, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the implementation of the resolution and to report to the Commission at its seventy-eighth session on progress thereon.

2. Progress made

34. In response to subparagraph 14 (a) and in conjunction with the seventh session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction held from 25 to 27 August 2021, ESCAP held a thematic expert meeting on building disaster, climate and health resilience on 24 August 2021. The Committee took note of the recommendation of the thematic expert meeting on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 to organize consultations with member States and expert meetings to shape appropriate policy tools/guidance that will support the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework by taking note of the Bangkok Principles.

35. Furthermore, the secretariat held a series of training workshops on the use of geospatial information integrated from multiple sources for dynamic mapping of pandemic hotspots in South-East Asia in collaboration with the ASEAN Research and Training Centre for Space Technology and Applications as well as the community of space agencies in the region. In addition, a tailored platform has been developed for Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Thailand to enhance the evidence-based decision-making capacity of multi-stakeholders in mapping and monitoring of health risk hotspots, vaccine roll-outs and mitigation of potential risks.

36. In response to subparagraph 14 (b), the secretariat provided technical advice and capacity-building on key environmental challenges, including climate action, safeguarding ecosystem health, clean air and sustainable urban development. This was delivered through various activities including executive training on environment and development, which provided capacity-building to senior policymakers in Asia-Pacific countries on five themes, namely: (a) climate change; (b) safeguarding ecosystem health; (c) clean air; (d) sustainable urban development, in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Capital Development Fund; and (e) environmental governance.

37. The secretariat also developed the following knowledge products and e-learning courses: a policy brief on integrated approaches to address the drivers of zoonoses entitled “Mending the broken relationship with nature: tackling the biodiversity, ecosystems, health and climate change nexus post-COVID-19”; a regional e-learning course on integrated action on biodiversity/ecosystems, health and climate developed with support from the Embassy of France in Thailand; a policy brief entitled “SDG 6 and COVID-19: accelerating progress towards SDG 6 in the Asia-Pacific region in the context of COVID-19 recovery”; and a report entitled *The Future of Asian and Pacific Cities: Transformative Pathways Towards Sustainable Urban Development in the Post COVID-19 Era*.

38. In addition, the secretariat collaborated with stakeholders to build the capacity of government officials in Central Asia on monitoring drought, mapping forest fire hotspots and managing land use through the integration of georeferenced data from space and ground, using open-source and easy-to-use models and analytical tools.

39. In response to subparagraph 14 (c) and to support the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat is developing an online dynamic platform called the Social Protection Online Toolbox. The Toolbox will be launched in 2022 and will include a user-friendly simulation tool to estimate how an extension of social protection benefits can reduce poverty and inequality while boosting household consumption in rural and urban areas, as well as for different household compositions. It will also estimate the needed investment for doing so. It will showcase country examples of social protection schemes and provide a wide range of helpful information for developing inclusive social protection systems. In addition, the 2022 issue of the flagship series, *Social Outlook for Asia and the Pacific*, will focus on the importance of social protection in building a healthy, protected and productive workforce.

40. In response to subparagraph 14 (d), the 26th meeting of the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on Information and Communications Technologies, co-organized by the secretariat, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity and the International Telecommunication Union, was held in January 2022. It served to promote the coordination and planning of joint activities by international and regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific.

41. The secretariat facilitated the development by member States of the action plan for the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia Pacific Information Superhighway, for 2022–2026, adopted at the fifth session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee on 25 November 2021. The action plan provides a blueprint for cooperative actions for universal digital connectivity, digital transformation and a more inclusive digital society and supports the recommendation to foster global digital cooperation found in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Road map for digital cooperation: implementation of the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation”, and the action lines of the World Summit on the Information Society.

42. The secretariat has supported the development of national road maps for nine countries that include analysis on the opportunities to synergize the achievement of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and the recovery from the pandemic. An analytical study has been completed with a partner institution on the impact of the pandemic on the energy sector across the region, including potential response of the sector under a range of scenarios during and after recovery from the pandemic.

43. In addition, the secretariat held ad hoc expert group meetings on preserving transport connectivity along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, where countries exchanged information on their pandemic responses and identified areas for possible joint actions. The Committee on Transport at its sixth session in November 2020 recognized transport connectivity as an integral part of pandemic response and recovery policies and recommended concrete collaborative initiatives on transport connectivity for efficient and resilient supply chains. In 2021, parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network agreed to start working on a new annex on electronic information exchange between railways and among railways and control agencies to further enhance the efficiency and resilience of rail transport. The Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026), adopted in December 2021 by the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport, contains activities and outputs aimed at achieving greater resilience in freight transport operations.

