



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

ESCAP Sustainable Business Network – Monthly Update

September 2020

Dear ESNB members,

We hope you are doing well and staying safe. This monthly update aims to help ESNB members stay updated with ESCAP activities to plan your engagement and volunteer for opportunities.

ESBN related news and activities

Conversion to corporate/organizational membership

Following the decision by the ESNB Executive Council to convert from personal to corporate/organizational membership of ESNB and strengthen sustainability requirements of members, the Secretariat has sent out the email to all ESNB members. **All ESNB members are kindly invited to submit the membership application/commitment form by 30 September 2020.** If you have any questions, please contact us at esbn@un.org.

As regards the requirement for ESNB members to be signatories of the Global Compact, as some have asked us about the costs for SMEs, we would like to clarify that ESNB membership only requires being a *signatory* of the Global Compact (as opposed to participant), and that being a signatory does not carry a fee for SMEs that have below USD50 million in annual revenue, other than potential fees for joining a local network. For more information on how to sign up to the Global Compact, see: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/participation/join/application> and for information on fee structures see: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/about/finances>.

Regional Conversation Series on Building Back Better: Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond in Asia and the Pacific, 31 August 2020

Victor Fung of the Fung Group participated in this second session and spoke on the role of finance in building back better, emphasizing the need for trade finance and trade facilitation. <https://unesco.org/events/2020-regional-conversation-2>.

The 2020 ASEAN Leadership and Partnership Forum and Virtual Conference, 27-28 August 2020

Tan Sri Dr. Michael Yeoh of the ESNB Executive Council and Mr. Shazali Sulaiman, ESNB member, participated in the 2020 ASEAN Leadership and Partnership Forum, which focused on “Partnership for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN”. <https://kasi.asia/events/2020-asean-leadership-and-partnership-forum/>

Upcoming events of interest to ESNB members

For a short overview of ESCAP related news, please see <https://www.unescap.org/news> or subscribe: <https://unescap.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=c0fdb6e03fa08a5e575b433c0&id=e318af22fc>

All ESCAP upcoming events: <https://www.unescap.org/events/upcoming>

Call for abstracts: Technology and the transition from informal to formal economy – deadline 11 sept

ESCAP and the International Labour Organization (ILO) invite researchers to submit proposals for innovative research papers relevant to the theme of the use of digital technologies in support of accelerating results in the transition from the informal to formal economy. The deadline for submission is 11 September 2020.

For more information, see: https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_750292/lang--en/index.htm

APEC Global Supply Chains Resiliency Survey.

The Global Trade Professionals Alliance (GTPA) is conducting a survey of COVID-19 impacts on SMEs and supply chains on behalf of the APEC, to take the survey go to:

https://ncsu.qualtrics.com//CP/Graphic.php?IM=IM_b9lwAU6k398qZ6Z

Regional Conversation Series on Building Back Better

The Regional Conversation Series on Building Back Better is being organized by ESCAP in commemoration of the 75th anniversary and gathers the UN, gathers Ministers, senior member States representatives, and eminent personalities to share their insights and experience in the recovery post COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific. It is organized in six sessions over the period 19 August to 26 October. As part of this [series](#), the following sessions will be held:

- *8 September 2020: Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific* (14:00-15:30 Bangkok time, UTC+7) [link](#)
- *25 September 2020: Resilient Supply Chains and Connectivity* (13:00-15:00 UTC+7) [link](#)
- *15 October 2020: Social protection: A Right for All, or a Privilege for a Few?*
- *26 October 2020: Shaping our Future Together*

3 September 2020: SME Policy Guidebook - Expert Group Meeting

In 2012, ESCAP published a Policy Guidebook for SME Development in Asia and the Pacific. During 2020 the Secretariat will work on the second edition of the Guidebook. ESNB members are invited to volunteer to contribute to this process e.g. through offering expert advice on special issues (like SME finance, digitization, start-ups), through participation in expert meetings and peer-reviews, or by proposing on such issues to contribute to the process. As a first step, on 3 September, an Expert Group Meeting will be held to review the outline of the second edition of the Guidebook. Barbara Meynert, member of the ESNB Executive Council will represent ESNB at that meeting. As earlier informed, ESNB members are invited to

volunteer to participate in this activity and contact the secretariat to receive the relevant documentation (esbn@un.org).

2-4 September 2020: Fourth North and Central Asian Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

As a subregional SDG Forum, this event will discuss the current situation of implementation of the SDGs in North and Central Asian countries and possible actions and solutions to accelerate action in the context of coping with the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and to “build back better”. speakers include David Morris, Vice-president of ESNB. For more information and to register, see: https://www.unescap.org/events/2020NCA_SDG and https://bit.ly/2020NCA_SDG.

8 September 2020:

2020 Asia Economic and Entrepreneurship Summit: “Growing Partnership for Inclusive, Innovative and Sustainable Growth”

Mia Mikic of ESCAP, Tan Sri Dr. Michael Yeoh and Mr. Shazali Sulaiman of the ESNB will speak in this event which is jointly organized by the KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific (KSI), The Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) and China Daily Asia Pacific (CD). <https://kasi.asia/events/2020-asia-economic-and-entrepreneurship-summit/>

21-23 September 2020: Uniting Business LIVE

To mark the opening of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, the United Nations Global Compact is organizing a special event “Uniting Business LIVE” from 21 to 23 September. The event will virtually convene leaders from business, government and civil society to showcase their commitment to the UN’s mission. Over a series of three one-day forums, leading Chief Executives, corporate sustainability experts and business leaders will come together to take stock of the state of the world, address gaps in progress, drive business ambition on the SDGs and highlight cooperative and actional solutions, and showcase how business can take clear steps and demonstrate bold leadership for the Decade of Action to transform business models and economies to become more just and inclusive, to leave no one behind.

