Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Eightieth session
Bangkok, 22–26 April 2024

Account of proceedings

Agenda item 1
Opening of the session

1. At its 1st plenary meeting, on 22 April 2024, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific elected Ms. Battsetseg Batmunkh (Mongolia) as Chair of its eightieth session. The Chair presided over the opening of the session. A statement was delivered by the Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr. Srettha Thavisin. A video message was played from the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session, Mr. Dennis Francis. The Executive Secretary of the Commission delivered her own welcoming remarks and a policy statement.

2. Special remarks were delivered by the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Mr. Hun Manet. Video messages were played from the President of the Philippines, Mr. Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, Jr.; the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Ms. Sheikh Hasina; and the Prime Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2024, Mr. Sonexay Siphandone. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Mr. Murat Nurtleu, also delivered a statement.

3. In his statement, the Prime Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic emphasized the critical role of digital innovation in advancing sustainable development across Asia and the Pacific. He underscored the Commission’s long-standing efforts to promote socioeconomic development across the Asia-Pacific region and outlined the commitment of his country to integrating digital strategies into its development plans, which were aimed at transforming the Lao People’s Democratic Republic into a land-linked country by enhancing digital government and the digital economy. He also highlighted the importance of regional and international cooperation to attracting the foreign investment and technology transfer necessary to achieving those goals. As the country prepared for its third voluntary national review in 2024 and took on the role of Chair of ASEAN, he called for support from the international community in the area of digital innovation to help realize the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure no one is left behind.

4. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Cambodia emphasized the importance of digital innovation in fostering inclusive and resilient development, in particular in bridging the digital divide exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Cambodia had prioritized digital technology in its development strategy, implementing policies to build a digital economy and society and to achieve the Cambodia Vision 2050 framework.
Cambodia was actively engaged in ASEAN digital initiatives and supported regional digitalization efforts. However, challenges persisted, such as the digital divide, cybersecurity and infrastructural deficiencies. As a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and as Chair of the meetings of the Convention’s signatories in 2024, Cambodia remained committed to its role in mine action, integrating it into its sustainable development objectives. The Prime Minister called for collaborative efforts to be made to overcome those challenges and advance digital transformation across the region.

5. In his statement, the President of the Philippines highlighted the crucial role of digital innovation in addressing global uncertainties and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He underscored the Philippine Innovation Act, which was aimed at fostering a dynamic and resilient innovation ecosystem and had contributed to significant economic growth in 2022. His country’s digital transformation strategy was aligned with both the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, enhancing the role of the Philippines as a regional and global leader in innovation. He reaffirmed the commitment of his country to multilateralism and global solidarity, announcing its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2027–2028 and its offer to serve as the host of the Board of the loss and damage fund.

6. In her statement, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh highlighted the theme of leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. She discussed the multifaceted challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions, that had negatively affected economies, in particular in developing and least developed countries. She noted the significant achievements of Bangladesh in the areas of economic growth, poverty reduction and social advancements, which had enabled it to graduate from the category of least developed countries and establish a new goal to transform itself into “smart Bangladesh” by 2041. She emphasized the importance of regional collaboration in areas such as e-commerce, digital trade, technology transfer and disaster risk management. She called for increased support for vulnerable nations and the enhancement of digital literacy and health innovation to improve resilience and development in the Asia-Pacific region.

7. In his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan emphasized the pivotal role of digital innovation in sustainable development. He recognized the Commission’s leadership and its contributions to economic, social and environmental sustainability across the Asia-Pacific region. He noted that Kazakhstan was committed to becoming an information technology powerhouse, leveraging digital technologies to enhance public services and the business climate. The country had made significant advancements in e-government services and hosted Central Asia’s largest information technology start-up park, Astana Hub. Highlighting his country’s readiness to share its digital expertise and collaborate on digital projects across various sectors, he outlined the contributions of Kazakhstan to regional digital integration, including its intention to host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation. He urged closer collaboration among States members of the Commission to bridge the digital divide. He also called upon the Commission to propose concrete cooperative modalities on international transit and access to seaports, including a set of shared principles and measures for facilitating the access of landlocked developing countries to global shipping routes.
Agenda item 2
Theme topic, “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”

Sub-item (a)
General debate

8. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat containing a summary of the theme study on leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/80/2).

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

High-level thematic round table on the socioeconomic outlook, emerging challenges and solutions

10. The high-level thematic round table on the socioeconomic outlook, emerging challenges and solutions was moderated by Ms. Sandra Hanutsaha of the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand. The Vice-President for Sectors and Themes of the Asian Development Bank, Ms. Fatima Yasmin, and the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, delivered special remarks. Statements were made by the Dean of the Lee Kwan Yew School of Public Policy of the National University of Singapore, Mr. Danny Quah; the Executive Director of the Puey Ungphakorn Institute for Economic Research, Ms. Sommarat Chantarat; and the Chief Operating Officer of the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, Mr. Nazeem Noordali.

11. The round-table participants highlighted that the global situation presented both significant challenges and opportunities for regional policymakers in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Policymakers were cautioned against conflating the goals of growth strategies with measures to address issues such as poverty and inequality. They emphasized the importance of informing the public about both the costs and the benefits of digital innovation policies in order to increase political acceptability. Key challenges included fractures in global cooperation and geopolitical tensions affecting trade potential. At the sectoral level, the issues of ageing populations and climate change were affecting agricultural productivity, necessitating policies to improve property rights; irrigation pricing and access; and innovation incentives. On the positive side, participants emphasized digital innovation as a catalyst for economic growth. They noted the key policies for promoting digital innovation, which included enhancing regulatory clarity, supporting blockchain technology in supply chain management, improving rural digital infrastructure and promoting digital literacy. They highlighted the importance of using digital tools to help small and medium-sized enterprises, especially those led by women. They stressed the need to increase public funding and private sector involvement through the use of public-private partnerships.

High-level thematic round table on digital innovations for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

12. The high-level thematic round table on digital innovations for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals was moderated by a television news anchor from NHK World, Bangkok, and the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand, Ms. Dhra Dhirakaosal. A video message was played from
the Executive Chair of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change and former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. Tony Blair. Statements were made by the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of Indonesia, Mr. Airlangga Hartarto; the Minister of Finance of Bangladesh, Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali; the Vice-Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of Kazakhstan, Mr. Askar Zhambakin; the Deputy Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, Ms. Ko Barrett; and the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Lvdoya, Ms. Xirui Lian.

13. The round-table participants highlighted the achievements and ongoing efforts of Governments and other actors in the Asia-Pacific region to leverage digital innovations to drive sustainable development and noted the positive impacts that were already evident across social and economic sectors as a result. Those impacts included an improvement in the accessibility and an expansion in the coverage of education, health care, early warning services and other government services, as well as a strengthening of the ability of industries to promote environmental sustainability and climate action. While encouraging Governments to harness the opportunities that digital innovations presented, they recommended addressing the associated risks posed by emerging technologies to cybersecurity and data privacy, as well as potential macroeconomic disruptions. Increasing access to finance and the creation of regional hubs for knowledge-sharing and skills development were identified as important contributions of regional cooperation, which helped to fully maximize the potential of digital innovations to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**High-level thematic round table on digital inclusion**

14. The high-level thematic round table on digital inclusion was moderated by a member of the 30 for 2030 Network of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Ms. Sanjana Chhantyal. Statements were made by the Vice President of the Department of Digital Inclusion of the National Information Society Agency of the Republic of Korea, Ms. Moon-Sil Choi; the Vice President of the Centre for International Knowledge on Development of China, Ms. Jin Zhang; the Deputy Head of Laboratory of the Radio Research and Development Institute of the Russian Federation, Mr. Zorikto Gomboin; the Accessibility Specialist of the Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) Consortium, Mr. Prashant Ranjan Verma; and the First Executive Vice President of Digital Products and Platforms Business of the Siam Commercial Bank of Thailand, Ms. Pitiporn Phanaphat.