44. In response to subparagraph 14 (e), the secretariat held a regional conversation on equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics on 30 November 2021. Member States, regional development banks, United Nations system partners, regional and global intergovernmental organizations and civil society participated in the event. Vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics were recognized as known and cost-effective public health interventions for preventing, treating and eradicating diseases, and that they were critical to ensuring health and well-being for all. Investments in health and the environment were important elements of any policy focusing on leaving no one behind, including proactive, consistent and strategic communication regarding the benefits of vaccines. The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to define and make vaccines a global public good and to strengthen universal health care with the ultimate goals of ensuring good health and well-being for all at all ages and building back better.

45. In addition, the secretariat contributed to two workshops held by UNDP in August and September 2021 to strengthen the capacity of countries in Asia to implement vaccination programmes at the national level, including through enhancing the use of digital technology, improving logistics, training health workers and addressing vaccine hesitancy. Working with the International Labour Organization and other United Nations system partners through the issue-based coalition on inclusion and empowerment, ESCAP contributed to the launch of the regional report entitled “Extending Social Health Protection: Accelerating progress towards Universal Health Coverage in Asia and the Pacific” on 7 December 2021. The report covers 27 countries in the region.

46. The secretariat initiated a research project titled, *From Lab to Jab: Improving Asia-Pacific’s Readiness to Produce and Deliver Vaccines*, in collaboration with the World Health Organization. The aim was to better understand vaccine production and delivery in the Asia-Pacific region with a focus on questions related to cross-border cooperation, trade, investment, financing and transportation. An additional aim was to help developing countries in the region to assess their readiness to be part of the vaccine landscape, develop policy considerations to improve vaccine trade, transport, logistics and research capacity in order to better prepare for the next pandemic as well as fight other communicable diseases.

47. In response to paragraph 15, the secretariat initiated consultations with several member States to support their implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific. This is expected to lead to informative policy reports on the current situation

and future ambitions to broaden social protection coverage, followed by national workshops. The secretariat, in collaboration with other United Nations entities, will track national progress and gaps in the implementation of the Action Plan.

48. During the third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, the secretariat, with funding support from the Government of China and in collaboration with the Government of Uzbekistan, held a side event on policy experiences from the region on forward-looking and targeted poverty reduction for post-COVID-19 recovery in October 2021. Three country case studies on the latest poverty reduction policy experiences in Bangladesh, China and the Philippines were also prepared for knowledge-sharing and peer learning.

49. The secretariat, in collaboration with the Green Fiscal Policy Network, held a regional workshop in September 2021 on the role of fiscal policies in a green COVID-19 recovery: experience, best practice and next steps in the Asia-Pacific region. The workshop served to raise awareness and promote policy dialogue on the potential of green fiscal policies to support countries in mobilizing domestic resources and fostering a green recovery.

50. The secretariat is supporting Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Samoa as part of an ongoing global project on finance-related issues of the COVID-19 pandemic in collaboration with UNCTAD, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic Commission for Africa to be completed in early 2022. The objective of the work is to assess the fiscal impact of recovery programmes and provide recommendations on their possible structure to build back better from the pandemic. The secretariat has contributed to this work through analytical studies and capacity-building events for national policymakers.

51. The third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, convened in October 2021, deliberated on policy options for an inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

52. The *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards Post-COVID-19 Resilient Economies* highlighted the potential for Asia-Pacific economies to make their COVID-19 recovery policy responses more conducive to social inclusion and environmental sustainability, and it served to propose an illustrative policy package for a stronger recovery by ensuring access to social services, closing the digital divide and fostering green development.

53. The secretariat prepared technical reports for Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic on government-to-person digital transfers as a tool to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the results were discussed in a capacity-building workshop for policymakers from both countries in December 2020. A follow-up report on Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal and Timor-Leste included measures to enhance the capacity of these countries. A workshop was held in December 2021 on measures to scale up these initiatives.

