

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
AMONG THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC, THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, AND
THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON THE 2030 AGENDA FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (hereinafter referred to as “ESCAP”), the Asian Development Bank (hereinafter referred to as “ADB”), and the United Nations Development Programme (hereinafter referred to as “UNDP”) have agreed to the present Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as the “Memorandum of Understanding” or “MOU”).

ESCAP, ADB, and UNDP will be jointly referred to as “Parties”, and severally as “Party” where the context so requires in this Memorandum of Understanding.

ESCAP is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP is committed to a resilient Asia and the Pacific founded on shared prosperity, social equity and sustainability. Its vision is to be the most comprehensive multilateral platform for promoting cooperation among member States to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific.

ADB is a regional development bank that helps its developing member countries (DMCs) reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth and regional integration.

UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) works with governments and organizations at all levels of society to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, to help governance become more effective and accountable, and to ensure that all development is sustainable and resilient. Through its 24 country offices and the Regional Hub, RBAP supports governments and communities of 36 countries in the region by providing policy advice and technical expertise on sustainable and resilient development, inclusive growth and effective governance.

The Parties have a common interest to eradicate poverty and to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

The Parties have collaborated for a number of years on a wide range of issues including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Asia and the Pacific. In 2005, ESCAP, ADB, and UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding formalizing their cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the “2005 MOU”).

However, the global development landscape has evolved since 2005. In light of the conclusion of the MDGs in 2015 and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development based on sustainable development goals (hereinafter referred to as “SDGs”), this MOU will form the new basis of cooperation between the Parties, and will therefore supersede the 2005 MOU.

ARTICLE I

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The purpose of the MOU is to strengthen and facilitate collaboration between the Parties in matters of common interest under the sustainable development agenda that succeeds the MDGs, with a focus on creating a platform for delivering high-quality knowledge products and facilitating high-level policy dialogues and capacity-building of developing member countries for the effective implementation of the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region towards the achievement of the following common objectives:

- Create a platform for forging regional voices on the SDGs;
- Strengthen partnerships and opportunities for high-quality knowledge-based policy dialogue, knowledge generation and knowledge-sharing, and mutual learning processes among representatives of governments, policy experts, development practitioners, regional networks, think tanks, academia, civil society and the private sector, thus promoting synergies across key sectors and stakeholders;
- Deepen linkages between evidence-based policy analysis and implementation at the national, subregional and regional levels with a view to enhancing sustainability of results;
- Enhance inclusiveness and institutional learning mechanisms through strategic regional knowledge products and services relevant to the new development goals at regional, subregional and national levels.

This MOU sets forth:

- The overall context of intended collaboration among the Parties;
- Certain details regarding the roles and management responsibilities of the Parties with respect to their work;
- Certain details regarding the purpose and output, methodology and key activities, and implementation arrangements.

ARTICLE II

PRIORITY AREAS OF JOINT COOPERATION

The new tripartite partnership will continue as a "knowledge partnership" around the international SDGs based on production of identified regional knowledge products, with a focus on sustainable development challenges in Asia and the Pacific. It takes into account the experience and assessment of the ten-year tripartite MDG Partnership.

The three organizations (ESCAP, ADB and UNDP) will continue to constitute the partners given their broad development mandates. Other agencies may be invited to make specific contributions, depending on the theme of a particular report. ESCAP will serve as the secretariat of the knowledge partnership and coordinate the preparation and publication of regional SDGs reports under the Partnership.

The core outputs of the Partnership will be to produce and disseminate regional SDGs reports and organize policy dialogues on diagnosing and addressing regional challenges that support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The regional SDGs reports will be produced every two years, allowing

time for high-quality national, subregional and regional consultations, monitoring of SDGs progress and ensuring better dissemination.

The outputs of the reports as well as policy dialogues under this Partnership will be discussed at various regional fora, including at ESCAP Commission sessions and ADB annual meetings. They will also contribute to an ESCAP-led intergovernmental platform for the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which is expected to provide regional inputs for the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development. The Partnership will ensure that the knowledge products are backed by high-quality technical analysis, data-driven and evidence-based policy advice and actions, strategic dissemination mechanisms with well documented messages and identified avenues for stronger support for member States, including policymakers in making progress towards achieving sustainable development results. Value off/for all the Partners will be ensured. The Partnership will continue to organize systematic subregional specific dialogues, and consultations and reviews, encourage buy-in, and disseminate the results of the high-quality knowledge products. New opportunities for a wider dissemination strategy and options will be tapped. Results will be systematically documented and updated in the Partnership secretariat.