15. The round-table participants emphasized the importance of digital inclusion to leaving no one behind in the digital age and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By designing and implementing laws and programmes that ensured that digital technologies were available, accessible and affordable, Governments could help to ensure that digital technologies benefited those most likely to be left behind, including persons living in poverty and in rural areas; women and girls; older persons; young people; persons with disabilities; Indigenous Peoples; and linguistic minority groups. It was especially important to establish technical standards regarding digital accessibility and to design programmes to promote the affordability of assistive devices to ensure that digital technologies benefited persons with disabilities. Participants also highlighted the importance of locally driven innovation and initiatives to develop solutions tailored to the specific needs of communities. A whole-of-society approach, including partnerships with the private sector and civil society, offered opportunities to accelerate digital
inclusion by enhancing capacity-building, financing, investment and technology transfer.

**Statements**

16. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements or submitted written statements: Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

17. Representatives of the following associate members of the Commission made statements or submitted written statements: Hong Kong, China; and Macao, China.


19. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations also made statements: Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, Eurasian Development Bank and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

20. Statements were also made by the Chair of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network and representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Muslim World League and Soroptimist International.

21. The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and noted how urgent it was to take action, considering the slow progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It cited the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global context of multiple crises as exacerbating factors. The Commission emphasized the role of digital innovation as a catalyst and enabler to achieving the 2030 Agenda and its potential to accelerate progress towards the Goals. Some representatives noted the need to address the risks that accompanied digital innovations. The Commission highlighted the potential of digital innovations to reduce inequalities and to promote inclusion, resilience, prosperity, environmental stewardship and social equity across the region. The Commission was informed of efforts made by members and associate members to use digital technologies across sectors.

22. The Commission noted that digitalization continued to make inroads in all sectors of the economy, including in agriculture, industrial production, transportation, trade, tourism and energy. Furthermore, technology supported the development of new digital economic sectors, such as e-commerce and e-payments, the development of the sharing economy and the transition to a circular economy. The Commission noted the important role of digital innovation, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain technology and the Internet of things, in driving transformation for e-governance and the delivery of public services and implementing smart city strategies as a solution for long-term sustainability.
23. Several representatives highlighted that leveraging digital technologies, innovation and big data could support Governments in developing informed policies and decision-making in many areas, including: poverty reduction; climate action; early warning systems; disaster resilience; environmental management; natural resource management; water monitoring and management; hydropower development; clean renewable energy supply; energy saving and circular systems; sustainable transportation; green finance; agricultural productivity; and the use of drones in crop cultivation. Some representatives also recognized the need to boost innovation and market application of scientific and technological advances and to strengthen cooperation in artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, digital inclusion and digital technology-enabled poverty alleviation to create more opportunities for global and regional growth.

24. The Commission noted the challenge presented by the inadequate digital infrastructure in some countries. Several representatives stressed the need for investments and the need to reduce the digital divide, including between and within countries, which if not addressed would widen inequalities. They also highlighted the importance of digital public infrastructure and enabling policy measures in streamlining government services, enhancing digital innovation in governance and public services and providing affordable digital solutions.

25. Several representatives noted that the digitalization of government services was being widely embraced in the region, including with regard to health care, education, social protection, tax collection and justice. It was also evident in the roll-out of e-government services for individual citizens and businesses, the deployment of digital identification documents and e-signatures, the creation of digital registers of households and the digitalization of trade. The digitalization of government services was expected to contribute to increased transparency, accessibility and efficiency and to lower governance costs. It was also expected to facilitate the provision of government services to citizens and benefit entrepreneurship.

26. Several representatives highlighted that the transfer of technologies was a means of furthering economic growth in the region. Several representatives noted that investment in digital infrastructure and information and communications technology (ICT) was also a key driver of economic growth, creating job opportunities, improving access to goods and services and formalizing economic activities.

27. The Commission was informed of actions taken at the national level to invest in digital infrastructure, connectivity and the technology sector, as well as efforts to mobilize and attract investments in that regard, including through foreign direct investment and public-private partnerships. It was also informed of the use of digital technologies to facilitate business and investment.

28. The Commission was informed of efforts by member States to bridge the digital divide by improving the infrastructure for digital connectivity and access to digital devices and services and by leveraging satellite-based connectivity to provide Internet services in remote locations. The Commission highlighted the importance of regional partnerships and collaborations, information-sharing, capacity-building and policy coordination to support members in overcoming the digital divide and strengthening digital capabilities. Several representatives noted the importance of building an open, fair, just and non-discriminatory environment for innovation. One representative urged the Commission to play a leading role in digital innovation efforts for sustainable development by coordinating international
and regional actions to promote digital innovation while another representative requested the Commission to facilitate peer-to-peer learning within the region.

29. Several representatives noted the important role of the private sector in advancing digital connectivity and promoting the responsible use of artificial intelligence to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in countries in special situations.

30. Highlighting the negative impact of climate change on economies, the Commission highlighted the role that digital innovation could play, both in environmental sustainability and in the deployment and use of technology in climate adaptation, mitigation, resilience-building and the accessibility of water resources. Some representatives also noted the need for green transition principles to be incorporated into digital solutions and the importance of reducing the environmental footprint of digital infrastructure and improving its resilience. Representatives of international organizations, major groups and other stakeholders reiterated the importance of digital technology for climate action; disaster risk reduction and early warning systems; low-carbon energy; food safety; ecology; and environmental sustainability.

31. The Commission noted that not everyone had benefited equally from digital innovations and emphasized the pressing need to bridge the digital divide and tackle the challenges faced by disadvantaged populations in accessing and using digital technologies. Several representatives called for a human-centred approach, as well as collaboration and cooperation, to ensure that digital innovation did not leave anyone behind.

32. In stressing the need to address disparities in Internet usage, affordability and speed, several representatives pointed to gaps pertaining to age and gender, as well as between rural and urban populations. Measures to promote digital inclusivity, access to innovative tools and digital literacy training were considered crucial to enhancing cybersecurity, data privacy and regulatory frameworks, including for artificial intelligence. It was also noted that, in order for digital technologies to benefit everyone, it was important to protect the rights of people in vulnerable situations within digital environments. Several representatives noted the importance of digital solutions in health care; education, including lifelong learning; and digital financial inclusion, including mobile banking. In that regard, they also cited the key role of young people in digital innovation. Several representatives also noted that digital innovation had strengthened climate resilience and helped to protect vulnerable communities from climate risks. Some representatives further highlighted that technology could empower marginalized groups and enhance civic participation. Several representatives underscored the necessity of promoting universal human rights in the digital transformation process.