54. The secretariat held a workshop in June 2021 on innovative climate financing instruments to support post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery in Asia-Pacific small island developing States, jointly with the Pacific Islands Forum

Secretariat, to discuss various sources of innovative financing instruments, including sustainability bonds and debt-for-climate adaptation swaps.

55. Furthermore, the ESCAP secretariat published a report entitled *Financing the SDGs to Build Back Better from the COVID-19 Pandemic in Asia and the Pacific* in October 2021. The publication provided a review of a range of financing instruments, strategies and mechanisms to help Asia-Pacific economies to recover from the pandemic and effectively pursue the Sustainable Development Goals.

56. A report was prepared and published by the secretariat on *Rethinking MSME Finance in Asia and the Pacific: A Post-Crisis Policy Agenda*. The last two chapters include recommendations and conclusions that illustrate new and potential avenues of intervention for financing for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprise finance in the region.

57. A regional conversation was held on financing for development under the post-COVID-19 era in October 2021. It provided a platform for policymakers and experts to exchange views on how to increase the availability of financing for sustainable development and climate action, and address debt risks in Asia and the Pacific. This conversation built on a high-level event on debt relief in the aftermath of the pandemic that was held during the seventy-seventh session of the Commission and complemented discussions at the third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development.

II. Social development

A. Resolution 68/7

Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

58. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 68/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support members and associate members upon request, including through capacity-building and technical assistance, in developing and pursuing national programmes and international cooperation during the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022.

59. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 68/7, the Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, and triennially thereafter until the end of the Decade, on the progress in the implementation of the resolution.

B. Resolution 74/7

Towards disability-inclusive sustainable development: implementation of the Beijing Declaration, including the Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

60. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 74/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to support members and associate members in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) To continue to provide technical assistance to members and associate members of the Commission to integrate disability perspectives and strengthen disability-inclusive development efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda;

(c) To report on progress in the implementation of the resolution and of resolution 69/13 to the Commission at its seventy-sixth, seventy-eighth and seventy-ninth sessions.

2. Progress made

61. The implementation of resolutions 68/7 and resolution 74/7 are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing for catalysing disability-inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific. The summary of progress made on both resolutions is therefore provided in an integrated manner.

62. In response to subparagraph 4 (a) of resolution 74/7, the secretariat held the sixth and seventh sessions of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022, in September 2020 and December 2021 to review progress in implementing the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific and the Beijing Declaration, including the Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy, and discuss the preparatory process for the conclusion of the Decade. The Working Group made decisions and recommendations for action by members and associate members to uphold and advance the rights of persons with disabilities in the region. To gather information on the realization of the goals and targets set out in the Incheon Strategy, the secretariat launched a voluntary national survey for the final review of the implementation of the Decade. Findings from the survey will contribute to an analytical review of the state of disability-inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific at the end of the Decade. The secretariat held an informal consultation of member States on the final review, offering a briefing on the review process and guidance on completing the national survey.

63. To enhance the technical knowledge of members and associate members on Incheon Strategy goals for the formulation of disability-inclusive policies and programmes, the secretariat developed knowledge products and facilitated the sharing of good practices and innovative approaches. Regarding Incheon Strategy goal 1 on reducing poverty and enhancing work and employment prospects, the secretariat issued the publication entitled *Disability at A Glance 2021: The Shaping of Disability-Inclusive Employment in Asia and the Pacific* and the policy paper entitled “Employment of persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific: trends, strategies and policy recommendations”. They provided a regional review of the employment status of persons with disabilities, with a wide range of recommendations to address barriers to obtaining and sustaining employment for persons with disabilities. Moreover, the secretariat convened the expert group meeting on promoting inclusive employment for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific in July 2021 to analyse the design and implementation of disability-related employment promotion interventions and explore recommendations to further empower persons with disabilities in the evolving world of work.