The Partners will exchange or second staff, where appropriate and feasible, in accordance with their respective regulations, rules, policies and procedures.

ARTICLE III

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Parties' respective bilateral relationships with respect to the subject matter of this MOU will be in accordance with the following:

With respect to the ADB and ESCAP relationship: A memorandum of understanding was signed between ESCAP and ADB on 24 April 2015. *Administrative Arrangements for ADB-ESCAP Project Cooperation*, expected to be finalized by before the end of 2015, will be made applicable to specific cooperation between ADB and ESCAP arising from this MOU, according to its terms.

With respect to the ADB and UNDP relationship: *Administrative Arrangements for ADB-UNDP Project Cooperation*, signed on 23 September 2014, will be made applicable to specific cooperation between ADB and UNDP arising from this MOU.

Roles and Management Responsibilities of the Parties

With respect to the roles and management responsibilities of each of the Parties, it is understood and agreed that each Party shall be responsible for the financial and administrative management of its contributions on a parallel basis with those of the other Parties. The Parties' respective activities hereunder shall be in accordance with and without derogation from their respective regulations, rules, policies and procedures.

The Parties shall establish a high-level steering committee comprised of the United Nations Under Secretary-General and ESCAP Executive Secretary, the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Pacific, and

the ADB Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, (hereinafter referred to as the "Steering Committee") for the overall coordination of activities related to planning, implementation and completion of agreed work.

The Parties shall establish a working group consisting of representatives at the working level from ESCAP, ADB and UNDP to coordinate the preparation and ensure high-quality of agreed work. ESCAP will serve as the secretariat of the Partnership working group.

Intellectual Property and Disclosure

The Parties recognize that the involvement of each of the Party organizations in joint activities needs to be publicized and agree that:

- there will be public acknowledgment of the role and contribution of each Party in all public documentation;
- the use of emblems of each Party in documentation resulting from this collaboration will be in accordance with the current policies of each Party concerning such usage;
- the Memorandum of Understanding between the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations, represented by ESCAP, on Joint Publications signed on 13 April 2013 remains in effect in the context of this MOU with respect to intellectual property issues between ADB and ESCAP; and
- the Parties shall consult with each other concerning the manner and form of the recognition and acknowledgement of this partnership, as appropriate.

Assignment

This MOU shall be specific to the Parties and may not be assigned and transferred by any of the Parties.

ARTICLE IV FOCAL POINTS

1. The focal points for each of the Parties with their respective contact details are as follows:

For ESCAP,

Director, Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division
ESCAP
United Nations Building
Rajadamnern Nok Ave.
Bangkok, 10200, Thailand
Tel: +66 2288 1636

With copy to,

Director, Strategy and Programme Management Division
ESCAP
United Nations Building
Rajadamnern Nok Ave.
Bangkok, 10200, Thailand
Tel: +66 2288 1935

For ADB,

Director General
Strategy and Policy Department
P.O. Box 789
0980 Manila, Philippines
Tel: +63 2683 6550

For UNDP,

Deputy Regional Director for Asia & the Pacific
Director, Bangkok Regional Hub
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajadamnern Nok Ave.
Bangkok, 10200, Thailand
Tel.: +66 2304 9100 ext. 5234

ARTICLE V

TERMINATION OR SUSPENSION

The MOU may be terminated by any Party by providing three (3) months prior written notice to the other Parties. In such a case, the Parties will agree, as appropriate, on the steps to ensure that the activities initiated under the MOU are brought to a prompt and orderly conclusion.

ARTICLE VI

DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND MODIFICATION

In the event of any dispute or conflict, the Parties shall exercise their best efforts to resolve the dispute through mutual consultation and cooperation.

This MOU may be amended by mutual written understanding of the Parties. Any amendment shall be without prejudice to any rights or obligations accruing or incurred under the supplementary agreements thereto reached pursuant to Article VII.

ARTICLE VII

NON-ALIENATION OF DECISION-MAKING AUTONOMY, PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

Any activities conducted under this MOU are subject to their inclusion in the Parties' respective programmes of work and budgets and to the availability of funds. In keeping with the administrative nature of these arrangements, no provision of this MOU will be construed to interfere in any way with the independent decision-making of the Parties with regard to their respective affairs and operations.

