



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

## ESBN Monthly Update

January 2021

Dear ESN members,

*We hope you are doing well and would like to take this opportunity to wish all ESN members a healthy and productive 2021. This will hopefully be a year when governments, businesses, and other stakeholders across the region will start to overcome the challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and begin the process of building back better, to achieve a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Asia and the Pacific. We look forward to continuing to engage with ESN members in this journey.*

### ESBN related news

#### **United Nations launches a Women Enterprise Recovery Fund**

ESCAP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), with support from the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank (FMO), the Government of Canada, and Visa Inc. on 8 January 2021 launched a 'Women Enterprise Recovery Fund: Promoting and Upscaling Digital Solutions for Enhancing Women Enterprise Growth and Resilience'. Through the Fund, the partners will support innovative business solutions that address the constraints faced by women enterprises in South and South-East Asia, providing up to US\$ 50,000 in co-funding, along with technical assistance through partner networks. To find out more and/or submit your application please visit: <https://uncdf.live/WERF>

#### **Call for proposals for side events at APFSD**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) will be held in hybrid mode on 23-26 March under the theme "*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific*". Side events to the APFSD can be organized and sponsored by member States, the UN system, other intergovernmental organizations, accredited CSOs or other stakeholders. Held outside the official programme, they provide an opportunity to discuss the theme of the 2021 APFSD "*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific*", or one (or more) of the SDGs under review, or to deepen discussions on Voluntary National Reviews, and to share good practices, identify new and emerging issues, and spread greater awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Interested parties are invited to submit applications to organize a side event using the Proposal Form available on: <https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/8/>. The deadline for submitting proposals is **31 January 2021**. For more information, see: <https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/8/>

## Other news of ESBN interest

### **WTO: package of declarations and recommendations adopted to help small businesses trade globally**

The WTO Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) officially adopted at its meeting on 11 December a package of six recommendations and declarations aimed at addressing challenges smaller businesses face when they trade internationally. The package was presented to all WTO members at a meeting of Heads of Delegation on 14 December.

[https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news20\\_e/msmes\\_11dec20\\_e.htm#.X9Y2Tsnh6Q0.mailto](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/msmes_11dec20_e.htm#.X9Y2Tsnh6Q0.mailto)

## Upcoming ESCAP events

### **12 January 2021: ARTNeT Webinar: Resetting Multilateral And Regional Cooperation For Sustainable Trade**

The new e-book on “Revitalising Multilateralism: Pragmatic ideas for the new WTO Director General”, co-edited by Simon Evenett and Richard Baldwin, offers practical suggestions for a WTO work programme greatly but not solely shaped by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This webinar will engage co-editors of the “Revitalising Multilateralism” and several other experts in a conversation on how to make international cooperation more effective to reset the trade regime underpinning recovery of economies around the region and the world towards building better future.

<https://www.unescap.org/events/2021/artnet-webinar-resetting-multilateral-and-regional-cooperation-sustainable-trade#>

### **21 January 2021: Launch of ESCAP’s Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Advisor (TINA) 3.0**

ESCAP’s Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Advisor, TINA (<https://tina.trade>) is an online tool designed to assist trade policymakers, as well as researchers and consultants supporting them, to carry out many of the analytical tasks commonly conducted in preparation for negotiation. These tasks require specialized analytical and data management skills and are time consuming when performed manually. TINA automates such tasks, enabling countries with limited resources to benefit from the same level of preparation as those afforded by larger economies. TINA has been developed in close consultation with current and former members of trade negotiation teams throughout Asia and the Pacific, developed by a team of trade economists, coders and web application programmers using state of the art methodologies and technologies. It has most recently been used, at the request of the Government of Bangladesh, to assist with the feasibility study of a trade agreement between Bangladesh and India.

<https://www.unescap.org/events/2021/launch-escaps-trade-intelligence-and-negotiation-advisor-tina-30#>

### **25-29 January 2021: Seventh Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week**

Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week brings together government officials and other stakeholders for discussions on issues of importance to trade and investment policy making in the region. The week hosts a number of engaging events related to trade and investment policy making, as further detailed below.

