



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

### Seventy-ninth session

Bangkok and online, 15–19 May 2023

## Account of proceedings

### Agenda item 1

#### Opening of the session

1. At its 1st meeting, on 15 May 2023, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific elected Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu (Tonga) as Chair of its seventy-ninth session. The Chair presided over the opening of the session. Video messages were played from the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi; the seventy-eighth President of the Economic and Social Council, Ms. Lachezara Stoeva; the Secretary-General; and the Prime Minister of Thailand, General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.). The Executive Secretary of the Commission delivered welcoming remarks and a policy statement.

### Agenda item 2

#### Theme topic, “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”

#### Sub-item (a)

##### General debate

2. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat containing a summary of the theme study on accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development (ESCAP/79/2).

3. The Executive Secretary made introductory remarks and presented the main findings related to the theme study. A video on the theme topic was screened.

4. Statements on climate action were delivered by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Mr. Mark Stephen Brown; the President of Palau, Mr. Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.; and the Prime Minister of Samoa, Ms. Fiamē Naomi Mata’afa. Video messages were played from the President of Indonesia, Mr. Joko Widodo; the President of the Philippines, Mr. Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, Jr.; the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Ms. Sheikh Hasina; the Prime Minister of Mongolia, Mr. Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene; the Prime Minister of Tonga, Mr. Siaosi ‘Ofakivahafolau Sovaleni Hu’akavameiliku; and the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Mr. Kausea Natano.

5. Keynote addresses were delivered by the Director of the Center for Sustainable Development of Columbia University and President of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Mr. Jeffrey D. Sachs; the Chair of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network and President of Hong Kong-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Foundation, Mr. George Lam; the Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment of India and Editor of “Down to Earth”, Ms. Sunita Narain; the Chair of the Commonwealth Youth Council, Mr. Kim Allen; and youth representative to the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Ms. Prim Rajasurang Wongkrasamongkol.

6. In his statement, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum highlighted that catastrophic human-induced climate events affected the Pacific even though the subregion had one of the smallest carbon footprints. He stated that greater climate ambition could be achieved and mitigation and sustainable development efforts could be accelerated, but that limited access to the necessary financing remained a barrier. The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent served as a road map for achieving carbon neutrality in the Pacific by 2050. He emphasized the alignment between the Commission and the Pacific Islands Forum and called for a strengthened partnership to deliver results effectively. The operationalization of the fund for loss and damage was a priority, along with the achievement of a breakthrough in climate financing.

7. In his statement, the President of Palau recalled the dire impacts of climate change on Pacific countries and urged the international community to catalyse climate financing and investment and ensure access to funds for loss and damage. He emphasized the need for parallel efforts at the regional and global levels. Palau also sought partnerships to achieve the goal of producing 100 per cent of its energy from renewable sources by 2032, to lower energy costs and carbon emissions. The Government of Palau was committed to ocean management and encouraged all coastal and ocean States to also make such a commitment, which supported a blue economy for the Pacific countries. Greater cooperation for collective action was stressed as a way forward.

8. In her statement, the Prime Minister of Samoa emphasized that oceans served as a common thread, bringing together countries in the Pacific that had developed collective and combined agendas and narratives. Since endorsing the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the Pacific countries had committed themselves to achieving sustainable development, inclusive economic growth and strengthened governance and security. While climate change represented the single biggest threat to the livelihoods and security of the peoples of the Pacific, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic too had left devastating impacts. Nevertheless, the Government of Samoa would continue to make its nationally determined contributions, including by aiming to reach 100 per cent electrification through renewable energy by 2030. It also aimed to decarbonize its land and maritime transport networks, phase out all fossil fuel subsidies and accelerate the transition to a low greenhouse gas and climate-resilient economy. Climate financing played a critical role. Small island developing States could not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and fund their core needs on their own without more responsive development cooperation systems.

9. In his statement, the President of Indonesia outlined urgent steps that needed to be taken to address climate change. First, regional adaptation mechanisms needed to be strengthened, especially through the use of technological innovations in the agricultural and fishery sectors, as well as by strengthening research in resilient plant species, early warning systems and

disaster-proof infrastructure. Second, regional climate action needed to be bolstered and the Asia-Pacific region had to play a part in realizing net-zero carbon emissions. Third, global partnerships needed to be established to mobilize innovative financial support for the transition to a low-carbon economy. Initiatives such as the fund for loss and damage, just energy transition partnerships and the Global Blended Finance Alliance would require additional commitments from developed countries and the private sector. The Commission played a key role as a forum for strengthening cooperation.

10. In his statement, the President of the Philippines stressed that, although climate change affected all countries, vulnerable countries suffered the most and the prospects of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals depended on addressing that global challenge. Some key actions that needed to be carried out included closing the climate financing gap, operationalizing the fund for loss and damage and sharing knowledge and best practices. Climate actions needed to be based on a people-centred approach, along with appropriate investments in renewable energy, agriculture and infrastructure.

11. In her statement, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh highlighted the severe impacts of climate change on the region in general and on her country in particular. She outlined the climate adaptation and mitigation plans of the Government of Bangladesh, including its national adaptation plan and updated nationally determined contributions. The key priorities for enabling climate action were: adequate financing; knowledge-sharing and technology transfer; trade facilitation and digital trade measures; and subregional cooperation. Countries should come together in partnership to fight climate change and make the world a safer place for future generations.

12. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Mongolia said that his country was among those most affected by climate change owing to its dependence on animal husbandry and livestock grazing. Although the Government of Mongolia had initiated green development policies, international cooperation and the sharing of technological knowledge and best practices would still be necessary. The Prime Minister recalled that Mongolia had hosted the High-level Forum on Clean Air in March 2023 and would be hosting the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, in 2026.

13. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Tonga emphasized that climate change posed the greatest existential threat to Pacific countries and called for risk-informed sustainable development, as climate change would limit development opportunities. Sustainable development for Tonga needed to be centred on resiliency, as small island developing States were increasingly and unpredictably affected by climate disasters. All developed countries were called upon to finalize the agreement on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance to support an increase in financing for adaptation. Developed countries, international financial institutions and the private sector were also called upon to support the operationalization of the fund for loss and damage.

14. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu emphasized that climate change was the single greatest existential threat to Pacific countries and expressed support for the action areas identified by the secretariat in its theme study, which were aligned with the priorities of Tuvalu. The Government of Tuvalu was raising ambition on climate action and supported climate-smart trade and investment, a just energy transition, low-carbon transport and the strengthening of statistical capacity, which were all part of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. Climate financing too was raised as critical for

mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. In addition, inclusive multilateralism and regional cooperation would be required to make progress on the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Paris Agreement.

15. The Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development of Columbia University outlined four main areas of politics that had to be done differently given the climate emergency: (a) planning strategies needed to address climate change within the context of sustainable development and be integrated into long-term planning; (b) regional cooperation needed to be strengthened, as no country could address the challenges of climate change alone – regions could not be divided by geopolitics but needed to cooperate instead; (c) financing structures based on needs and equity should be developed; and (d) different approaches to geopolitics should be taken, as all countries needed to cooperate since there was only one planet.

16. The Chair of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network and President of the Hong Kong-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Foundation emphasized that the world should move into emergency mode and transition to a more sustainable and inclusive economy. Regional cooperation needed to be strengthened to enable continuous dialogue and technical assistance. He outlined the five pillars of the Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business, which were aimed at achieving the green transformation of the region by mobilizing businesses: green energy; green infrastructure; green finance; green innovation; and green production, consumption and waste management.