33. Several representatives shared examples of the use of digital innovations to support groups in vulnerable situations, including senior citizens and women and girls. Those innovations included: e-government and digital service provisions; digitalized national identification platforms; digital learning tools and resources for remote and lifelong learning; digital literacy programmes; national ICT programmes providing access to high-speed Internet to geographically dispersed or marginalized populations; research laboratories on the protection of children and women online; the International Telecommunication Union Smart Villages and Smart Islands initiative; and the provision of solar-powered Internet kiosks in remote areas. Several representatives called for the use of innovations to accelerate digitalization, such as by investing in financial technology for women, supporting women’s
entrepreneurship in the digital age and making artificial intelligence open source for marginalized groups.

34. The Commission noted that leveraging digital innovations could drive inclusive economic growth and development. Several representatives recalled the importance of promoting digital inclusivity in all its facets and of including gender perspectives in digital development, for example, by investing in women-led financial technology companies and startups. Several representatives stressed the need to close the digital divide and reduce related socioeconomic inequalities by investing in ICT infrastructure and increasing the accessibility and affordability of digital services and connectivity, in particular among women. They also noted that innovation and the digitalization of financial services were perceived as necessary for mobile banking for the purposes of financial inclusion, the development of green finance mechanisms and further socioeconomic development.

35. The Commission emphasized the importance of using regional cooperation to achieve a structured and inclusive approach to the leveraging and scaling up of digital innovation for sustainable development. Some representatives highlighted the value of international and regional partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration, which helped countries to leverage collective expertise, share regional best practices and improve capacity-building and skills. The provision of special support aimed at closing the digital divide, as well as the continued support provided to innovative financial service sectors in the region, was highlighted, in particular by member States with limited resources.

36. Several representatives underscored that the digital economy held great potential for small island developing States, providing reliable digital platform services and promoting opportunities across all economic sectors. They called for action to further bridge the digital divide at the international level, noting the unique vulnerabilities of that group of countries.

37. Several representatives of landlocked developing countries noted that science, technology and innovation had played essential roles in unlocking new opportunities in global markets and in helping their countries to overcome their geographic disadvantages.

38. The Commission was informed of member States’ commitments to supporting digital inclusion and the development of resilient digital infrastructure in developing countries and to facilitating access to cutting-edge technologies through the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.

39. Several representatives noted the important role that regional transport connectivity could play, including in providing access to affordable, safe, resilient and reliable transport services for landlocked developing countries. In that regard, the Commission was informed of some national programmes aimed at promoting regional and global connectivity, which presented opportunities for potential synergies with the Commission’s connectivity initiatives. The Commission was also apprised of developments in digital applications to enhance transport connectivity for trade facilitation and competitiveness in landlocked developing countries. Several representatives also noted the important role that international transport corridors could play in linking landlocked developing countries to global markets.

40. Many representatives called for the strengthening of cybersecurity, and several representatives noted the importance of policy and regulatory
frameworks for addressing cybersecurity and cybercrime and for the ethical development and safe application of artificial intelligence.

41. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission adopted resolution 80/1 on leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. The resolution was sponsored by Fiji, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia and the Philippines.

42. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat containing a summary of the theme study on leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/80/2).

**Sub-item (b)**

**Subregional perspectives**

43. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on subregional perspectives on leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development (ESCAP/80/3).

44. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, United States and Vanuatu.

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 Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, Mr. Indra Mani Pandey; the Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, Mr. Lee Hee-sup; the Secretary-General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, Mr. Kairat Sarybay; the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN, Mr. Satvinder Singh; the Deputy Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Mr. Shukhrat Sobirzoda; and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Mr. Kashif Zaman.

46. The Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat presented information on the Pacific subregion’s efforts towards sustainable development and the vital role of digital innovation in shaping the subregion’s future. In the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the thematic pillar of technology and connectivity that would harness digital technology for public services, disaster risk management, economic growth through digital trade and entrepreneurship was underscored. In August 2023, the Pacific ministers endorsed the Lagatoi Declaration on the Digital Transformation of the Pacific to create an inclusive and resilient digital Pacific. The engagement of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat with the secretariat had resulted in the establishment of the Pacific Internet exchange point and a digital skills hub at the University of the South Pacific. Moving forward, he proposed a collaboration with the secretariat in regional collective action to strengthen governance using digital tools and enhance policy frameworks for sustainable digital economies.

47. The Secretary-General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation underlined that the achievement of sustainable development through digital innovation required digital infrastructure, capacity-building and digital skilling, accompanied by the enactment of the requisite regulatory frameworks needed to ensure equitable, affordable, secure and safe access to digital platforms. While
member States had adopted policies at the national level to promote digital innovation and greater deployment of digital public infrastructure, they faced implementation challenges in terms of mobilizing resources for digital public infrastructure and securing the necessary technical and legal expertise in cybersecurity systems. He suggested making collective efforts that employed appropriate policy strategies at the regional and subregional levels. He also stated that his organization would be interested in exploring new avenues for cooperation in the field of digitalization with other international and regional organizations, including the Commission.

48. The Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat highlighted his organization’s focus on digital innovation under its Trilateral Cooperation Vision for the Next Decade, as well as its approach (known as “Trilateral Plus X”) to expanding regional cooperation in the area of technological innovation to address regional and global challenges. He showcased the effective application of the “Trilateral Plus X” modality in collaboration with the Commission and the Climate Action Team of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations during the third Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, which had inspired engaging discussions and useful insights on the role of digital innovation in achieving carbon neutrality. He recalled a joint session organized with the Commission at the 2023 International Forum for Trilateral Cooperation, during which successful case studies of digitalization in ageing societies had been examined. The 2024 Forum was expected to feature discussions on digital tools for enhancing mutual cooperation among China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. In that regard, he stated that a continued partnership with the Commission would be desirable as it would help to link impactful efforts aimed at enabling the digital transition with efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development.

49. The Secretary-General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia underscored the commitment of the States members of his organization to taking action to leverage digital innovation for sustainable development. The application of digital innovation by the member States ranged from disaster preparedness measures to policy responses aimed at poverty alleviation. In addition, seminars and workshops were organized on the digitalization of the economy, covering digital solutions for agriculture and small and medium-sized enterprises. He commended various States members of the Conference for taking the lead in addressing challenges related to environmental sustainability. He noted that digital technologies could be used to enhance early warning systems, facilitate rapid communication and coordination among responders and streamline relief efforts. By accelerating digital innovation in disaster risk management at the regional and subregional levels, countries could strengthen their resilience. He called for strengthened cooperation with the Commission and other partner organizations with a view to seizing the opportunities presented by digital innovation.

50. The Deputy Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization advocated for a robust platform dedicated to digital transformation and the technology to drive economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region. He expressed appreciation for the Commission, which had served as a crucial partner since the founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. He emphasized the role of technological advancement as a key driver of global development. E-governance systems were particularly vital for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, e-commerce was increasingly being recognized as a crucial platform for economic development, as digital technologies contributed to private sector
promotion in various countries. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was actively engaged in socioeconomic projects that promoted the digital economy in collaboration with numerous partners. Representing nine Eurasian countries, which were home to half the world’s population and accounted for a significant share of Internet users, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was focused on expanding e-governance solutions to improve governance and accessibility and was committed to making digital transformation affordable and inclusive in the region.