This MOU is neither intended to create legal relations among the Parties nor to impose formal and binding obligations on the Parties, or on one Party to any other Party. In particular, this MOU does not represent any specific commitment with regard to specific resources – funds or staff time – which will be separately addressed – on the part of the Parties and it should not be construed as allowing or compelling the Parties to exceed in any way the limitations of their respective mandates, policies and resources.

Any specific joint activities may be reflected in separate written agreements that may be entered into by the Parties under this MOU.

Funding and other financial arrangements between the Parties, if any, shall be covered by separate agreements that will be entered into between the Parties. Such agreements could take the form of, but are not limited to, an exchange of letters between ESCAP, ADB, and UNDP. They will include any necessary provision on intellectual property rights deriving from the activities carried out under the separate agreement. All use of resources and implementation of activities further to this MOU by each Party, shall be in accordance with each Party's respective regulations, rules, policies and procedures.

This MOU does not represent any commitment on the part of any Party to give preferred treatment to any other Party in any matter contemplated under this MOU or otherwise.

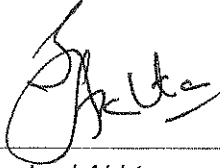
Nothing in this MOU shall constitute a waiver, or be construed as constituting a waiver, of the immunities, privileges and exemptions enjoyed by the Parties under their respective Charters, any international convention, customary international law, or other applicable law.

ARTICLE VIII

DURATION

This MOU shall enter into force upon signature of all three Parties and, unless otherwise agreed by the Parties, shall be effective on the date of the last signature. This MOU will remain in force for a period of five (5) years, unless otherwise terminated in accordance with Article V above. The term of this MOU may be extended by written understanding of all three Parties following a review of the results of the collaborative activities.

FOR THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC



Shamshad Akhtar
Under-Secretary-General
And Executive Secretary

Date: 29 Sept 2015

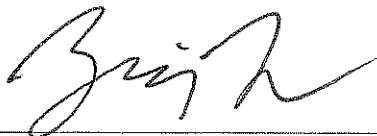
FOR THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



Stephen Groff
Vice President

Date: 29 Sep 2015

FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Haoliang Xu
Assistant Administrator and Director,
Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

Date: _____

Signed on 29 September 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, the United States of America

ANNEX: ESCAP-ADB-UNDP JOINT ACTIVITIES

- **Knowledge products.** Develop issue-based technical papers and knowledge-based policy advocacy products on the region's priorities for sustainable development and implementation challenges. Among the tentatively proposed technical background papers, the focus is on expanding financing opportunities, enhancing South-South cooperation and triangular development cooperation, in particular among least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, and fragile and conflict-affected situations and high- and middle-income countries of Asia and the Pacific, and related work to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Other studies will be undertaken in the course of the preparation of the regional SDGs reports. Relevant studies and technical policy research papers will be drawn into regional SDGs reports for external audiences as flagship publications.
- **Evidence-based monitoring of internationally agreed SDGs.** Support the compilation of regular and comparable data to monitor progress on the MDG-successor goals at the regional level, establishing a shared understanding of the development context in countries of the region. For ESCAP, the Partnership is one of the instruments to help member States in the region to follow up on and review the implementation process of the SDGs and related national development strategies. For ADB, this will provide evidence for ADB's Level 1 indicators with concrete inputs to assess and monitor the ongoing relevance of ADB's strategies and contribute to operational guidelines and staff instructions. The same database can also be drawn on by regional departments when needed.
- **Policy dialogue and advocacy.** Support engagement with United Nations system organizations, multilateral development banks and other regional and subregional stakeholders, including ADB clients and shareholders, in lifting barriers to progress on the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Evidence-based dialogue is expected to reinforce shared understanding and appreciation of differences towards strengthening complementarities and coordination in development cooperation. Also, support national, regional/subregional and global fora, workshops and multi-stakeholder consultations (including representatives from governments, think tanks, academia, the private sector and the media) on development priorities, implementation challenges and opportunities to solicit and share ideas from within and outside the region and to support broader multi-stakeholder development partnerships. Build capacities where necessary at both supra and subnational and national levels in understanding and implementing findings and recommendations based on joint work and knowledge products.



15 October 2020

Adnan H. Aliani
Director, Strategy and Programme Management Division
The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Building
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok, 10200, Thailand

Christophe Bahuet
Deputy Regional Director for Asia & the Pacific
Director, Bangkok Regional Hub
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok, 10200, Thailand

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

Dear Mr. Aliani and Mr. Bahuet,

1. This letter is written with respect to the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the ADB (Asian Development Bank) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), hereinafter referred to severally as the “Parties” and individually as “Party,” signed on 29 September 2015 (hereinafter referred to as the “MOU”).