### **25-26 January 2021: Sixth Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation**

The meeting will be held on 25 (13:00 – 16:00) and 26 (13:00 – 14:30) January 2021, Bangkok time. The interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation was established following ESCAP Commission Resolution 70/6 adopted in 2014. Following finalization of the treaty text of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific in 2016, the steering group now focuses on preparation of a draft implementation roadmap of the agreement and related supporting documents. <https://www.unescap.org/events/sixth-meeting-interim-intergovernmental-steering-group-cross-border-paperless-trade#>

**26 January 2021: Webinar on Enhancing National Trade Repositories**

The webinar will discuss practical measures for assessing and enhancing National Trade Repositories (NTRs) to make them more sustainable and provide more relevant and up to date information to the trade community. <https://www.unescap.org/events/webinar-enhancing-national-trade-repositories#>

**27-29 January 2021: Committee on Trade and Investment, Seventh Session**

The seventh session of the Committee on Trade and Investment of ESCAP will be held daily from 10:30 to 13:30 on 27 and 28 January with the adoption of the report on 29 January from 13:30 to 16:30. The Committee will review recent trends and developments in trade and investment in Asia and the Pacific including impact of rising protectionism and COVID-19 pandemic; discuss promoting inward and outward foreign direct investment in the post-COVID-19 era; discuss the work of the secretariat and associated results and priorities pertaining to trade and investment under the subprogramme on trade, investment and innovation; and consider the programme plan for the 2022 annual budget on trade and investment. The objectives of the seventh session of the Committee are two-fold: (1) to review and discuss relevant issues on trade, investment and regional integration especially in the context of COVID-19 recovery and building back better; and (2) provide guidance and propose areas for regional cooperation to contribute to enhancing resilience of trade and investment in the region. Mr. Vangelis Vitalis, Deputy Secretary, Trade and Economic, and APEC2021 Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Chair Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of New Zealand, has been invited to deliver a keynote address. <https://www.unescap.org/events/committee-trade-and-investment-seventh-session>

**23-24 February 2021: 10th meeting of the Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Network**

The Network was established in 2011 as a mechanism for knowledge sharing among FDI policy makers from Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries of the Asia-Pacific region and was expanded in 2015 to include all ESCAP member and associate member States. Each year, the network meets to discuss topical FDI issues and increase their knowledge through exchange of experiences and interaction with FDI experts. This year's meeting of the FDI Network will discuss Trends in national Policies and IIAs during and post-COVID, and Promoting, Regulating and Monitoring FDI in Digital industries. <https://artnet.unescap.org/fdi/asia-pacific-fdi-network>.

**24-26 February 2021: Committee on Energy, Third Session**

The Committee will be organized under the theme "Energy transition for a greener, more resilient and inclusive energy future in the Asia-Pacific". It will review and discuss relevant issues on energy transition and provide guidance and propose areas for regional cooperation that contribute to enhancing the security and resilience of the region's energy systems. <https://www.unescap.org/events/committee-energy-third-session>

### **23-26 March 2021: 8<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) will be held in hybrid mode from 23 to 26 March under the theme “*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific*”. Some sessions will be organized as hybrid sessions, enabling physical presence in the UNCC, while other sessions (i.e. parallel roundtables on in-depth reviews of SDGs) will be organized entirely as online events. For more information see: <https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/8/>

### **27-29 April 2021: 77th session of the Commission**

The seventy-seventh session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and via videoconferencing from 27 to 29 April 2021 under the theme, “Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.” <https://www.unescap.org/commission/77>

**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>

### **Recently published by ESCAP**

[Energy Transition Pathways for the 2030 Agenda: SDG7 Roadmap for Georgia \(29 December 2020\)](#)

[Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific \(25 December 2020\)](#)

[Trade in Commercial Services Outlook in Asia and the Pacific 2020/2021 \(22 December 2020\)](#)

[Trade in Goods Outlook in Asia and the Pacific 2020/2021 \(22 December 2020\)](#)

[Foreign Direct Investment Trends and Outlook in Asia and the Pacific 2020/2021 \(22 December 2020\)](#)

[Regional Energy Trends Report 2020: Tracking SDG 7 in the ASEAN Region \(16 December 2020\)](#)

[Regional Power Grid Connectivity for Sustainable Development in North-East Asia \(10 December 2020\)](#)

[Monitoring the State of Statistical Operations Under The COVID-19 Pandemic in The Asia-Pacific Region: Highlights from A Global COVID-19 Survey of National Statistical Offices \(2nd Round\) \(9 December 2020\)](#)

[Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific, No.90 “Resilience of Transport Systems and Services” \(9 December 2020\)](#)

[Are Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region Initiating a "Green Recovery"? What More Can Be Done? \(8 December 2020\)](#)

[Turning The COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis into Collective SDG Actions in North-East Asia \(8 December 2020\)](#)

[Inclusive Subregional Cooperation in East and North-East Asia for Sustainable Development \(7 December 2020\)](#)

[MPFD Policy Brief No. 116: An Assessment of Fiscal Space for COVID-19 Response and Recovery in Asia-Pacific Developing Countries \(2 December 2020\)](#)

[Vertical Integration of Climate Change Policies and Actions in Asia-Pacific Cities \(1 December 2020\)](#)

[Energy Transition Pathways for the 2030 Agenda: SDG7 Roadmap for Indonesia \(1 December 2020\)](#)

**Working paper series**

Macroeconomics: Click [here](#)

Trade: Click [here](#)

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

Best regards,  
ESBN Secretariat