51. The Deputy Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization emphasized that it was necessary to fully leverage the transformative potential of digitalization to achieve the collective vision of sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. He stated that the Economic Cooperation Organization Vision 2025, in which core principles and areas of cooperation were outlined, was a testament to the unwavering commitment of the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization to align regional efforts with those contained in the 2030 Agenda. He noted that the initiatives contained in the Vision 2025 in sectors such as trade, transport, communication and energy had been carefully and coherently designed. The organization keenly followed emerging digitalization trends to facilitate digital trade, smart road and rail solutions for cross-border transport and the strengthening of disaster resilience strategies using digital technologies. He highlighted that the adoption of a new memorandum of understanding with the Commission would further strengthen the organization’s commitment to fostering regional cooperation and integration.

52. The Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN highlighted his organization’s commitment to embedding digitalization and sustainable development in all regional endeavours and to leveraging innovative technologies to foster inclusive growth. The ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement had been updated to cover emerging issues, such as the circular economy, digitalization and sustainability. The ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement would provide the region with a cohesive digital strategy and serve as a powerful enabler of regional integration and cooperation in the field of digitalization. In addition, the adoption of three other documents would drive industrial transformation towards a more sustainable way of production and consumption, namely: (a) the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community, (b) the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality and (c) the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework. Those documents also contained clear and structured pathways for the region to decarbonize and preserve its future competitiveness, given the increasing shift in international trade towards sustainability.

Panel discussion on subregional perspectives on the role of digital innovation in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

53. A panel discussion on subregional perspectives on the role of digital innovation in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals was moderated by the secretariat. Statements were made by a policy specialist at the Division of International Policy Partnership of the Office of the National Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Policy Council of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of Thailand, Mr. Parinand Varnasavang; the Regional Director of the Pacific Community, Ms. Sarah Mecartney; the Managing Director of the Policy Design and Support Department of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, Mr. Aladdin Rillo; and the Country Managing Director of Accenture Thailand, Ms. Patama Chantaruck.
54. The panellists emphasized the pivotal role of digital technologies and innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific. Examples of the potential positive impacts of digital technologies could be found for all 17 Goals and included the use of artificial intelligence to optimize energy consumption and the use of the Internet of things for developing smart cities (aimed at Goals 7 and 11, respectively). However, all countries in Asia and the Pacific experienced challenges, such as: capacity constraints in accessing and leveraging digital technologies; the upskilling of small enterprises; data governance and cybersecurity; and difficulties in mobilizing investments for digital infrastructure. With regard to bringing about a conducive environment for digital transformation, the panellists underscored the importance of interdisciplinary approaches, multi-stakeholder collaboration and international partnerships among Governments, the private sector, universities, civil society organizations and practitioners. It was important to consolidate different initiatives across the Asia-Pacific region, adopting a targeted and coherent approach. Countries needed to prioritize digital literacy, affordable and reliable broadband access and a supportive environment for digital entrepreneurship.

Panel discussion on subregional perspectives on disaster risk management through digital innovation

55. A panel discussion on subregional perspectives on disaster risk management through digital innovation was moderated by the secretariat. Statements were made by the Focal Point of the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia secretariat and Deputy Director General of the Weather Service Division of Maldives Meteorological Service, Mr. Ali Shareef; the Chief Executive Officer of Think Blue Data Co., Ltd., Mr. Paul Janecek; and the Programme Director of Plan International Thailand, Ms. Sudawadee Limpaiub.

56. Applications of digital technologies were increasingly being deployed for disaster risk reduction and were undergoing the constant improvements essential for disaster resilience across Asia and the Pacific. The decision support systems under the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia had transformed multi-hazard information into impact-based climate forecasting. Similarly, the Risk and Resilience Portal, used for web-based decision support systems in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, was upgraded with new innovations, such as a mobile interface that supported offline data access and real-time data feeds from local meteorological services. As continuous developments improved the effectiveness of disaster risk management across Asia and the Pacific, panellists voiced concerns over the cost of some disaster risk management technologies, which could be prohibitively high, especially for resource-poor countries, thereby impeding their widespread usage. Many Asia-Pacific countries also needed long-term support, given the considerable lead time needed to master new risk management tools and practices. They called for greater integration of disaster risk management practices and digital innovation knowledge and requested that training programmes be provided on new digital disaster risk management systems to empower marginalized and vulnerable people.

57. The Commission recognized the fast-changing landscape of digital technologies and noted key priorities to enable emerging technologies to continue to serve as catalysts for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. While highlighting the importance of digitalization in fostering economic growth and social development, it was acknowledged that inequitable access to digital technologies and services, deficits in digital
infrastructure and legal frameworks, and threats to digital security created persistent barriers to maximizing the developmental dividends of digitalization.

58. Representatives emphasized the need for inclusive strategies to bridge the digital divide. It was important to ensure that digital innovation benefited all communities and segments of society, thereby promoting equitable digital advancements across the region. Universal access to affordable and reliable digital connectivity must be a key objective of regional cooperation in the area of digitalization. A rights-based approach to digital technology policies was required, in particular addressing the needs of marginalized and vulnerable sections of the population, including women, persons with disabilities and the poor. Several representatives expressed appreciation for the support provided by the secretariat, including through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative.

59. Several representatives expressed the need for further regional collaboration in priority areas, such as cybersecurity technologies, digital skilling of the workforce and raising awareness concerning cyberattacks and online fraud. One representative pointed to the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 78/265 – a landmark resolution on the promotion of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems, which was sponsored by more than 120 Member States – as testimony to the global community’s desire for greater collaboration on digitalization.

60. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on subregional perspectives on leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development (ESCAP/80/3).

**Agenda item 3**

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

61. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat containing a summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2024: Leveraging Digitalization for Productivity and Decent Employment (ESCAP/80/4).

62. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Japan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Turkmenistan, United States and Uzbekistan.

63. The Executive Secretary presented the key findings contained in the publication entitled *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2024: Leveraging Digitalization for Productivity and Decent Employment*. The High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States made a statement.

64. The Commission highlighted the potential of digitalization in driving transformation and prosperity across countries in special situations in Asia and the Pacific. It noted advancements in the development of digital infrastructure and capabilities, guided by the implementation of comprehensive digital strategies. Various digital platforms had been introduced at the national level to enhance public service delivery and increase transparency. Initiatives such as the establishment of technology parks and investment incentives had created an environment conducive to digital innovation and entrepreneurship.
65. The Commission was informed of various initiatives aimed at improving e-governance, boosting information technology exports and fostering a skilled workforce to enable countries in special situations to advance digital services and promote innovation. Several representatives underscored the importance of establishing robust regulatory frameworks and supportive digital policies and ecosystems for digital innovation. Some representatives emphasized the importance of employing digital tools to monitor and combat climate change and its impacts and mainstreaming climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts into development strategies.

66. The Commission noted that, despite the progress made, challenges persisted, including providing equitable access to digital technologies and bridging the digital divide. Inclusive policies had been prioritized to extend digital benefits to remote and underserved areas so that no one was left behind in the digital revolution. Some representatives underscored the importance of enhancing digital skills and literacy by providing training and digital education and meeting the growing demand for information technology professionals.

67. The Commission noted the importance of regional and international cooperation in fostering digital development. A few representatives noted the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in that regard. A few representatives also acknowledged the benefits of transport infrastructure development projects. Efforts to promote international trade through digital innovation, including through the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific and cross-border data exchanges, were also emphasized by a few representatives. Some representatives further highlighted the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation in narrowing the digital divide, alongside commitments from development partners to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

68. Representatives of the least developed countries and their development partners underscored the importance of effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2022–2031. They shared information on progress that had been made towards and preparations for graduation from the category of least developed countries and stressed the need for innovation and digital solutions in ensuring a smooth, sustainable transition.