Through this exchange of letters, the three Parties agree to extend this MOU for another 5 years through 29 September 2025. In this regard, Article VIII (Duration) shall be revised as follows:

“This MOU shall enter into force upon signature of all three Parties and, unless otherwise agreed by the Parties, shall be effective on the date of the last signature. This MOU will remain in force for a period of ten (10) years, unless otherwise terminated in accordance with Article V above. The term of this MOU may be extended by written understanding of all three Parties following a review of the results of the collaborative activities.”

2. As referenced in the original MOU, its purpose is to strengthen and facilitate collaboration between the Parties on matters of common interest in attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The partnership focuses on (a) creating a platform for delivering high-quality knowledge products and (b) facilitating high-level policy dialogues and capacity-building of

developing member countries for the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP will continue to serve as the secretariat of the partnership, and coordinate preparation and publication of joint knowledge products. The partnership will support the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which provides regional inputs for the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, as well as other regional fora including the Commission session. UNDP and ADB will be fully involved in the development of knowledge products, which will be jointly framed and agreed, and support outreach through dedicated convening. As it has been the practice, an annual report will be produced, and a data portal to support monitoring and analysis of progress towards the SDGs will be maintained.

With respect to paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article III:

With respect to the ADB and ESCAP relationship: *Administrative Arrangements for ADB-ESCAP Project Cooperation*, signed on 12 October 2016, will be made applicable to specific cooperation between ADB and ESCAP arising from this MOU. The wider ADB ESCAP MOU will be renewed separately.

With respect to the ADB and UNDP relationship, provisions under the 12 April 2020 ADB-UNDP MOU and associated *Administrative Arrangements for ADB-UNDP Project Cooperation* will be made applicable to specific cooperation between ADB and UNDP arising from this MOU.

3. An updated annex setting out joint activities under the partnership is attached to this letter and will be reviewed and updated through periodic technical level discussions as needed.
4. The other terms of the MOU remain unchanged and in effect.
5. If the foregoing is acceptable, please indicate your concurrence by signing on the space provided below. This will constitute as an amendment to the MOU pursuant to Article VI of the MOU with effect from the date of the last signature.

Sincerely,



Tomoyuki Kimura
Director General
Strategy, Policy and Partnerships
Department

BW

Confirmed:

FOR The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific



Name : Adnan H. Aliani

Title : Director, Strategy and Programme Management Division

Date : 5 November 2020

FOR United Nations Development Programme



Name : Christophe Bahuet

Title : Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and Director, Bangkok Regional Hub

Date : 12-Nov-2020

ANNEX: ESCAP-ADB-UNDP JOINT ACTIVITIES

- **Knowledge products.** Develop knowledge products on the region's priorities for sustainable development and implementation challenges, including to support deliberations at the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and at the high-level political forum. Agree on focus areas in line with the outcome of the ongoing HLPF review. Relevant studies and technical policy research papers will be drawn into regional reports for external audiences as flagship publications.
- **Evidence-based monitoring of internationally agreed SDGs.** Support the compilation of regular and comparable data to monitor progress Sustainable Development Goals at the regional level, establishing a shared understanding of the development context in countries of the region. For ESCAP, the partnership is one of the instruments to help member States in the region to follow up on and review the implementation process of the SDGs and related national development strategies. For ADB, this will provide evidence for ADB's Level 1 indicators with concrete inputs. The same database can also be drawn on by regional departments and partner governments when needed.
- **Policy dialogue and advocacy.** Support engagement with United Nations system organizations, United Nations country teams, multilateral development banks and other regional and subregional stakeholders, including ADB clients and shareholders, in lifting barriers to progress on the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Evidence-based dialogue is expected to reinforce shared understanding and appreciation of differences towards strengthening complementarities and coordination in development cooperation. Also, support national, regional/subregional and global fora, workshops and multi-stakeholder consultations (including representatives from governments, think tanks, academia, the private sector and the media) on development priorities, implementation challenges and opportunities to solicit and share ideas from within and outside the region and to support broader multi-stakeholder development partnerships as relevant and necessary. Build capacities where necessary at both supra and subnational and national levels in understanding and implementing findings and recommendations based on joint work and knowledge products.