17. The Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment of India and Editor of “Down to Earth” emphasized the urgency of addressing climate change as an existential threat. Climate justice should be pursued on the basis of a rule-based framework that encouraged those countries that had contributed the most to climate change to reduce their emissions and those countries that still needed to develop to still do so but in a different manner. Equitable climate financing too was important. Countries in Asia and the Pacific would have to develop and grow differently through the adoption of equitable growth models that were appropriate for the region, without representing a huge cost to the environment. The secretariat of the Commission could, therefore, play an important role in sharing different growth models and pathways and enable countries to hold conversations and learn from each other.

18. The Chair of the Commonwealth Youth Council and the youth representative to the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development highlighted that now was the time to address climate change, including by transitioning to clean and green energy. They emphasized the role of youth in taking climate action and urged the States members of the Commission to scale up funding, increase public transport, develop smart cities, achieve equity for all, implement transformative regulatory frameworks and involve youth in decision-making processes.

## Statements

19. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made statements or submitted written statements: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Fiji; France; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Nepal; Netherlands (Kingdom of the); New Zealand; Palau; Republic of Korea; Russian

Federation; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tuvalu; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

20. Representatives of Italy, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Soroptimist International, the United Nations Environment Programme and Youth Empowerment in Climate Action Platform also made statements or submitted written statements.

21. The Commission was informed of increasingly frequent and intensifying climate-induced disasters, including tropical cyclones, heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires, landslides, sand and dust storms, melting glaciers, loss of biodiversity and rising sea levels, leading to tragic loss of life, displaced communities, threats to food security, livelihoods and poor health, as result of which millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region were being pushed into poverty. The Commission also noted with concern that greenhouse gas emissions were increasingly accompanied by periods of extreme air pollution. Some representatives stressed that climate change adaptation plans should be people-centred and include social protection measures.

22. Several representatives highlighted that the challenges posed by climate change, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions, had led to a surge in inflation and food and energy shortages. Such consequences had also hindered progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

23. The Commission noted the efforts of member States to increase their commitments in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving net zero and carbon neutrality by mid-century.

24. The Commission specifically noted the commitment of member States in the Pacific to ensure net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, as stated in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which had been endorsed in July 2022. In addition, since climate-induced disasters were transboundary in nature and since regional cooperation and partnerships were required to find solutions, representatives also shared recent opportunities for high-level collaboration, for example through the Group of Seven, the Group of 20 and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

25. The Commission noted with concern that melting and disappearing glaciers in the Pamir and Hindu Kush Himalaya mountain ranges were posing great challenges across multiple sectors in the area, especially for landlocked countries. One representative noted that, in its resolution 77/158, the General Assembly had decided to declare 2025 the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation and to proclaim 21 March of each year the World Day for Glaciers, and that the Assembly had invited Governments and all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the trust fund in support of activities for glaciers' preservation.

26. Various representatives welcomed the outcome of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on establishing a fund for loss and damage and called for its operationalization and expedient implementation.

27. The Commission urged member States to mainstream ocean-oriented goals and ocean-based actions into climate discussions and called for concerted action on conserving ocean and terrestrial ecosystems, which played an

important role in carbon sequestration and in enhancing the resilience of local communities to climate change. Several representatives emphasized the importance of forests and biodiversity for preserving the climate amelioration and carbon sink functions of ecosystems, as also highlighted in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

28. The Commission called for efforts to enhance adaptation efforts to address the adverse impacts of climate change on the availability of water resources and on agriculture and food security. It was important to address those issues in national plans and programmes. A representative emphasized the importance of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building as key means of accelerating adaptation actions in the region. Improving access to finance for the most vulnerable countries was particularly important.

29. Noting with concern the threat posed by climate change to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Pacific small island developing States, the Commission called upon member States to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation and join forces to accelerate climate action and keep global warming within 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Many representatives also called upon the secretariat to support member States at the regional level in those efforts through technology transfer, targeted research, technical assistance, capacity-building and dialogue. Representatives called for strengthened regional cooperation and collaboration on policies and resilient development, including to implement their national adaptation plans and make nationally determined contributions.

30. Several representatives called for the increased provision of financial resources to support climate action in developing countries, including through the fulfilment of the financial commitments made by developed countries under the Paris Agreement, increased funding for adaptation and blended finance. Several representatives informed the Commission about the actions that their respective Governments had taken for the development of green financing, including the issuance of green and sustainability bonds, the development of green taxonomies and the integration of environmental, social and governance principles in business practices.

31. The Commission was informed of initiatives to expand green energy and green infrastructure and of climate finance contributions made by several member States to developing countries. Several member States expressed their commitment to expanding cooperation on climate action. One representative pointed to the need to mobilize private financing to complement public funds.

32. Some representatives proposed innovative solutions to scale up access to climate financing by developing countries and facilitate climate action, including the implementation of reforms for multilateral development banks to leverage their capacity to address global challenges, including climate change, and the establishment of just energy transition partnerships to mobilize financing for net-zero economies. Another innovative idea proposed was a levy on greenhouse gas emissions in the shipping sector to finance the energy transition of the shipping industry and help vulnerable countries to address the impacts of climate change.

33. The Commission noted the various initiatives taken by member States to support regional cooperation on climate change, including meetings that would contribute to strengthened regional and multilateral cooperation on climate action.

34. The Commission noted the various approaches being pursued by member States to facilitate low-emission development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, such as the green growth, green economy, green industry, sustainable urban development, sufficiency economy and gross national happiness approaches, as well as nature-based solutions.

35. The Commission highlighted the importance of accelerating the transition to low-carbon mobility and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector and reaffirmed the important role of digital technologies in accelerating such a transition. The Commission acknowledged the importance of decarbonizing the maritime sector, especially in the Pacific subregion. Several representatives called for strengthened cooperation on low-carbon and green cities, including sustainable urban transport development through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and networking to promote sustainable urban development.

36. The Commission reaffirmed the important role of transport connectivity in promoting sustainable development in the region and, in that regard, underlined the importance of transport infrastructure development. One representative acknowledged the role of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network.

37. The Commission was informed of initiatives taken by member States to accelerate the decarbonization of transport and the adoption of electric mobility, including through the implementation of policies conducive to the use of electric vehicles and climate-friendly initiatives in the transport and construction sectors.

38. The Commission noted the importance of putting climate financing instruments into action to promote decarbonization efforts, in particular in the energy and transport sectors. One representative added that greenhouse gas reductions in the energy and transport sectors should be key elements of nationally determined contributions.

39. The Commission was informed of national actions to invest in and increase renewable energy, including solar energy, hydrogen and hydropower. Some representatives highlighted targets and efforts to increase the share of renewable energy, including by phasing out the use of coal, increasing energy efficiency and expanding energy access through aid efforts. One representative encouraged member States to join a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty.

40. Representatives of international organizations, major groups and other stakeholders reiterated that climate change was one of the biggest challenges facing humanity; called for strong actions to reach net zero; highlighted the impact of climate change on public health, especially among vulnerable groups in urban environments; called for efforts to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems for local communities; emphasized that social inclusion must be a priority in climate action; and encouraged member States to take advantage of the creative and innovative solutions that the young people could offer.

41. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat containing a summary of the theme study on accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development (ESCAP/79/2).

42. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted resolutions 79/1 on accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development and 79/2 on regional cooperation to accelerate climate action on oceans in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development.