64. The secretariat, jointly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund, developed the policy paper entitled “Early intervention and quality education of children with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific” to expand the evidence base concerning Incheon Strategy goal 5 on expanding early intervention and education of children with disabilities. To facilitate discussion at the Working Group sessions, issue papers on Incheon Strategy goals were

disseminated, covering the areas of employment (goal 1), political participation (goal 2), early intervention and inclusive education (goal 5), gender equality and women's empowerment (goal 6), disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (goal 7) and harmonization of national laws with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (goal 9). The secretariat also prepared a series of policy papers on disability policies and strategies as well as case studies on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

65. To support members and associate members in the implementation of the Incheon Strategy and the Beijing Declaration, including the Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat prepared the policy brief entitled "Ensuring disability rights and inclusion in the response to COVID-19" and held a webinar on developing disability-inclusive policy solutions and responses to the pandemic. In addition, the secretariat established a dedicated web page on COVID-19 and disability inclusion hosted on the ESCAP "Make the Right Real" portal, containing a compilation of government responses to support and empower persons with disabilities during the pandemic. The web page provided more than 240 disability-related resources created by Governments, civil society organizations and United Nations entities, including resources in accessible formats. Further, the secretariat forged close collaboration with Governments and organizations of persons with disabilities in developing pilot initiatives in Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia and Thailand, to promote disability rights and inclusion amid the pandemic and beyond. Following the implementation of the initiatives, the secretariat will document achievements, good practices and lessons learned to inform policy development in future crisis responses in times of pandemic.

66. To commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat held the Regional Forum on Advancing Disability-Inclusive Development: Leadership and Participation of Persons with Disabilities towards an Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable Post-COVID-19 World in December 2021. The Forum deepened the understanding of the global campaign to enhance disability-inclusive policy services for persons with disabilities and shared related initiatives within the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, national and local initiatives to empower persons with disabilities in the context of the pandemic were presented to demonstrate good practices on the effective participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in COVID-19 response and recovery.

67. In response to paragraph 4 of resolution 68/7 and subparagraph 4 (b) of resolution 74/7, the secretariat provided technical assistance to members and associate members to strengthen institutional capacities in disability-inclusive policymaking and programming. The secretariat is assisting the Government of Bhutan in mainstreaming disability inclusion into its systems, policies and programmes concerning social protection, technical and vocational education and training, and employment. The secretariat is also supporting the Lao People's Democratic Republic to collect disability-disaggregated data and analyse the state of disability-inclusive development for the final review of the implementation of the Decade, accelerating progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal target 17.18 on increasing the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data.

68. In support of realizing Sustainable Development Goal target 1.3 on implementing social protection systems and achieving substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable, the secretariat is providing technical assistance to the provincial government of Batangas, Philippines, for the implementation of a pilot project on disability assessment. The project aims to improve the design and application of disability assessment tools to facilitate the issuance of disability identification cards and increase access for persons with disabilities to disability-related programmes and services. Further, the secretariat supported the Government of Thailand in the development of a disability-inclusive public procurement mechanism, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities).

69. The secretariat provided technical assistance to the ASEAN secretariat for the development of “Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, which ASEAN member States will use to track their progress in the implementation of the Incheon Strategy and the 2030 Agenda with a focus on disability inclusion. Through participation in thematic online forums held by ASEAN, the Commission raised the awareness of policymakers on disability-inclusive development, digital accessibility and disability-inclusive entrepreneurship.

III. Environment and development

Resolution 76/1

Strengthening cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

70. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 76/1, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to strengthen current partnerships and to develop new partnerships, where appropriate, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources, including through participatory, multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms;

(b) To continue to strengthen and facilitate national capacities and to provide, upon request, and within existing resources, technical assistance for the effective implementation of relevant internationally agreed conventions to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, in collaboration with relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and regional and subregional organizations, in line with their existing mandates;

(c) To continue to support countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as developing middle-income countries, in sharing experiences as well as in enhancing cooperation on the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, including ecosystem restoration and sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism and through coastal habitat restoration efforts, in light of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific;

(d) To continue to strengthen and facilitate national capacities, including through engagement with the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership, on a voluntary basis, for measurement and accounting of progress towards the sustainable development of the oceans, in line with the document entitled “Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community”, endorsed by the Committee on Statistics at its fifth session;

(e) To continue to support systematic regional dialogue on sustainable maritime connectivity, in close collaboration with the key global and regional stakeholders, and as part of the work of the Commission on promoting sustainable transport connectivity in the region.

71. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 76/1, the Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-eighth session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

72. In response to subparagraph 4 (a), the secretariat held the third and fourth Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean on 29 October 2020 and on 27 October 2021 to support member States and key stakeholders through systematic and inclusive dialogue on priority areas and challenges in the region. Each event engaged more than 400 participants from all subregions, including a strong presence from Pacific stakeholders.