- 21 September 2020: **Private sector forum**
- 22 September 2020: **Global Impact Forum**
- 23 September 2020: **SDG Business Forum (in collaboration with ICC)**

<https://registration.unglobalcompact.org/website/15648/>

29 October 2020: Executive Council of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN), 4th meeting

The fourth meeting of the Executive Council of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) will be held on 29 October 2020 through video-conference.

30 October 2020: Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2020

As the annual ESNB summit event, the Asia-Pacific Business Forum will be held virtually on 30 October 2020 under the theme “The Future of Global Value Chains and Implications for SMEs”. The Forum will discuss innovative solutions to address the challenges and capitalize on opportunities to recover from the Covid-19 induced crisis and global trade tensions, and restore global trade and investment links through GVCs, while supporting the transfer to more world. Various members of the ESNB Executive Council have

agreed to moderate sessions of the Forum. The latest version of the programme can be found at the official website of the Forum which is now active and also has the registration portal: www.apbf2020.com

November 2020 (TBC): ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN), 8th Meeting

The next meeting of the ESBN is proposed to be postponed to November, to avoid members having to participate in virtual meetings two consecutive days. The secretariat will consult with the Executive Council on a suitable date which will be communicated soon.

<https://esbn.unescap.org/events/escap-sustainable-business-network-esbn-8th-meeting>

Other recent events of interest

Thailand Business Leadership for the SDGs 2020, 31 August 2020

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the UN Global Compact and the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, Global Compact Network Thailand in partnership with the United Nations Team in Thailand and Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) organized “GCNT FORUM 2020: Thailand Business Leadership for SDGs” under the theme “Recover World, Recover Thailand Better” to gather commitments from the private sector as well as all stakeholders to lead Thailand towards sustainability after COVID-19. For more information, see: <https://globalcompact-th.com/TBL/SDGs/2020>. The video of the Forum can also be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzbxYITYcZ0>.

Recently published by ESCAP

Investing in innovative solutions to manage cascading disaster risks: Key takeaways for stakeholders (20 August 2020)

Understanding the links between epidemics and disasters requires innovative solutions including a wide range of risk analytics such as impact forecasting and risk informed early warning, indexing and creating risk matrix to target at risk communities. This issue brief on COVID-19 focuses on the innovations which are protecting communities from cascading hazards, the challenges, and opportunities therein, and offers policy guidance to shape the future management of cascading hazards.

<https://www.unescap.org/resources/investing-innovative-solutions-manage-cascading-disaster-risks-south-asia-key-takeaways>

Policy Brief (2/2020) Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Network: When crises converge Responding to natural disasters in South Asia during Covid-19 (14 August 2020)

South Asia has been severely impacted by COVID-19 – with more than 20,000 deaths, around one million confirmed cases, and many millions of workers unemployed. The pandemic and the need for social distancing have also constrained the responses to cyclones, floods and other climate-related disasters. Nevertheless, the pandemic also brings opportunities – for directing economic stimulus packages towards investments in disaster-resilient infrastructure and services that will support a greener and more productive future.

<https://www.unescap.org/resources/policy-brief-22020-asia-pacific-disaster-resilience-network-when-crises-converge>

Can this time be different? Challenges and opportunities for Asia-Pacific economies in the aftermath of COVID-19 (11 August 2020)

The Asia and Pacific region is facing its worst economic contraction at least since the 1970s due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The consequent economic weakness is likely to set back the region's socio-economic progress and is predicted to push a significant number of people into unemployment and poverty while increasing inequality. Although slowdown in economic activities has provided some breathing space to the environment, such a benefit could turn out to be temporary. The region faces a difficult path to recovery, due to deepened existing vulnerabilities that include weak economic conditions and other exogenous shocks. These challenging times call for unprecedented relief and stimulus policies and offer an opportunity for countries to align their socio-economic policies with the 2030 Agenda to ensure a more inclusive, greener and more resilient future. Such policies include increasing investments in Sustainable Development Goals and strengthening governance to improve investment efficiency. Climate resilience should be built into investment projects. Regulatory changes could catalyze such efforts to "build forward better". Partnership with local, national and international stakeholders is critical for Governments to support this development transition.

<https://www.unescap.org/resources/can-time-be-different-challenges-and-opportunities-asia-pacific-economies-aftermath-covid>

MSMEs Access to Finance in Samoa; COVID-19 Supplementary Report and Recommendations (11 August 2020)

This study is supplementary to the study on "Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Access to Finance in Samoa." The study identifies immediate and medium-term measure to support both financial institutions and MSMEs to cope with the financial impacts faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study undertakes a gender lens analysis to determine the gender-specific impacts faced by Samoan women entrepreneurs.

<https://www.unescap.org/resources/msmes-access-finance-samoa-covid-19-supplementary-report-and-recommendations>

Working paper series

Macroeconomics: <https://www.unescap.org/publication-series/mpfd-working-papers>

Trade: <https://artnet.unescap.org/publications/working-papers>

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us to provide input, questions or suggestions for the monthly update: esbn@un.org.

Best regards,

ESBN Secretariat