**Sub-item (b)**

**Strengthening subregional cooperation**

43. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/79/3) and the note by the secretariat on subregional cooperation to accelerate climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development (ESCAP/79/4).

44. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; Cook Islands; Indonesia; Thailand; and United States.

45. The Executive Secretary made introductory remarks before a dialogue among the following representatives of subregional organizations and groupings: the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Mr. Henry Puna; the Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Mr. Zhang Ming; the Secretary-General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, Mr. Tenzin Lekphell; the Director General of the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Mr. Sefanaia Nawadra; the Deputy Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, Mr. Bek Bumhym; the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Mr. Khusrav Noziri; the Secretary-General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon; the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Mr. Kao Kim Hourn; the Member of the Board (Minister) for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Mr. Andrey Slepnev; and the Director of the Greater Tumen Initiative, Mr. Andrey Smorodin.

46. The Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat noted that the subregion contributed only 0.3 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions yet suffered the greatest climate impacts. Urgent action to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels was a key priority for the subregion. The Pacific was taking an integrated approach to addressing the impacts of climate change and disasters on sustainable development through various frameworks focused on reducing fossil fuel dependency while increasing investments in renewable energy and low-carbon mobility; addressing climate security; and reducing emissions to achieve renewable energy targets. The Pacific supported the development of a legally binding international framework that established the climate responsibilities of States, upheld the user pays principle for mobilizing new and additional climate financing and addressed the disproportionate impacts of natural disasters and climate change borne by the subregion despite their minimal emissions. The Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat also noted that fisheries accounted for up to 50 per cent of the revenue of some Pacific Governments and that the subregion supplied 60 per cent of the global tuna market, which had come under threat from ocean acidification and warming sea temperatures. He highlighted the value of blue carbon credit as an alternative trading instrument for the subregion. The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which was set out around certain key thematic areas, including climate change, disasters, oceans and the environment, provided a



road map for taking collective responsibility and subregional action in the face of multiple crises and challenges.

47. The Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization informed the Commission that his organization attached great importance to jointly addressing climate change and preventing its negative impacts, including through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the protection and management of water resources and the promotion of low-carbon technologies and inclusive social development. He highlighted the work done by the Commission and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in particular the assistance provided by the Commission for the development of an agreement between the Governments of the States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on creating favourable conditions for international road transportation. The updated memorandum of understanding between the two organizations signed in 2022 included new areas for cooperation and priorities for collaboration. He welcomed cooperation with the non-governmental structures of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, such as the business council, the interbank association, the consortium of economic and analytical centres, the youth council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization University, and other similar large regional organizations, to promote wider interactions between the stakeholders of each organization. He expressed the hope that the Commission would convene meetings of experts from the relevant regional organizations that would help to turn recommendations into concrete actions.

48. The Secretary-General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation stated that the States members of the Initiative were vulnerable to a range of climate-induced hazards and that many of the 1.7 billion people in those countries were poor and extremely vulnerable to economic loss, displacement and diminished living conditions caused by climate change. Efforts were being made to develop a plan of action on the environment and climate change and a partnership had been established with the Asian Development Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute to support efforts to meet climate-related targets, including those of Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate action). However, countries needed capacity-building and financial support to make their nationally determined contributions and meet the targets of a plan of action on the environment and climate change. Subregional, regional and international cooperation were needed to address climate challenges and find solutions.

49. The Director General of the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme informed the Commission that his organization was focused on four key issues to address climate change. First, it was focusing on building capacity in the Pacific on climate science and information, including ocean science, to support informed and meaningful policies and actions. In that context, he noted the contributions of the Weather Ready Pacific programme and the Pacific Climate Change Centre, and that the Centre would seek to collaborate with the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology and the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network of the United Nations Environment Programme in the future. Second, the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme continued to advocate for greater climate ambition through international forums like the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to amplify Pacific voices. Third, the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme was adding its voice to the ongoing call to address access to climate financing, including the systemic challenges in the process of accreditation and access to the Green Climate Fund, noting that the

negotiations on loss and damage should reflect lessons already learned. In that context, the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme was hosting a conference on loss and damage in July 2023 to support preparations for negotiations at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties. Fourth, the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme was focusing on the need to address associated issues like waste and loss of biodiversity.

50. The Deputy Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat underscored the urgent and common need to address climate change. The Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat was making concerted efforts to achieve sustainable development and coordinate climate policies. It had collaborated with the Commission secretariat to promote climate actions in North-East Asia, bringing together Governments and experts and facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

51. The Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization informed the Commission that, in line with the aspirations of its member States, his organization was reinforcing environmental and climate change cooperation in the region through enhanced collaboration among its member States while they were consolidating their actions and efforts in that sphere. The Economic Cooperation Organization was committed to promoting development that was more resilient to climate change and had already collaborated in that respect within the region and beyond, including with the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on disaster risk reduction and the management of cascading risks. Possible key areas of cooperation on climate change between subregional organizations and the secretariat were: raising public awareness for climate action; making leaders more aware of the need to move from short-term to long-term thinking; focusing on ways and means of adapting to climate change; and transitioning to sustainable agriculture and low-carbon industries, mobility, logistics and urban development.

52. The Secretary-General of SAARC noted that South Asia was extremely vulnerable to climate-induced natural disasters and that climate action could help to resolve problems linked to increasing water stress, a declining share of renewables in the energy mix, industrialization and rapid and unplanned urbanization and to promote resilient infrastructure and innovation. SAARC had adopted an action plan on climate change and protection of the environment, including disaster risk reduction and management, which remained a high priority. In addition to the priorities for climate action in South and South-West Asia identified by the secretariat, the graduation of SAARC member States from the category of least developed countries also posed challenges for such countries in terms of meeting their financial needs for climate action and the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. The SAARC secretariat was working with the secretariat of the Commission to maintain preferential access to markets and provide technical assistance even after graduation. It was suggested that regional and subregional cooperation on climate action should focus on research, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building and that the work being carried out by the South and South-West Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals was an important bridge in that regard. SAARC had initiated many activities that benefited its members. The establishment of a regional framework to enhance collaboration between subregional and regional organizations on climate change could allow the entire Asia-Pacific region to prosper.

53. The Secretary-General of ASEAN stated that his organization was actively promoting sustainable development practices and working towards climate change mitigation and adaptation targets. Actions included advancing green growth and low-carbon development strategies, reducing energy intensity and increasing the share of renewables in the total energy supply. Furthermore, ASEAN was working to promote and develop sustainable transport infrastructure, strengthen climate mitigation measures and promote sustainable finance and investments. ASEAN recognized the global nature of climate change and aimed to coordinate efforts to address the issue while remaining aligned with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda.

54. The Member of the Board (Minister) for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission informed the Commission that, in 2021, the States members of the Eurasian Economic Union had adopted a statement on economic cooperation in the context of the climate agenda that included commitments on the broad international exchange and non-discriminatory use of technologies that ensured emission reductions and low-carbon development; the efficient and rational use of fossil fuels, nuclear energy and hydropower generation, as well as a shift to low-carbon transport; and the adoption of hydrogen technologies, renewable energy sources and energy-efficient approaches and technologies in manufacturing, agriculture and housing and communal services. The Eurasian Economic Commission had developed a model taxonomy that was being used to develop national taxonomies for assessing green projects and facilitating access by investors from the States members of the Eurasian Economic Union to capital markets through the listing of financing instruments on stock exchanges. The Eurasian Economic Commission was making every effort to harmonize the carbon regulations of its member States, including through measures to promote the decarbonization of key economic sectors and, where possible, to develop a joint approach based on the goals of the Paris Agreement.