73. The secretariat worked with research institutions, and civil society organizations in East and North-East Asia through the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network, launched in 2013 by the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation. The secretariat published a report entitled *Management Plans, Monitoring and Assessment of Marine Protected Areas* on selected marine protected areas in China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. Key findings and recommendations were presented to the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network workshop, held online on 15 July 2021. The participants in the workshop suggested holding theme-based dialogues, including on climate change, marine ecosystems, blue carbon and rare marine species. The secretariat and the China-Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia Sustainable Coastal Management Cooperation Center jointly held a side event of the East Asian Seas Congress 2021, on 13 and 14 October 2021 to improve management capabilities for marine protected areas and enhance partnerships between marine protected areas.

74. In addition, the secretariat forged a partnership with the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme to cooperate in areas of mutual interest to serve small island developing States and least developed countries in the Pacific region and signed a memorandum of understanding.

75. In response to subparagraphs 4 (b) and (d), the secretariat provided support to Palau in the planning for its first ocean account. This technical assistance has included training and discussions related to the anticipated uses and applications of ocean accounts as well as the process for compiling the ocean data and statistics needed for an ocean account. The secretariat supported the first stakeholder discussion of ocean accounting in Palau in December 2021, which brought together relevant government ministries and non-governmental organizations within Palau for discussion and agreement on next steps. The secretariat has provided training support on ocean accounting

in Fiji, Indonesia and Samoa and engaged in discussions in each of those member States on policy applications of ocean accounts.

76. Furthermore, the secretariat held two executive training programmes for high-level government officials in 2020 and 2021. These programmes included capacity development on ocean protection issues, including a module on safeguarding ecosystem health with a focus on marine pollution and a module focusing on ocean and climate synergies. Additional capacity development activities included the development of an e-learning course on water, the ocean and the Sustainable Development Goals.

77. In response to subparagraph 4 (c), the secretariat, in partnership with UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme and coordinated by the United Nations multi-country office in Samoa, submitted a joint proposal entitled “Building Forward Better by Safeguarding Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services” to the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund. Addressing Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15, the project will support the development of policy and planning, data collection and the valuation of ecosystem services for the development of scenarios and to build a case for investment in ecosystem services for human well-being. This proposal has been approved for implementation in 2022–2023.

78. In response to subparagraph 4 (d), the secretariat has continued to advance the implementation of ocean accounts in collaboration with the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership. The Second Global Dialogue on Ocean Accounting was held online in April 2021, bringing together representatives of member States, researchers and other stakeholders to share experiences and strategies related to the development of ocean accounts. To serve the broader regionalization of ocean accounting, the secretariat contributed to a two-day regional training workshop hosted in November 2021 by the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership, with representatives of member States and other stakeholders involved in the implementation of ocean accounting. The secretariat is working with the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to develop global guidance on ocean accounting that draws from regional experiences, and ESCAP held a successful side event at the fifty-second session of the Statistical Commission in 2021, which led to the endorsement of such work by the Statistical Commission.

79. Ongoing work in Samoa, which commenced with a diagnostic study on areas of focus and country needs, has evolved into research on accounting for the contribution of tourism to the economy and linking that with waste production and management issues. Further work is expected in 2022, aimed at supporting specific Samoa Ocean Strategy priorities and related national and Sustainable Development Goal initiatives. This work will be supported by the new project reported under subparagraph 4 (c). Additional ocean accounting pilot activities in Fiji and Palau (as described under subparagraph 4 (b)) are planned for 2022, and ongoing discussion with authorities supports the identification of the scope of work.

80. In response to subparagraph 4 (e), the secretariat has scaled up the implementation of intergovernmental, analytical and capacity-building activities on sustainable maritime connectivity. The secretariat has mobilized extrabudgetary funds, leveraging long-standing partnerships with relevant United Nations agencies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and UNCTAD, and has used existing collaboration platforms, such as the Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean, the Committee on Transport and the Ministerial Conference on Transport. The secretariat has secured the basis for

its activities by including maritime and interregional transport connectivity as one of the seven key areas of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026), adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport, held from 14 to 17 December 2021. Relevant outputs include the following: new analytical products on sustainable maritime connectivity; online workshops and expert meetings held in close cooperation with IMO, UNCTAD and other partners; and inputs to the relevant sessions of the Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean, the Committee on Transport and the Ministerial Conference on Transport in 2021 and discussions on sustainable transport during the fifth Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in Fiji.