69. Representatives of landlocked developing countries highlighted the comprehensive review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the upcoming third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries as a crucial juncture for addressing the unique challenges of landlocked countries, which included limited economies of scale and reduced trade competitiveness. They underscored the significance of harnessing the transit potential of landlocked countries by enhancing connectivity and infrastructure.

70. Representatives of small island developing States reiterated the unique development challenges faced by their countries, including the high costs of Internet connectivity, limited readiness for e-trade, climate change and their remote location. They emphasized the need for stronger regional cooperation and support to overcome those challenges, including by exchanging information on and engaging in peer learning related to digitalization efforts and by participating in capacity-building activities made possible by bilateral or subregional partnerships. They highlighted the conclusion of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway in 2024. They also highlighted the expected adoption of a new 10-year agenda for small island developing States at the fourth International Conference on Small Island
Developing States as a pivotal opportunity to renew commitments to address the specific needs and promote the sustainable development of small island developing States.

71. The Commission took note of the regional reviews of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, held in Thailand in August 2023, and of the Samoa Pathway, held in Tonga in August 2023, which provided opportunities for countries and development partners to identify challenges and priorities for the future.

72. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission adopted resolution 80/2 on sustainable development in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The resolution was sponsored by Cambodia, Fiji, Maldives, Mongolia and Nepal.

73. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat containing a summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2024: Leveraging Digitalization for Productivity and Decent Employment (ESCAP/80/4).

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

74. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the decisions taken by the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia at its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/5) and the information document on the annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1).

75. The Deputy Executive Secretary for Programme of the Commission delivered an introductory presentation on the agenda item.

76. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh delivered special remarks.

77. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat transmitting the decisions taken by the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia at its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/5) and the information document on the annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/80/INF/1).

Sub-item (a)
Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

78. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report on the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (ESCAP/RFSD/2024/6) and the note by the secretariat containing a summary of round-table discussions (ESCAP/RFSD/2024/6/Add.1).

80. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, United States and Vanuatu.

81. 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 and for diverse stakeholders to share views on, regional trends in and best practices and strategies for its implementation. The Forum’s multi-stakeholder approach and diverse participation were noted as important factors in its effectiveness.

82. The Commission noted the important role of regional and South-South cooperation in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Several representatives expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for providing capacity-building and facilitating peer learning, in particular for countries in special situations. One representative called for the provision of support tailored to the needs of middle-income countries.

83. The Commission expressed its renewed commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda and to redoubling efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Several representatives highlighted that the region must address the multidimensional nature of sustainable development and put people and the planet at the centre of development efforts. In addition, a number of representatives recognized the importance of strengthening: multi-stakeholder partnerships; the localization of the Goals; innovative and scaled up financing, including climate financing; and the leveraging of science, technology and innovation.

84. The Commission was informed of efforts and progress made by member States in various areas, including social protection; poverty reduction; connectivity; education; food security; climate action and finance; inclusive digital innovation; and the promotion of peace and stability.

85. Representatives shared their experiences with regard to developing national priority indicators, mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into national planning and policies and enhancing data collection and monitoring systems.

86. Some representatives recognized the role of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in providing regional contributions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Summit of the Future and receiving priorities and guidance relating to sustainable development from those global events.

87. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report on the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (ESCAP/RFSD/2024/6) and took note of the note by the secretariat containing a summary of round-table discussions (ESCAP/RFSD/2024/6/Add.1).

Sub-item (b)
Social development

88. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report on the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference (ESCAP/APPC(7)/4), the report on the ad hoc session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities held on 8 and 9 November 2023 (ESCAP/80/6), the note by the secretariat on the composition of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific
Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 (ESCAP/80/6/Add.1) and the note by the secretariat on the key social development issues for consideration in 2024 (ESCAP/80/7).

89. The Chair of the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference presented the outcomes of the Conference.

90. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Timor-Leste and United Kingdom.

91. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds made statements: United Nations Population Fund and UN-Women.

92. A representative of the civil society organization steering committee of the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference also made a statement.

93. Several representatives recognized the importance of regional collaboration and partnerships to advancing inclusive social development, and they called for the promotion of equality and inclusion and for the furthering of such efforts. Several representatives highlighted inequality, ageing societies, low fertility, climate change and digital transformation among the major challenges affecting the region.

94. The Commission was informed about how digital technologies had been leveraged to promote a more inclusive society and extend social protection. Several representatives reported on initiatives relating to digitalization and social protection systems and on other efforts to harness technology to promote inclusion, including initiatives related to broadband Internet access, people-centred e-government service delivery, e-learning platforms, digital classrooms and online educational resources.

95. Some representatives shared examples of efforts relating to poverty reduction; universal access to affordable health care, including access to digital health services; education; initiatives on clean water and energy; targeted food security initiatives; national housing schemes; financial inclusion schemes aimed at tackling multidimensional forms of poverty; and social protection.

96. The inclusion of older persons and persons with disabilities in economies and societies was considered crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The importance of disaggregated data, which served as an evidentiary basis to ensure that no one was left behind, was highlighted. In that regard, crucial enablers were also highlighted, including: (a) the adoption of a whole-of-government approach that incorporated all stakeholders, including representatives of vulnerable groups, into the dialogue on population and development; and (b) the leveraging of national and local governments.

97. Several representatives highlighted the progress the region had made towards the population and development agenda, including reducing maternal mortality and child marriage. A representative of one member State and a representative of civil society highlighted the importance of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development as a major achievement, although there were remaining challenges that needed to be addressed.

98. The Commission highlighted the importance of gender equality to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building an inclusive and
equitable future for all. Some delegations shared their efforts to promote the empowerment of women and girls, including through the women and peace and security agenda. Those efforts included highlighting the participation and empowerment of women in relevant actions related to disaster risk reduction and response and climate actions; recognizing, reducing and redistributing the unpaid care work of women and girls; and reducing poverty among women in vulnerable situations. Representatives welcomed the upcoming Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review to be convened by the Commission in collaboration with UN-Women in November 2024 and reiterated their support for the Commission’s role as a convening platform for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The representative of UN-Women encouraged members and associate members of the Commission to submit responses to the national survey and create high-quality national reports for the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review, in partnership and in consultation with civil society. The representative further encouraged high-level participation at the Conference.

99. Some representatives emphasized the commitments made in the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, and noted their support for the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032. They shared their initiatives to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society, including by improving employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and carrying out other targeted actions and programmes to empower them.

100. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report on the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference (ESCAP/APPC(7)/4).

101. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat containing the report on the ad hoc session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities held on 8 and 9 November 2023 (ESCAP/80/6) and endorsed the composition of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, for the period 2024–2032 (ESCAP/80/6/Add.1).

102. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on key social development issues for consideration in 2024 (ESCAP/80/7).

Sub-item (e)
Environment and development

103. 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 Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/8) and the note by the secretariat on crisis-resilient cities for a sustainable Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/9).

104. The Chair of the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization presented the report of the Governing Council.

105. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: China, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Russian Federation and United States.
106. The Commission expressed its continued support for advancing climate solutions and addressing climate impacts in Asia and the Pacific, protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, promoting ocean-based climate action and combating marine plastic pollution. The Commission was informed of efforts by member States to strengthen climate action and environmental sustainability, including by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, engaging in reforestation, increasing biodiversity protection and promoting environmentally friendly infrastructure.

