

**Virtual South Asia Policy Dialogue on
Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021:
*Towards post-COVID-19 resilient economies***

12 April 2021 (14.30 – 16.00 Hours, Indian Standard Time)

Introduction

The *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards post-COVID-19 resilient economies*, the flagship publication of ESCAP, was launched recently at the UNESCAP headquarters in Bangkok. The COVID-19 has disrupted the socio-economic well-being of people living in Asia and the Pacific. Millions of people lost their jobs and millions became ‘new poor’ due to COVID-19. Unprecedented slowdown in economic growth of countries were observed during the period. The countries also regressed in their performance on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and efforts will be needed to accelerate the progress and build back better. The 2021 Survey maps out a “riskscape” of economic and non-economic shocks – financial crises, terms of trade shocks, natural disasters and epidemics – and finds that these leave behind long-lasting scars that reverse hard-won gains across all three dimensions of sustainable development. Highlighting the fact that policy choices matter, the Survey recommends that countries respond aggressively in order to minimize the reversal of hard-won gains rather than end up with “too little, too late”.

The Policy Dialogue will provide a forum for discussion of the key messages of the 2021 Survey especially relating to the major challenges including those created by COVID-19 that South Asia is facing and policy options to address them. The Dialogue will take the form of an interactive discussion following an introductory presentation followed by remarks by eminent panelists and open discussion with participants.

The Policy Dialogue which will be held on a virtual platform.

Tentative programme

14.30 – 14.40 PM	<p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Director, South and South-West Asia Office, UNESCAP, New Delhi
14.40 – 14.50 PM	<p>Presentation on “Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Insights on South Asia”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Sweta Saxena, Chief, MPAS, MPFD, UNESCAP, Bangkok
14.50 – 15.20 PM	<p>Moderated Panel discussion: (Time: 5 minutes each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. N.R. Bhanumurthy, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar School of Economics, Bengaluru

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Selim Raihan, Executive Director, SANEM, Bangladesh ○ Dr. Dushni Weerakoon, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka ○ Dr. Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) ○ Dr. Omar Joya, Executive Director, Biruni Institute, Afghanistan ○ Dr. Puspa Sharma, Executive Director, SAWTEE, Kathmandu
15.20 – 15.45 PM	Q&A
15.45 – 16.00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up