55. The Director of the Secretariat of the Greater Tumen Initiative said that it was necessary to address environmental degradation and shared information on the Initiative's strategic action plan for the period 2021–2024, which was aimed at enhancing energy policy coordination and cooperation, reducing the non-physical barriers to energy trade and investment, mitigating the adverse effects of climate change and achieving sustainable development. The Initiative had collaborated with the secretariat of the Commission to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices in capacity-building for effective power grid interconnection cooperation, digitization of transport and cross-border paperless trade. Partnerships needed to be built to accelerate climate action.

56. The Commission emphasized the importance of regional and subregional cooperation and strategies to complement global initiatives to accelerate climate action. Examples provided included ongoing solutions-focused partnerships and collaborative efforts to address the impacts of climate change, acknowledging the diversity of the subregions of the Asia-Pacific region, where the secretariat played a catalytic role in advancing initiatives and in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

57. Many representatives stressed the need to focus on building climate and disaster resilience and making concerted efforts to address the impact of climate change. It was also important to support the worst affected and most vulnerable communities, as well as those countries that had least contributed to the climate crisis.

58. Several representatives noted that the potential of digital technologies could be leveraged to develop policies to help achieve climate goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Securing new and additional financial support remained a challenge. The fund for loss and damage should become operational keeping in mind the different contexts of various countries and access to the fund should be facilitated. The urgent need for regional and international actions that were meaningful, deep and sustained reductions in emissions to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels was also emphasized. Countries were encouraged to consider making submissions pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/276, in which the Assembly decided to request the International Court of Justice to render an advisory opinion on the obligations of States in respect of climate change.

59. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/79/3) and the note by the secretariat on subregional cooperation to accelerate climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development (ESCAP/79/4).

### **Sub-item (c)**

#### **Catalysing climate financing and investment**

60. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat containing a summary of the theme study on accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development (ESCAP/79/2).

61. The Executive Secretary made introductory remarks. The special representative of the President of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Mr. Wael Aboulmagd, and the Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and high-level champion for climate action, Mr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, made opening remarks. The special representative of the Minister of Finance of Finland, Mr. Pekka Morén, delivered keynote remarks.

62. The special representative of the President of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties said that success in the fight against climate change would depend heavily on the availability of predictable and adequate climate financing. Given their heavy debt burdens and the high cost of borrowing, developing countries needed to have access to concessional loans.

63. The Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda and high-level champion for climate action spoke of the importance of the dialogues among Governments and financial institutions organized by the regional commissions of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, for working together with the climate champions on supporting bankable projects in all areas of adaptation and mitigation.

64. A panel discussion was moderated by the secretariat. The secretariat made a presentation and statements were made by the Minister of Finance of Bhutan, Mr. Namgay Tshering; the Minister of the Environment of Sri Lanka, Mr. Naseer Ahamed; the Minister of Finance of Tuvalu, Mr. Seve Paeniu; the Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Cambodia, Ms. Chea Serey; Chair of the Association of Investment Management Companies of Thailand, Ms. Chavinda Hanratanakool; Managing Executive Officer of MUFG Bank of

Japan, Mr. Koichiro Oshima; and First Deputy Chairman of VEB.RF of the Russian Federation, Mr. Alexey Miroshnichenko.

65. The panellists representing member States spoke about the progress made in financing the energy transition and moving away from fossil fuels; the need to attract private financing; the introduction of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for green investment; the need to restructure the sovereign debts of highly indebted developing countries, including through debt-for-nature swaps; and the need for climate-vulnerable developing countries to gain access to loss and damage financing, as well as other forms of financing related to climate justice. Examples of good practices included debt cancellation, just energy transition measures that provided affordable access to electricity for vulnerable groups while also ensuring sustainability and initiatives like the just energy transition partnerships.

66. Specific concerns for the Pacific were also raised, including the critical need to finance climate adaptation in small island developing States, the commitment of Pacific member States to transition away from fossil fuels and the request for climate and development financing to be accessible on flexible terms and in a manner responsive to the situations of Pacific small island developing States. In addition, panellists discussed the importance of developing a sustainable finance ecosystem through the development of enabling policies, regulations and infrastructure; the importance of not adopting a one-size-fits-all pathway but to consider multiple pathways with different costs and results for achieving reductions in carbon emissions; and the need to strengthen capacities to enhance access to climate financing.

67. The panellists representing financial institutions and asset managers reiterated the importance of building demand for and supply of green financial products and the need to invest in the capacities of financial personnel. They noted the progress that had been made on developing green finance ecosystems and that there were many cost-effective ways to finance a reduction in emissions. They also noted the role that the financial sector played in encouraging the real economy to transition faster; the trend in increasing energy demand that Asia and the Pacific would have to address; and the fact that financing renewables could be effective only with a strong grid infrastructure in place for the transition.

68. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Russian Federation; United States; and Uzbekistan. A youth representative also made a statement.

69. Significant progress was reported in mobilizing financing for climate mitigation and adaptation through advances in green and innovative financial instruments, carbon finance, awareness of climate-related financial risks, capacity-building of financial institutions and investments in energy efficiency, solar power and other renewables. However, some representatives highlighted that raising the ambition to act on climate change required mobilizing the necessary public and private investment to achieve climate objectives and address the current financing gap.

70. Representatives underscored the role of effective national policies and regulations to lower the costs of financing and increase the supply of funds for climate action while contributing to the alignment of public and private financial flows with climate objectives. Some representatives also noted the importance of developing a clear and transparent regulatory framework for promoting sustainable investment and attracting private sector engagement,

and highlighted additional measures, such as fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for green investment, including tax.

71. Innovation and green technology were mentioned as crucial elements to unlock climate financing and investment and, in that regard, the importance of nurturing a culture of innovation, knowledge-sharing and support to start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises was emphasized.

72. Some representatives noted that effective multilateralism and enhanced regional and international cooperation and partnerships, including South-South cooperation, would be necessary, especially to increase financial and technical support to developing countries. Some representatives noted that development partners and the international community played a critical role in providing technical and capacity-building assistance and in enhancing access to climate finance instruments and mechanisms. The Commission was informed of commitments made by developed countries to provide climate financing to developing countries, as well as about the need to strengthen access to and engagement with multilateral climate funds and scale up concessional loans for countries with the greatest needs.

73. Representatives noted that investments in climate action should enable a just transition in terms of sustainable growth, creating green jobs and addressing broader environmental and social challenges.

### **Agenda item 3**

#### **Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States**

74. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Summary of the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity*” (ESCAP/79/5).

75. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made statements or submitted written statements: Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Nepal; Samoa; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; and United States.

76. Representatives of the following regional and intergovernmental organizations made statements: International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries; Pacific Regional Environment Programme; and Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.

77. The Executive Secretary presented the key findings contained in the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity*. The High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States made a statement.

78. The Commission emphasized the importance of connectivity in transport, energy and information and communications technology (ICT) for socioeconomic development, addressing climate change and increasing resilience to disasters. It highlighted the significance of digital connectivity, technology transfer and digital technology applications in monitoring the climate and building resilience to natural disasters. It also recognized trade as a driver of economic growth and emphasized that digitalization and non-tariff

measures could facilitate trade. One representative noted that the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific was an important initiative in that regard.

79. While improvements had been made in mobile connectivity in countries in special situations, affordability and reliability were identified as challenges. One representative called for more funding and technical assistance to unlock the potential of new technologies, such as low Earth orbit satellites, in bridging the digital divide.