107. One representative acknowledged the work of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in supporting member States in their transition to sustainable, digital and mechanized agriculture through capacity-building and project cooperation. The secretariat’s work to facilitate policy dialogue and the sharing of experiences related to climate action, oceans and sustainable cities was also recognized.

108. Several representatives noted the outcomes of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the call for all parties to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and the conclusion of the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement.

109. Several representatives noted the opportunities presented by the utilization of digital technology, innovation and artificial intelligence to support environmental protection, management and monitoring in the fields of forestry, hydrometeorology and biodiversity protection. Issues such as climate adaptation and mitigation, the blue economy and tourism, and marine plastic pollution were emphasized.

110. Some representatives recalled the commitments to accelerate ocean-based climate action contained in Commission resolution 79/2 and highlighted several recommendations for promoting ocean-based climate solutions with the following priorities: good maritime governance; strengthened cooperation for the generation of ocean-based solutions; the promotion of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches; blue carbon storage and accounting; and enhanced science policy interfaces. The Commission was informed of the plan of the Government of Indonesia to support a regional dialogue on ocean-based climate action at the seventh Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean, to be held in Bangkok in September 2024, with the aim of delivering a voluntary regional initiative for submission to the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference.

111. The Commission noted the challenges faced by the Asia-Pacific region, which were being exacerbated by climate change, including increasingly frequent and severe sand and dust storms. One representative highlighted the importance of fully implementing the Regional Plan of Action on Sand and Dust Storms in Asia and the Pacific in order to alleviate some of the challenges. Some representatives also noted that tropical cyclones in the Pacific exacerbated the risks posed by rising sea levels, underlining the need for continued support for resilience-building for cities.

112. One representative expressed appreciation for the efforts and contributions made by the Pacific Urban Partnership in organizing the Sixth Pacific Urban Forum and requested the secretariat’s leadership to continue to usher in new partnership modalities to strengthen support for Pacific cities.
The Commission highlighted the importance of continued international and regional cooperation on climate change and environmentally sustainable development, pointing to the need to share best practices on regional decarbonization through city-to-city collaborations promoting South-South cooperation and continued commitments to subregional cooperation.

At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/8).

At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on crisis-resilient cities for a sustainable Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/9).

Sub-item (d)
Disaster risk reduction

In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its eighth session (ESCAP/CDR(8)/6), the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its eighth session (ESCAP/80/10) and the note by the secretariat on scaling up the use of early warnings for preventive actions through the implementation of a regional strategy (ESCAP/80/11).

The Chair of the eighth session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction presented the report of the Committee. The Chair of the eighth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management presented the report of the Governing Council.

Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Thailand and United States.

The Commission highlighted the increasing intensity and frequency of disasters and the increasing vulnerabilities stemming from climate change. Some representatives specifically noted: the significant impacts of climate change and disasters on vulnerable segments of the population, such as women and people with disabilities; the challenges in addressing the linkages of poverty, climate change and disasters, and in managing transboundary risks; and the importance of social protection systems in responding to disaster shocks.

In that regard, the Commission emphasized the importance of early warning systems for disaster risk reduction, and several representatives highlighted initiatives to improve early warning capacities and disaster risk reduction systems. Some representatives acknowledged the Commission’s efforts on regional cooperation for early warning, and they expressed support for scaling up the use of early warnings for preventive actions through the implementation of a regional strategy and for strengthening cooperation for disaster risk reduction. In that regard, one representative informed the Commission that the Group of 20 had started a new workstream and established a working group on disaster risk reduction whose priorities included early warning systems. The representative also noted that the ESCAP multi-donor trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness had emerged as an important platform for enabling access to multi-hazard early warning systems.
121. Some representatives highlighted country initiatives aimed at the use of satellite-derived data and other cutting-edge digital technologies. It was noted that country initiatives had an impact on international and regional initiatives, resulting in an increase in the sharing of satellite imagery and disaster information for response and in the timely assessment of damages and losses.

122. Some representatives further emphasized the need to increase investments into understanding disaster risks and provide financing for climate adaptation, including through national plans on adaptation and resilience.

123. The Commission was informed of the continued support of some member States to: the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development of the Commission; the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning, in order to enhance the capacity of developing countries; and the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management. It was also informed of an initiative aimed at developing a virtual satellite constellation for disaster risk management.

124. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its eighth session (ESCAP/CDR(8)/6) and the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its eighth session (ESCAP/80/10).

125. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on scaling up the use of early warnings for preventive actions through the implementation of a regional strategy (ESCAP/80/11).

Sub-item (e)

Energy

126. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report on the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6), the Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6/Add.1) and the note by the secretariat on employing digitally driven innovation in the energy sector to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (ESCAP/80/12).

127. The Chair of the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum presented the outcomes of the Forum.

128. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan and Russian Federation.

129. The Commission acknowledged the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, wherein member States committed themselves to ensuring energy security, fostering the energy transition and promoting sustainable development.

130. The Commission underlined the importance of digital technologies in enhancing energy efficiency, optimizing production, minimizing environmental impact and increasing sustainability. The integration of digital technologies was expected to lower energy costs, increase energy security and reduce emissions. Furthermore, the adoption of digital solutions should
significantly support global energy development and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

131. Several representatives underlined the criticality of the energy transition and the proactive development of clean energy sources, including wind, solar and nuclear energy, as well as the importance of commercializing technologies at the research and development phase. This was crucial for advancing innovative technologies for decarbonization, including the development of floating offshore wind farms and other renewable energy technologies.

132. Several representatives underlined the importance of: strengthening cooperation in areas such as energy science and technological innovation; reducing technical barriers; enhancing technical transfer; developing standards; ensuring the availability of critical materials; and financing renewable energy. They also stressed the importance of sharing knowledge in order to collaboratively achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy); realize a fair, inclusive and sustainable energy transition; and achieve net-zero emissions through the use of diverse and tailored pathways.

133. Several representatives stressed the need to expedite the shift from fossil fuels to clean energy and reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, bolstered by partnerships involving both the public and private sectors that facilitated investment in collaboration with international partners.

134. One representative called for more to be done to reform the financial and regulatory systems pertaining to renewable energy projects by: devising mechanisms to improve the understanding of such projects by financial institutions; aiding in the development of bankable renewable energy projects; mitigating risks; and developing financing models within a supportive regulatory framework.

135. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission adopted resolution 80/3 on the Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific. The resolution was sponsored by Thailand.

136. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the report on the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6).

137. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on employing digitally driven innovation in the energy sector to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (ESCAP/80/12).

Sub-item (f)
Transport

138. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on transitioning to the digitalization of transport for a sustainable future in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/80/13).

139. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: China, Fiji, India, Republic of Korea and Thailand.

140. Several representatives expressed support for the secretariat’s work to enhance sustainable transport connectivity in the region by promoting the
implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026), and they highlighted the important role of digitalization in the scaling up of sustainable and resilient transport. The Commission was informed of the efforts made by member States to support the transition of small island developing States to smart mobility and low-carbon transport that were aided by the application of digital technologies.

