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Agenda item 2

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

78/1. Bangkok Declaration Commemorating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: a Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Adopts the following declaration:

Bangkok Declaration Commemorating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: a Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

1. We, the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, have gathered in Bangkok from 23 to 27 May 2022 for the seventy-eighth session of the Commission.
2. We recognize the historic significance of the current session of the Commission in the year that marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Commission.
3. We celebrate a period of seven and a half decades during which membership in the Commission has grown from 10 in 1947 to 62 today and during which the region has made extraordinary socioeconomic progress, in the spirit of unity, solidarity and multilateralism and international cooperation, lifting millions out of poverty, and is now home to some of the world's largest and most dynamic economies and is characterized by a rich diversity of cultures and economic and social systems.
4. At the same time, we recognize the need to address outstanding and emerging development challenges of persisting poverty and inequalities, vulnerability to shocks, natural disasters and climate change and environmental degradation, and reaffirm our commitment to accelerate progress towards a

more equal, more resilient and more sustainable world and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹

5. Deeply concerned by the significant adverse health, social and economic effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, particularly on the most vulnerable, we reiterate the need to ensure universal and equitable access to safe, effective, quality and affordable vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, particularly in developing countries and least developed countries, recognizing the role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good to get the pandemic under control and invest in people and the planet to build resilience against future pandemics, natural disasters, climate change and other shocks.

6. Recalling the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations,² we reaffirm our commitment to promoting multilateralism and international cooperation, strengthening partnerships for sustainable development, upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and advancing sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

7. Recognizing the unique challenges of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in the region, who find themselves in increasingly vulnerable situations, we resolve to accelerate the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries,³ the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024⁴ and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,⁵ which will further enhance the overall connectivity of such countries.

8. We take note of the theme study for the seventy-eighth session of the Commission,⁶ in which the secretariat presents research on possible pathways and means to advance sustainable development in the region and identifies elements for a common agenda for our region.

9. We reaffirm the centrality of the United Nations system, and the vital role of the Commission as the main economic and social development arm in the region within this system, in fostering regional and subregional cooperation as well as in assisting members and associate members of the Commission in our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and commit ourselves to supporting and working collaboratively through the Commission.

10. On this historic occasion, we pledge our strong and continuing support for the leadership role of the Commission in catalysing regional cooperation and supporting actions to confront regional, transboundary and common challenges faced by its membership, and we reaffirm our commitment to advancing sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific and realizing the future we want, in particular the following commitments.

¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

² Assembly resolution 75/1.

³ Assembly resolution 76/258, annex.

⁴ Assembly resolution 69/137, annex II.

⁵ Assembly resolution 69/15, annex.

⁶ ESCAP/78/1.

11. We commit to leave no one behind. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected our livelihood and disrupted societies and economies, particularly the most vulnerable. We reaffirm the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Sustainable Development Goals met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of societies, and we recommit to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. In building forward better, we emphasize the importance of implementing equal, sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

12. We commit to put people at the centre of all our efforts while making sustainable development in all its dimensions a priority in the region. Millions in the region have yet to benefit from social protection and are left unprotected against any form of contingency throughout their lives. Many more have been pushed back into extreme poverty. We need to invest in inclusive national social protection systems that promote access to essential services, resources, human capital development, poverty reduction, education, employment and decent jobs and to strengthen health resilience, including by accelerating efforts towards the achievement of universal health coverage by 2030. In this regard, the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific⁷ provides an important framework to prevent poverty and reduce vulnerability.

13. We commit to protect our planet. Without more determined actions, we will be more affected by multiple challenges to our common environment, inter alia, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and all types of natural disasters. Small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries are among the most affected. We recognize that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is important for the enjoyment of human rights and for sustainable development in all its dimensions. Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to healthy and productive lives in harmony with nature. The well-being of humanity depends on the health of nature and hence on our ability to sustainably use, restore and protect the ecosystem services. Recalling the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁸ and the Paris Agreement,⁹ we need to immediately curb greenhouse gas emissions and pursue an effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and achieve a more balanced growth, including through sustainable consumption and production patterns, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We also need to take urgent actions to enhance international collaboration for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources and reduce pollution of air, oceans and fresh water, mitigate the impacts of pollution on human health and halt the global decline of biodiversity.

14. We need to mobilize financial resources from all sources and promote the provision and the transfer of appropriate forms of environmentally sound technology on voluntary and mutually agreed terms and build capacity and provide support to help countries to achieve low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development in Asia and the Pacific. We recognize that ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions, among others, play an essential role in the overall global effort to achieve the Sustainable

⁷ ESCAP/CSD/2020/3, annex III.