80. The Commission acknowledged the key challenges in improving road, rail, port and border infrastructure in countries in special situations, including the pressing need to reduce transport costs and ensure greater resilience. Several representatives highlighted the need for affordable, efficient and sustainable transport networks and strengthened financial and technical capacities, including through strengthened regional cooperation and additional transport facilitation efforts.

81. Several representatives highlighted the high dependence of many countries on imported fossil fuels for energy and transport and the need to shift towards renewable and more efficient sources of energy. Representatives also shared the view that the digital divide might be attributed to insufficient investments in infrastructure, such as submarine fibre-optic cables, and the absence of a regulatory environment conducive to investment.

82. The Commission highlighted the significant impact of climate change on countries in special situations and reiterated the multidimensional challenges faced by those countries, such as low productive capacities, narrow economic bases, geographic isolation and climate-related vulnerabilities. Addressing those challenges required constant support from development partners, including entities of the United Nations system and other multilateral institutions. Some representatives called for increased international assistance and development financing based on multidimensional vulnerabilities.

83. Several representatives recognized that partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement through regional digital cooperation mechanisms, such as the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, played a vital role in strengthening the seamless sustainable connectivity of countries in special situations.

84. The Commission acknowledged the priorities identified in the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for achieving sustainable development. The effective implementation of the Doha Programme of Action required integrating it into national development strategies and cooperation frameworks, promoting trade facilitation and foreign investment, scaling up investment in connectivity, science, technology and innovation, and taking a multi-stakeholder approach.

85. Representatives of landlocked developing countries stressed the importance of efficient transport networks and cross-border communications. Digitalization was highlighted as a means to streamline cross-border trade processes, enhance climate monitoring and increase competitiveness. Road and railway networks and dry ports for multimodal transport systems were important and high levels of investment were required.

86. Representatives of small island developing States noted that the small size and remoteness of their countries posed challenges to transport and trade logistics; for example, small cargo volumes limited the ability to benefit from

economies of scale. Moreover, small island developing States were highly vulnerable to external shocks and paid high prices for imported sources of energy. The impacts of climate change required investments that significantly exceeded the available resources, including in terms of climate financing. Representatives stressed the role of the secretariat in aligning the Samoa Pathway with the 2030 Agenda through collaborative efforts with Pacific institutions. The core of regional development efforts for small island developing States should focus on climate change resilience and be based on the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

87. The Commission took note of the regional reviews of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the Samoa Pathway to be convened in the second half of 2023, which would provide opportunities for countries and development partners to identify priorities for the future.

88. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission adopted resolution 79/3 on supporting the sustainable development of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Asia and the Pacific.

89. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat entitled “Summary of the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity*” (ESCAP/79/5).

#### **Agenda item 4**

#### **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**

90. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat containing a summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (ESCAP/79/6) and the information document on the annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/79/INF/1).

91. The Executive Secretary delivered an introductory presentation on the agenda item.

92. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat containing a summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (ESCAP/79/6) and the information document on the annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/79/INF/1).

#### **Sub-item (a)**

#### **Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development**

93. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report on the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (ESCAP/RFSD/2023/6) and the note by the secretariat containing a summary of its round-table discussions (ESCAP/RFSD/2023/6/Add.1).

94. The Chair of the Tenth Forum presented the report on the Tenth Forum.



95. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; Maldives; Mongolia; and Thailand.

96. The Commission emphasized the role of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development as the primary regional platform for following up on and reviewing the 2030 Agenda. The Forum was instrumental as a key multi-stakeholder platform to strengthen efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals by enabling a review of regional progress and promoting overall regional cooperation and collaboration. The Forum also provided opportunities to share experiences and facilitated regional multi-stakeholder dialogues on ways to accelerate action on the Goals.

97. The Commission recognized that the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development was a means to inform the global dialogues on sustainable development, including the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

98. Some representatives recognized the support provided by the secretariat in developing voluntary national reviews and encouraged continued support from the secretariat, including for sharing experiences through the twinning programme and providing methodologies and tools in that regard.

99. The Commission reiterated its commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, the region must transform its energy, food, financial and economic sectors to align them with sustainable development objectives and engage in regional cooperation. In addition, it was important to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships, invest in innovation and build agile and dynamic institutions.

100. The Commission underscored the need to leave no one behind and to put people at the centre of all development efforts. It stressed that those furthest behind should be reached first, including by investing in inclusive national social protection and universal health coverage, advancing gender equality and equity and accelerating the transition to inclusive and sustainable economies, for example through climate change mitigation and adaptation and nature-based solutions.

101. Representatives shared their experiences on developing national priority indicators, incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into national planning and undertaking a data-based review of progress in implementation.

102. The Commission was informed of the efforts made by member States to create inclusive green societies and promote cooperation on environmental conservation and climate action. One representative stressed the importance of committing resources in the health sector to tackle the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and informed the Commission of efforts made to reduce poverty, provide housing to refugees and finance long-term national plans. Another representative advocated for closer cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations such as ASEAN to promote development.

103. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission adopted resolution 79/4 on accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for a better future for all in Asia and the Pacific.

104. Prior to the adoption of the resolution, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that his delegation had joined the consensus to adopt the resolution, noting that the provisions contained therein were in line with the national rules and legislation, cultural background and national development priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. His delegation attached great importance to the realization of sustainable development at the national, regional and international levels based on the principles of fairness, inclusivity, partnership, cooperation, country ownership, common but differentiated responsibilities and the historical responsibilities of developed countries. The final text of the resolution did not, however, properly reflect the concerns and priorities of the developing countries in the region. In the 2030 Agenda, States were strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impeded the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. The representative stated that unilateral coercive measures, including sanctions, were unlawful, immoral and inhumane and they violated international law and breached basic human rights. He also stated that those illegal measures had drastically deterred firms, banks and financial institutions from engaging in commercial and financial transactions with the Islamic Republic of Iran, therefore posing a serious threat to Iranians' right to health and access to essential medicines, medical equipment and supplies, pharmaceutical products and health commodities. He added that they inflicted suffering on those who were already afflicted by a range of diseases and medical conditions, resulting annually in the deaths of many Iranians. He noted that so-called "humanitarian exemptions" were deceiving and designed to remain only on paper. Jeopardizing the health and safety of entire populations for political ends was illegal and a crime against humanity, entailing international responsibility.

105. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the report on the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (ESCAP/RFS/2023/6) and took note of the note by the secretariat containing a summary of its round-table discussions (ESCAP/RFS/2023/6/Add.1).

**Sub-item (b)**  
**Social development**

106. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Social Development on its seventh session (ESCAP/CSD/2022/5), the report on the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3), the outcome document entitled "Accelerating Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, to Build a Sustainable Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific" (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1), the report on the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022 (ESCAP/APDDP/2022/3), the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 (ESCAP/APDDP/2022/3/Add.1) and the note by the secretariat entitled "Trends in social development: the future of work in Asia and the Pacific" (ESCAP/79/7).

107. The Chair of the seventh session of the Committee on Social Development presented the report of the Committee. The Chair of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing presented the outcomes of the Meeting. The Vice-Chair of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the

Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022, presented the outcomes of the Meeting.

108. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Maldives; Russian Federation; Thailand; and United States.