141. Noting the dynamic development of smart highways and green logistics, several representatives acknowledged the application of digital technologies in regional transport connectivity using measures such as the introduction of unified toll management and highway traffic centres for network monitoring. The Commission was also informed of initiatives taken to make transport more inclusive and sustainable and to promote regional connectivity. Such initiatives included: the development of smart railways linked with automated container terminals; intercontinental train services; the electrification of railway transport to reduce emissions; and the expansion of rail infrastructure. Autonomous navigation and the digitalization of port gates and container terminals were also mentioned.

142. The Commission was informed about national efforts to promote regional and global transport connectivity and noted the commitment of many member States to promoting low-carbon freight transport and logistics. The Commission noted the role of seamless multimodal transport and logistics in strengthening regional transport connectivity and recognized the role of digital solutions in enhancing freight transport performance and operational connectivity. Examples of digital solutions included unified logistics interfaces and platforms; the use of geographical information-based systems for the efficient planning, execution and monitoring of infrastructure projects; the implementation of toll roads; and the use of radio frequency identification and global positioning systems for cargo vehicle tracking.

143. One representative emphasized the importance of maritime transport to the Pacific subregion. The representative informed the Commission of regional cooperation initiatives on low-carbon transport, such as the Pacific Blue Shipping Partnership, and emphasized that regional cooperation and partnerships were crucial to accelerating the achievement of net-zero emissions by 2050 in the Pacific and to supporting women and marginalized groups.

144. The Commission was informed of regional cooperation initiatives taken by some member States to support and promote digital innovations, such as automated vehicle identification technologies; the introduction of so-called “new energy vehicles” and public bus electrification; and low-carbon passenger fleets. It was also informed of initiatives related to road safety and to the promotion of knowledge pertaining to sustainable transport.

145. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on transitioning to the digitalization of transport for a sustainable future in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/80/13).

Sub-item (g)
Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development

146. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development on its fourth session (ESCAP/CMPF(4)/6) and the note by the secretariat on the
macroeconomic outlook, challenges and policies for the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/14).

147. The Chair of the fourth session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development presented the report of the Committee.

148. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam.

149. The Commission reiterated its strong commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular with regard to eradicating poverty. Some representatives underlined the negative impacts of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine on inflation, fiscal positions and debt levels among economies in Asia and the Pacific. The efficient utilization of resources, effective debt management and fiscal transparency were highlighted as factors necessary for addressing socioeconomic challenges, amid a broader call to reduce indebtedness in order to rebuild the capacity to respond to shocks.

150. The Commission underscored the importance of investments in the areas of science, technology, infrastructure, innovation and universal basic health care. It also stressed the need to increase institutional capacities and the engagement of young people and to develop digital economies and innovative financing instruments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

151. Several representatives underlined the importance of, and the commitment of their Governments to, knowledge-sharing and economic cooperation within the region, not only among member States but with key financing stakeholders, including multilateral development banks and private finance institutions, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

152. Some representatives requested the secretariat to continue its role in: strengthening regional dialogue aimed at the sharing of experiences and best practices in economic development and financing issues among countries in Asia and the Pacific; leveraging innovative and sustainable financing instruments, such as blended finance; and providing capacity-building and advisory activities at the country level.

153. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development on its fourth session (ESCAP/CMPF(4)/6).

154. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on the macroeconomic outlook, challenges and policies for the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/80/14).

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

155. 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 Transfer of Technology on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/15) and the note by the secretariat on enabling inclusive and sustainable development through digital trade, investment, innovation and the use of technology (ESCAP/80/16).
156. The Chair of the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology presented the report of the Governing Council.

157. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

158. The Commission noted the importance of trade, investment and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development and of building the capacities of small and medium-sized enterprises to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. Several representatives shared their country experiences in improving trade and e-commerce.

159. Several representatives noted the critical role that digital, emerging and cutting-edge technologies play for government and industry. They shared their experiences with regard to: using digital technologies, including artificial intelligence; and nurturing an innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem in order to facilitate business operations, the digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises and business innovation. Representatives also spoke of the importance of regional cooperation to ensuring the ethical use of such technologies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

160. Several representatives noted the importance of capacity-building and technology transfer for sustainable development, including in addressing key societal issues, such as climate change and waste management.

161. Several representatives expressed support for the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology. They expressed their appreciation to the Centre for its contributions to strengthening regional cooperation in new and emerging technologies, advancing technology transfer, supporting capacity-building and fostering cooperation on issues relating to technology. They also expressed their appreciation to the Centre for its commitment to nurturing diverse forms of collaboration in the field of science, technology and innovation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region. Representatives also encouraged member States to play a more active role and to collaborate in the activities of the Centre.

162. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/15).

163. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on enabling inclusive and sustainable development through digital trade, investment, innovation and the use of technology (ESCAP/80/16).

Sub-item (i)
Information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation

164. 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 Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/17) and the note by the secretariat on leveraging digital technologies to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/80/18).
165. The Chair of the eighteenth 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.

166. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Armenia, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Thailand, United States and Viet Nam.

167. The Commission recognized the crucial role of ICT in accelerating sustainable development. The Commission highlighted the diverse areas in which ICT was applied for sustainable development, including digital government and public services, as well as trade cooperation. It also emphasized that digital transformation should lead to tangible results and positive changes and should be digitally inclusive.

168. The Commission underlined the importance of regional digital cooperation and partnerships, including with the private sector, while acknowledging its important role in facilitating effective partnerships to accelerate new technological innovation. It expressed support for the continued implementation of the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative 2022–2026, in particular, to bridge the digital divide in Asia and the Pacific by promoting inclusive digital connectivity and access to affordable ICT, including for women and girls, to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

169. The Commission recognized the rapid development of technologies in Asia and the Pacific. It also recognized the opportunities presented by new and emerging technologies, including the development of fifth-generation technology and the rise of artificial intelligence with the potential to revolutionize traditional sectors, such as improving agricultural productivity. Many representatives acknowledged the need for strong cybersecurity to ensure safe, secure and trustworthy technological developments.

170. The Commission was informed of the continued support of some member States for the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030), and member States were encouraged to accelerate the implementation of its second phase, as called for in the Jakarta Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The Commission was further informed of country efforts to promote spatial technology and its role in smart transportation, resilient cities, disaster response and environmental monitoring. It noted that the applications of remote sensing, communications and navigation satellites have been steadily improving.

171. The Commission acknowledged the efforts made to promote capacity-building on ICT in the region by the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development. The Centre’s programmes had benefited numerous beneficiaries, including government leaders, civil servants and women entrepreneurs.

172. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its eighteenth session (ESCAP/80/17).

173. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on leveraging digital technologies to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/80/18).
Sub-item (j)
Statistics

174. 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 Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/19) and the note by the secretariat entitled “Towards the realization of the regional vision for inclusive civil registration and vital statistics systems” (ESCAP/80/20).

175. The Chair of the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific presented the report of the Governing Council.

176. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan and Philippines.

177. The Commission acknowledged the transformative power of digital innovation and the crucial role data played in the delivery of digital government services, as well as the importance of data and statistics in evidence-based planning. Several representatives highlighted the role of tools, such as the National SDG Tracker and the “Every policy is connected” tool, in assessing progress, filling data gaps and developing effective policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The roles of big data and new technologies were highlighted, and some representatives noted the establishment of two regional hubs in support of the United Nations Global Platform, namely, the regional hub for big data in China and the regional hub on big data and data science for Asia and the Pacific in Indonesia.