⁸ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

⁹ See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

Development Goals, including by effectively and efficiently addressing major social, economic and environmental challenges. We commit to promoting sustainable urban development to enhance quality of life, develop healthy environments and better manage environmental risks and resources.

15. We commit to place all women and girls at the centre of development. Women and girls play a vital role as agents of development, and the achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. We will accelerate action to achieve women's active, equal and equitable participation and the empowerment of women and girls in all domains and to strengthen policies and legislation for the promotion of gender equality.

16. We commit to work together to enhance regional connectivity. Integrated and seamless regional connectivity plays an important role in promoting sustainable and inclusive development, eradicating poverty and tackling inequality in Asia and the Pacific. We will work on developing integrated and seamless connectivity across the region and strengthen regional cooperation in infrastructure, trade, finance, human exchange, transport, energy, and information and communications technology, among other areas, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and encourage all member States to cooperate in closing connectivity gaps, strengthening digital connectivity, promoting the digital economy and sustainable, disaster resilient infrastructure and investment, and enhancing regional supply chain connectivity and diversification, as well as to facilitate recovery and to ensure resilient connectivity during crises.

17. We commit to improve digital cooperation. We recognize that science, technology and innovation, including information and communications technology, are critical in the pursuit of sustainable development and are among the key driving forces of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The fourth industrial revolution, driven by the impact of digital technology, data processing and the development of artificial intelligence, offers unprecedented opportunities and new challenges and has tremendous potential to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We endeavour to ensure safe, affordable and equitable digital access for all. We intend to cooperate at all levels, including the ministerial level, in closing the digital connectivity divide, ensuring digital skills training, strengthening digital connectivity, addressing digital trust and security, and promoting an inclusive digital economy and society. In this regard, the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative could be one of the useful regional platforms for the promotion of digital cooperation.

18. We reaffirm that international trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction and that it contributes to the promotion of sustainable development. We, as part of the world's most dynamic and interconnected regional economy, reaffirm our commitment to keep markets open. We will continue to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, with special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries. We note the significance of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.¹⁰

¹⁰ Commission resolution 72/4, annex.

19. We underscore the importance of enhancing sustainable financing for development goals. We commit to align public and private financial resources to effectively pursue our sustainable development aspirations. We reaffirm the importance of financing for development as a critical means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in this regard the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.¹¹ We commit to strengthen our fiscal positions, promote regional cooperation where needed and explore various innovative financing instruments and mechanisms, including public and private financing as well as fiscal, market and regulatory mechanisms, as appropriate, that can help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, based on multilateralism and international cooperation.

20. We reaffirm the commitments set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and encourage member States to strengthen statistical departments to deliver data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, as well as other characteristics relevant in national contexts, to support measurement of progress of sustainable development and decision-making.

21. We commit to boost partnerships that strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation. Today's challenges require cooperation across borders as well as across the whole of society. We emphasize the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation and partnership in advancing sustainable development in the region, including by leveraging synergies between the work of the Commission and its parent body, the Economic and Social Council. We encourage the Commission to foster regional cooperation by strengthening linkages with subregional organizations. We encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships and commit ourselves to listen to and work with major groups and other stakeholders as appropriate. We recognize the role of the Commission in supporting North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and note the role of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network.

22. We will listen to and work with youth, who are essential to sustainable development and will have to live with the consequences of our action and inaction. Thus, we will ensure their meaningful engagement.

23. We commit to build our resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a wake-up call for improving our preparedness for not only health-related shocks but also other challenges and crises. We need to advance international and regional cooperation to strengthen the resilience of our economies and societies against wide-ranging socioeconomic effects of pandemics, natural disasters, climate change and other shocks. We recognize the value of an integrated One Health approach that fosters cooperation on issues relevant to human health, animal health and plant health, as well as environmental and other relevant sectors. We also recognize the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030¹² and stress the need for resilient health systems. We need to scale up investments in people and planet to build resilience by focusing on providing social and health services, closing the digital divide and pursuing sustainable development.

¹¹ General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

¹² Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

24. We therefore request the Executive Secretary to reinvigorate the role of the Commission as a regional development platform by identifying, advocating and analysing innovative, integrated, action-oriented and multisectoral approaches to address sustainable development challenges, coordinating region-wide inclusive policy dialogues, in close collaboration with the rest of the United Nations development system, and engaging relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, in order to respond effectively to the changing and emerging needs of the region, and taking into account national considerations.

*10th plenary meeting
27 May 2022*