109. Several representatives recognized that climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic had worsened inequality in the region, with people in vulnerable situations shouldering most of the burden. The commitments made in the 2030 Agenda to promote human-centred development in the context of climate change and to leave no one behind were reiterated. To that end, representatives highlighted efforts to promote education and skills development, particularly for groups in vulnerable situations, including migrant workers, older persons, children, persons with disabilities and women, to ensure their access to decent work and livelihoods.

110. The Commission highlighted social protection as instrumental for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Several delegations reported on measures taken to extend social protection coverage to include, in particular, groups in vulnerable situations, including children, persons with disabilities and older persons. They also reported on other good practices with regard to social protection. One representative highlighted that implementing the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific would help to implement the national road map on social protection.

111. The Commission reiterated its commitment to implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Several delegations reported on measures taken to support older persons, in particular through the provision of contributory and social pensions or other cash transfers. They also highlighted the need to increase employment opportunities for older persons and provide access to health care and long-term care.

112. Several representatives noted that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls continued to be a priority in the Asia-Pacific region, including by promoting the meaningful participation of women and girls in actions to build climate resilience and women's participation in the labour force and the care economy. They called for strengthened regional and global collaboration in those areas.

113. The Commission was informed of the initiatives of several Governments to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, emphasizing the importance of including persons with disabilities in all government actions and of adopting a multisectoral approach. Recognizing the need for inclusive environments, both physical and virtual, representatives shared information on efforts to ensure accessibility for persons with diverse disabilities. The disproportionate impact of disasters on persons with disabilities and the need to include persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction planning was further highlighted.

114. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission adopted resolution 79/5 on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032.

115. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Social Development on its seventh session (ESCAP/CSD/2022/5), the report on the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental

Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3), the outcome document entitled “Accelerating Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, to Build a Sustainable Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1) and the report on the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022 (ESCAP/APDDP/2022/3).

116. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat entitled “Trends in social development: the future of work in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/79/7).

### **Sub-item (c)**

#### **Environment and development**

117. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Environment and Development on its seventh session (ESCAP/CED/2022/4), the Ministerial Declaration on Protecting Our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CED/2022/4/Add.1), the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/79/8) and the note by the secretariat on enabling cities to take climate action and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/79/9).

118. The Chair of the seventh session of the Committee on Environment and Development presented the outcomes of the session. The Chair of the eighteenth session of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization presented the report of the Governing Council.

119. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements or submitted written statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Thailand; and United States.

120. The Commission noted that the Committee on Environment and Development provided a platform to discuss the impacts of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, air pollution and climate change on human health, well-being and socioeconomic development. The Commission pointed out key actions that could be taken to address those issues, including phasing out coal, transitioning to renewables, promoting sustainable mobility, enhancing mitigation measures and strengthening regional collaboration on air quality monitoring, as well as on open data and information-sharing.

121. States members of the Commission reiterated their commitments to achieving carbon neutrality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Commission recognized the efforts of member States to improve environmental sustainability through reforestation and by reducing air and climate pollutants through stricter ambient air standards, preserving ecosystems, enhancing nature-based solutions and mainstreaming green economy principles through low-carbon development initiatives, including carbon pricing. Some representatives noted the importance of adopting integrated approaches for the implementation of the environment-related Sustainable Development Goals to accelerate climate action and reduce vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change.

122. Several representatives shared information on low-carbon initiatives, green cities, plastic pollution reduction, the blue economy, resource efficiency, the circular economy, resilient infrastructure, the sustainable use of land, the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, sustainable water management, protected areas and the preservation of mountain ecosystems and glaciers.

123. One representative highlighted the dialogue held at the third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the message on reinforcing synergies as a means to accelerate the implementation of both the climate action targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

124. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission adopted resolution 79/6 on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Protecting Our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific and resolution 79/7 on advancing regional cooperation for sustainable urban development and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific.

125. Prior to the adoption of resolution 79/6, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated that the environment in the region was a single and interrelated ecosystem and should be protected through multilateral, intergovernmental and regional cooperation, as well as national programmes, and emphasized the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The environmental crisis, including land degradation, the water crisis, desertification and sand and dust storms, in particular in East Asia and other parts of the region, had become a huge and serious human crisis. Sand and dust storms had deprived some affected countries of clean air and oxygen, had threatened the right to life and the right to health and had had a detrimental impact on the economic and social life of nations in the region and beyond. The representative reiterated the adverse effects of severe and long-lasting drought and the implications of climate change in the form of sand and dust storms and emphasized the importance of implementing the Regional Plan of Action on Sand and Dust Storms in Asia and the Pacific, which had been endorsed by the Commission at its seventy-eighth session. He recalled the regional ministerial meeting on environmental cooperation for a better future, held in Tehran on 12 July 2022, and noted its importance in strengthening regional and interregional collaboration to mitigate the negative effects of climate change, including sand and dust storms, desertification and water scarcity.

126. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Environment and Development on its seventh session (ESCAP/CED/2022/4) and the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/79/8).

127. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on enabling cities to take climate action and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/79/9).

#### **Sub-item (d)**

#### **Disaster risk reduction**

128. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its seventh session (ESCAP/79/10), the note by the secretariat

on the update on the financial situation of the Centre (ESCAP/79/10/Add.1) and the note by the secretariat entitled “Early warning and action for all by 2027: transformative adaptation measures to address increased risks in the Asia-Pacific region” (ESCAP/79/11).

129. The secretariat read the message from the Chair of the seventh session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management presenting the report of the Governing Council.

130. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements or submitted written statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; and Philippines.

131. The Commission highlighted the increasing intensity and frequency of disasters stemming from climate change and reiterated the vulnerability of the Asia-Pacific region to disasters. One representative noted that natural disasters had been followed by long-term poverty and increased inequality. In that regard, representatives emphasized the importance of early warning systems in decreasing mortality rates and property loss.

132. The Commission noted that early warning systems were a key component of disaster risk management, and highlighted efforts it had made to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems in Asia and the Pacific. In that context, some representatives requested support from the secretariat to strengthen regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms for addressing disasters, specifically by sharing real-time data on transboundary hazards and for mitigating cascading risks, developing risk assessment tools, mainstreaming disaster risk management and climate change in development programmes and making use of remote sensing. They also requested support to strengthen early warning systems in the region, including through the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development and the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management.

133. The Commission noted that recent cooperative efforts by member States had enabled disaster-hit countries in the region to gain access to and utilize space-based data to monitor and forecast hazards, respond to disasters, verify damage and assess the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of recent disasters.

134. The Commission, noting the importance of adaptation measures for risk reduction, called for strengthened regional dialogue on issues related to adaptation programmes and social protection for risk reduction, including risk-based financing for: supporting vulnerable communities affected by non-climate-related disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis; developing integrated systems for natural and biological hazards; sharing best practices in disaster management and resilience-building; and building back better from all natural disasters. Some representatives noted the importance of regional cooperation to address disasters and climate change, not only to provide humanitarian assistance, and called for a more people-centred approach that focused on the most vulnerable populations to safeguard the gains of the region in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

135. The Commission was informed of efforts to utilize space science and technology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

136. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission adopted resolution 79/8 on consideration of the modalities for the establishment of the United Nations special programme for the Aral Sea basin.

137. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its seventh session (ESCAP/79/10) and took note of the note by the secretariat on the update on the financial situation of the Centre (ESCAP/79/10/Add.1).

138. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat entitled “Early warning and action for all by 2027: transformative adaptation measures to address increased risks in the Asia-Pacific region” (ESCAP/79/11).