178. The Commission highlighted the important role played by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in providing relevant statistical training to countries in Asia and the Pacific. It called upon the Institute to continue to be results-focused and responsive to existing and emerging statistical training needs by routinely updating its courses and acquiring talented staff with relevant expertise, as well as by expanding and diversifying its funding.

179. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its nineteenth session (ESCAP/80/19).

180. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat entitled “Towards the realization of the regional vision for inclusive civil registration and vital statistics systems” (ESCAP/80/20).

Agenda item 5
Management issues

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

Sub-item (a)
Proposed programme plan for 2025

182. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the proposed programme plan for 2025 (ESCAP/80/21).

183. The representative of Fiji made a statement.
The representative of Fiji noted that the proposed programme plan reflected his Government’s developmental priorities as a small island developing State. He suggested that the programme plan should also reflect subregional, regional and global mandates, such as the Samoa Pathway and subsequent programmes of action. The representative stressed the importance of inclusivity, in particular for countries in special situations, and welcomed the focus on strengthening cooperation for climate change, highlighting the importance accorded to ocean-based climate action. He also welcomed the focus on disaster risk reduction, trade, business, ICT and gender.

At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission endorsed the proposed programme plan for 2025 (ESCAP/80/21).

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

The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development (ESCAP/80/22).

Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and United States.

The representative of Japan stated that 2023 had been a challenging year for the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. In addition to resuming in-person training courses, which boasted participation at pre-pandemic levels, the Institute had also been required to respond to growing needs in the region, including issues related to the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The representative of Japan noted with appreciation that the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific had achieved notable and valuable results in that regard, despite the challenging environment. The Government of Japan, the host country of the Institute, pledged $1,891,065 in cash and the equivalent of $923,734 in-kind contributions to support its 2024 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 participation 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.

The representative of the Republic of Korea stated that his Government would contribute $4 million in support of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia, the regional institutions and the technical cooperation programmes of the Commission for 2024. The Government of the Republic of Korea reaffirmed its commitment to inclusive and sustainable development and regional cooperation through its unwavering support of the work of the Commission. It recognized the importance of technical assistance and capacity-development programmes that enhanced the technical and institutional capacity of members and would continue to extend support to the Commission for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region.

The representative of China stated that her Government intended to pledge approximately $2.7 million and RMB 1.5 million in 2024 to support the China-ESCAP Cooperation Programme, the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities. She highlighted that her
Government, which was making the second-largest pledge and was a long-standing donor to the secretariat, would maintain the level of its contributions to the Commission despite various difficulties and the pressures of economic growth and recovery, which fully reflected her country’s continuous commitment to promoting sustainable development cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. The representative of China expressed the hope that, in using the contributions, the secretariat and other affiliated organizations would strengthen project management, improve financial efficiency, produce practical results and contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and economic recovery in the region.

191. The representative of India stated that her Government recognized the important role of the secretariat and its regional institutions in assisting in the delivery of capacity-building and other initiatives in support of member States and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. She reaffirmed the commitment of her Government to engaging in regional cooperation to tackle shared challenges across the Asia-Pacific region in order to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the representative stated that her Government intended to pledge $989,000 to support the activities of the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.

192. The representative of the United States stated that her Government valued the important role of the secretariat in the region in facilitating cooperation and announced that a new Junior Professional Officer post would be funded by her Government. The post would be in the Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division and the work would be focused on cross-sectoral technology and policy issues, such as digital infrastructure, e-connectivity, e-governance platforms, digital public infrastructure and best practices in the use of artificial intelligence. She also noted that her Government had contributed $400,000 towards a project to reduce transboundary air pollution through local, national and subregional policy interventions and to address sources of pollution contributing to common airsheds. As part of the project, an analysis of air pollution data, including remote sensing, machine learning, geospatial satellite imagery and meteorological data, would be conducted.

193. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on the evaluation activities of the Commission during the biennium 2022–2023 (ESCAP/80/23).
Sub-item (d)
Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

196. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (ESCAP/80/24) and the information document on the same topic (ESCAP/80/INF/2).

197. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: India and Russian Federation.

198. The representative of India noted the evaluation findings that underscored the contribution the Centre was making in some member States in the areas of science, technology and innovation; technology cooperation; and the technology transfer ecosystem. The representative also stressed that, as the host country of the Centre, the Government of India remained committed to supporting the Centre in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the evaluation.

199. The representative of the Russian Federation emphasized the role of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology in fostering digital cooperation. On behalf of her Government, which was a member of the Governing Council of the Centre, she expressed appreciation to the Centre for its work.

200. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission took note of the recommendations contained in the note by the secretariat on the evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (ESCAP/80/24) and of the information document on the same topic (ESCAP/80/INF/2).

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

201. The Commission had before it the report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ESCAP/80/25).

202. The Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste presented the report of the Advisory Committee on behalf of its members.

203. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements: China, Fiji and Japan.

204. One representative stressed the importance of the role of the Advisory Committee in providing oversight on the delivery and review of the programme plan, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee, to ensure transparency before its adoption by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The representative reiterated the importance of applying and adhering to the principles of transparency, accountability and governance oversight in all functions of the Commission, including those carried out by its subsidiary bodies and subregional offices, to ensure full accountability and the effective discharge of its responsibilities.

205. Another representative recognized the role of the Advisory Committee, in particular its role in communicating information about and coordinating the meetings of the Commission and promoting the implementation of resolutions.
and actions plans adopted by the Commission. He acknowledged the constructive cooperation among members of the Advisory Committee and called for strengthened communication and cooperation between its members and the secretariat to ensure that the Advisory Committee could play its role effectively. He reiterated that the Commission had the support of his delegation as it continued to fulfil its role as a regional, economic and social development cooperation platform, contributing to sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

206. One representative noted that the participation of Pacific member States in the Advisory Committee was critical as a means of contributing to discussions within the mandate of the Commission. Their participation also helped to foster sustainable development in the region, in particular in countries in vulnerable situations, such as the Pacific small island developing States. The representative stressed the importance of inclusivity, recognized the efforts of the secretariat to ensure the participation of Pacific member States in the meetings of the Advisory Committee and requested the secretariat to continue its efforts, noting that Pacific member States did not have a permanent presence in Bangkok.

207. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission took note of the report of the Advisory Committee (ESCAP/80/25).

**Agenda item 7**
**Dates and venue of and theme topic for the eighty-first session of the Commission (2025)**

208. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the dates and venue of and theme topic for the eighty-first session of the Commission (2025) (ESCAP/80/26).

209. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on the dates and venue of and theme topic for the eighty-first session of the Commission (2025) (ESCAP/80/26) and decided that its eighty-first session would be held in Bangkok from 21 to 25 April 2025. The Commission also decided that the theme topic for its eighty-first session would be “Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific”.

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

210. 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 47 member States were found to be in order. Acknowledging the report of the Credentials Committee to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session (A/78/605), 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 eightieth session of the Commission pending a decision by the Assembly on the representation of Myanmar.

211. The Commission took note of the oral report of the bureau on credentials.
212. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission adopted resolution 80/4 on clarifying the reports on meetings held under the rules of procedure of the Commission. The resolution was sponsored by Fiji, India, Japan, the Philippines and the United States.

**Agenda item 9**

**Adoption of the report of the Commission on its eightieth session**

213. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 26 April 2024, the Commission unanimously adopted the report on its eightieth session (ESCAP/80/27).