#### **Sub-item (e)**

##### **Energy**

139. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on accelerating the just energy transition to make progress in achieving net-zero-emissions targets in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/79/12).

140. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements or submitted written statements: Bangladesh; China; Japan; Russian Federation; and United States.

141. The Commission noted the importance of advancing sustainable energy in line with the Sustainable Development Goals in order to address climate change while ensuring energy security. The Commission was informed of efforts to establish regional power grids through electricity interconnectors, in line with the Goals, and the need to enhance regional cooperation in that area. One delegate stated that the upcoming Asian and Pacific Energy Forum would be an important event for the region in that regard.

142. The Commission was informed of the just energy transition partnership in Indonesia and Viet Nam to reduce carbon-intensive energy generation, encourage private investment in renewable sources of energy and improve energy efficiency in a manner that was inclusive and equitable. One delegate stressed that such a transition required non-discriminatory access to technologies and fairness in the field of energy, adding that, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it was necessary for all stakeholders to be involved in the spirit of multilateralism and solidarity.

143. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on accelerating the just energy transition to make progress in achieving net-zero-emissions targets in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/79/12).

#### **Sub-item (f)**

##### **Transport**

144. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Transport on its seventh session (ESCAP/CTR/2022/6) and the note by the secretariat on enhancing the environmental sustainability of transport systems to support climate action in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/79/13).

145. The Chair of the seventh session of the Committee on Transport presented the report of the Committee.

146. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; India, Japan; Russian Federation; and United States.

147. The Commission noted the support from the secretariat on the promotion of regional cooperation on transport through the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026), noting its contribution to achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the Asia-Pacific region.

148. The Commission reiterated the importance of sustainable transport connectivity and resilient infrastructure networks, especially for post-pandemic recovery in the region. In that context, the Commission took note of the progress made by member States in further developing transport infrastructure along the Asian Highway Network and the Trans-Asian Railway Network, as well as the infrastructure of dry ports, for better multimodal integration and greater interregional connectivity. Some representatives noted the need to further exploit the potential of inland waterway transport and shipping as part of the regional multimodal transport network.

149. Several representatives reaffirmed that the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Dry Ports continued to provide a basis for infrastructure connectivity in Asia and the Pacific. The Commission underscored the importance of enhancing cooperation with subregional platforms.

150. One representative noted the important role of transport corridors in improving the efficiency of transport operations in the region and beyond.

151. Some representatives identified critical synergies between climate action and the development of the transport sector and highlighted the importance of international cooperation in advancing green, efficient and resilient transport systems through a range of national and multilateral initiatives.

152. Against that background, the Commission called for more to be done to promote low-carbon initiatives for all modes of transport and took note of several initiatives in that regard. The Commission underscored the role of the private sector by highlighting green logistics initiatives and recognized that investing in infrastructure, developing green technologies, improving operational systems and using alternative fuels were key for sustainable and low-carbon transport systems.

153. The Commission was informed about efforts to develop regulatory frameworks and relevant standards for transitioning to cleaner fuels in transport, improving the efficiency of vehicles by regulating and enforcing emission standards, adopting alternative fuels and enabling the manufacturing of electric vehicles, as well as specifying the requirements covering personal/passenger and battery safety in electric vehicles.

154. Representatives emphasized the important role of emerging technologies in enhancing sustainable and resilient transport in Asia and the Pacific and highlighted the promotion of intelligent transport solutions and the sharing of best practices to enhance capacities for low-carbon transport development in the Asia-Pacific region.



155. The Commission reaffirmed that improving road safety was a priority for the region and noted the progress that had been made in reducing road traffic fatalities in some member States and strengthening partnerships at the subregional level.

156. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Transport on its seventh session (ESCAP/CTR/2022/6).

157. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on enhancing the environmental sustainability of transport systems to support climate action in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/79/13).

### **Sub-item (g)**

### **Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development**

158. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on securing public debt sustainability while pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/79/14).

159. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; and Thailand.

160. The Commission noted the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing conflicts and the subsequent efforts towards achieving an economic recovery in the region despite ongoing macroeconomic challenges. Some delegations expressed concern about the global financial situation, especially given high inflation and rising interest rates, which had led to currency depreciations and capital outflows in some developing countries. Representatives called for work to be done to strengthen fiscal and monetary policy coordination to ensure global and regional economic and financial stability. One delegation urged developed countries to honour their development assistance commitments and support developing countries in mitigating debt and liquidity risks.

161. The Commission highlighted significant achievements in poverty reduction in the region and reiterated its commitment to continue to prioritize poverty reduction in its policy agenda. Some representatives noted that poverty was multidimensional and that high economic growth alone was insufficient to reduce poverty; economic growth needed to be inclusive and sustainable. To that end, governments should expand access to education and health care, invest in infrastructure and deepen financial inclusion so as to reach poor and otherwise vulnerable people.

162. The Commission emphasized structural transformation and the importance of innovation and digitalization in steering economies onto a sustainable and inclusive path. In that context, some representatives highlighted the importance of building digital infrastructure, creating a digital financial ecosystem, including by promoting mobile banking services and digital payment methods, and developing high-end manufacturing activities, for example for electric vehicles and smart electronic devices.

163. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on securing public debt sustainability while pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/79/14).

**Sub-item (h)****Trade, investment, enterprise and business innovation**

164. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report on the Third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCREI/2022/5), the report of the Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation on its first session (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/8), the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/79/15) and the note by the secretariat on harnessing trade, investment, innovation and technology transfer for climate action (ESCAP/79/16).

165. The Chair of the Third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific presented the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference. The Chair of the first session of the Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation presented the report of the Committee. The Chair of the eighteenth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology presented the report of the Governing Council.

166. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Russian Federation; Thailand; and United States.

167. The Chair of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network also made a statement.

168. The Commission underscored the need for regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific to support the multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization (WTO), and to remove barriers to trade and investment.

169. Some representatives highlighted the importance of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific in advancing trade in the region, and one representative reported on the progress made in terms of the domestic procedures to join the Framework Agreement.

170. Several representatives highlighted the role climate-smart trade could play in helping to combat climate change. One representative expressed concern about the growth of green protectionism and emphasized the importance of removing barriers to trade, particularly for environmental goods.

171. One representative noted that the secretariat provided valuable capacity-building support in trade negotiation and suggested that additional support could be provided in the areas of climate-smart trade and investment, as well as on the WTO commitments, in collaboration with other organizations.

172. The Commission highlighted the importance of promoting foreign direct investment for sustainable development, emphasizing that such investment could be important for addressing climate change. Moreover, regional cooperation in those areas was important to deepen economic integration and narrow development gaps. Representatives shared national experiences in aligning investment strategies to the Sustainable Development Goals.

173. The Commission also highlighted the importance of promoting enterprise and business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development, and representatives shared relevant national experiences.

174. The Commission highlighted that the private sector played an important role in fostering inclusive and sustainable development and, in particular, that promoting entrepreneurship, start-ups and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises was important for economic development and more resilient supply chains.

175. One representative expressed appreciation for the efforts and contributions made by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology to strengthen national innovation systems and the technology cooperation and transfer capacities of countries in the region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

176. According to one representative, research and innovation should be geared towards sustainable development through multi-stakeholder partnerships between universities and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, which should be encouraged to share knowledge and support each other.

177. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission endorsed the report on the Third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCREI/2022/5), the report of the Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation on its first session (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/8) and the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/79/15).

178. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on harnessing trade, investment, innovation and technology transfer for climate action (ESCAP/79/16).

#### **Sub-item (i)**

#### **Information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation**

179. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation on its fourth session (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/6), the report on the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCSASD/2022/3), the Jakarta Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCSASD/2022/3/Add.1), the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/79/17) and the note by the secretariat on promoting digital transformation in Asia and the Pacific through the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026 (ESCAP/79/18).

180. The Chair of the fourth session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation presented the report of the Committee. The Chair of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific presented the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference. The Chair of the

seventeenth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development presented the report of the Governing Council.

181. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Thailand; and United States. A youth representative also made a statement.

182. The Commission underlined the importance of digital technologies and applications, digital skills and the sharing of knowledge and good practices to bridge the digital divide and accelerate digital transformation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing the challenges of climate change.

183. Regional digital cooperation, including through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, in the areas of ICT infrastructure connectivity, digital technologies and applications, and digital data was important for promoting the development of an inclusive digital economy.

184. The Commission highlighted the diverse areas in which space-derived information was systematically applied for climate action and sustainable development, for example for achieving smart transportation, resilient cities, pandemic prevention, disaster risk management and response, crop and forest monitoring, and COVID-19 hotspot mapping for delineating containment and vaccination zones and food distribution centres and engaging private entities. Regional cooperation was needed to improve the monitoring of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions through the use of satellite-derived data and to share capacity-building resources through the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific affiliated with the United Nations and relevant projects. The Commission was informed of efforts by member States at the national level to promote space applications for sustainable development.

185. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission adopted resolution 79/9 on the implementation of the Jakarta Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and resolution 79/10 on promoting digital cooperation and inclusion through the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026.

186. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation on its fourth session (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/6), the report on the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MCSASD/2022/3) and the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/79/17).

187. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on promoting digital transformation in Asia and the Pacific through the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026 (ESCAP/79/18).

## **Sub-item (j)**

### **Statistics**

188. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Statistics on its eighth session (ESCAP/CST/2022/8), the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/79/19) and the note by the secretariat on getting everyone in the picture for more effective climate change action (ESCAP/79/20).

189. The Chair of the eighth session of the Committee on Statistics presented the report of the Committee. The Chair of the eighteenth session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific presented the report of the Governing Council.

190. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; China; Japan; Philippines; and Thailand. A youth representative also delivered a statement.

191. The Commission acknowledged the importance of data for monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and of using measures other than gross domestic product to assess progress. Data governance and data-driven approaches to addressing the impacts of climate change were also important. Some representatives said that inclusive and resilient civil registration and vital statistics systems should continue to be built.

192. The Commission highlighted the important role played by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in strengthening statistical capacity and recommended that the Institute include training courses on leadership, creative thinking, communication and problem-solving, and consider topics of high demand like climate change, informal labour, quality statistics and other global issues related to the 2030 Agenda.

193. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Statistics on its eighth session (ESCAP/CST/2022/8) and the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/79/19).

194. At the same meeting the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on getting everyone in the picture for more effective climate change action (ESCAP/79/20).

## **Agenda item 5**

### **Management issues**

195. The Executive Secretary made an introductory statement on management issues.

## **Sub-item (a)**

### **Proposed programme plan for 2024**

196. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the proposed programme plan for 2024 (ESCAP/79/21).

197. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission endorsed the proposed programme plan for 2024 (ESCAP/79/21).

**Sub-item (b)****Overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development**

198. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development (ESCAP/79/22).

199. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: China; India; Japan; and Republic of Korea.

200. The representative of China expressed his Government's support for the work of the Commission and announced the Government's pledge of approximately \$2.8 million and RMB 1.5 million to the Commission, the regional institutions, the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, the China-ESCAP Cooperation Programme and the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation. The representative expressed the hope that, in using the contributions, the secretariat would demonstrate improved project management and capital efficiency and identify specific outcomes towards sustainable development and the post-pandemic recovery in Asia and the Pacific.

201. The representative of the Republic of Korea stated that his Government intended to pledge almost \$3.7 million in support of the technical cooperation programmes of the Commission, the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia and the regional institutions. Such technical cooperation would help to address the Asia-Pacific region's most pressing challenges, based on the principle of leaving no one behind. The Government of the Republic of Korea would continue to extend support to the Commission for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific.

202. The representative of India stated that his Government, the host country of the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, intended to pledge \$949,000 to support the activities of the Subregional Office and the Centre.

203. The representative of Japan noted with appreciation that the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific had expanded opportunities for each country to participate in training courses despite the various restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Japan, the host country of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, pledged around \$1.8 million in cash and \$992,620 in in-kind contributions to support its 2023 workplan in order to respond to the statistical training needs in the region, including on issues linked to the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Government would provide fellowships for 10 persons to participate in a three-month training course. The representative of Japan expressed the hope that contributions would be used effectively and efficiently for the development of statistical human resources capacity in each country.

204. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on the overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development (ESCAP/79/22) and expressed appreciation for the pledges made, which amounted to approximately \$9.7 million in cash and \$1 million in in-kind contributions for 2023 from the following members and associate members: Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; India; Japan; Macao, China; Malaysia; Republic of Korea; Singapore; and Thailand.

**Agenda item 6****Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission**

205. The Commission had before it the report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ESCAP/79/23).

206. The Permanent Representative of Bhutan presented the report of the Advisory Committee on behalf of its members.

207. Representatives of China and Fiji made statements.

208. The representative of China highlighted the work of the Advisory Committee, in particular its role in coordinating the work of the Commission and supporting the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission. He expressed appreciation for the constructive work of its members and its effective communication. He noted the Advisory Committee's role as a platform for exchanging information and promoting cooperation in a spirit of solidarity and reaffirmed the commitment of China to continuing to support the Commission in promoting cooperation for sustainable development in the region.

209. The representative of Fiji stressed that the hybrid format of the meetings of the Advisory Committee had allowed those delegations that did not have a permanent presence in Bangkok to engage more effectively. He requested the Advisory Committee to continue to hold its meetings in person and online to ensure inclusion and the effective participation of all delegations in all the activities of the Advisory Committee.

210. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission took note of the report of the Advisory Committee (ESCAP/79/23).

**Agenda item 7****Dates and venue of and theme topic for the eightieth session of the Commission (2024)**

211. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the dates and venue of and theme topic for the eightieth session of the Commission (2024) (ESCAP/79/24).

212. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission decided that its eightieth session would be held in Bangkok from 22 to 26 April 2024. The Commission also decided that the theme topic for its eightieth session would be "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific".

**Agenda item 8****Other matters**

213. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Chair and Vice-Chairs examined the credentials of the representatives of member States and reported upon them to the Commission. The credentials of the representatives of 49 member States were found to be in order. Acknowledging the report of the Credentials Committee to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session (A/77/600), and in line with Assembly resolution 396 (V) of 14 December 1950, the bureau decided to defer any action on the credentials pertaining to the representatives of Myanmar at the

seventy-ninth session of the Commission pending a decision by the Assembly on the representation of Myanmar.

214. The Commission took note of the oral report of the bureau on credentials.

**Election of the members of Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology**

215. In addition to the host country, India, the Commission elected the following members to the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology for the period from 2023 to 2026: Bangladesh; China; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Tajikistan; Thailand; and Uzbekistan.

**Agenda item 9**

**Adoption of the report of the Commission on its seventy-ninth session**

216. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 19 May 2023, the Commission unanimously adopted the report on its seventy-ninth session (ESCAP/79/25).

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