

2. Integration of the newly independent Asian republics into the region

26. Seven Asian republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, although ESCAP members, have remained isolated from the rest of the region despite historical links to Asia. Studies to identify emerging complementarities between the Asian republics and other countries of the Asian and Pacific region would be beneficial to policy makers in the Asian republics and to those in the rest of the region. The linkages that would be focused upon are trade, transport and communications and investment possibilities. In addition, as most of these countries are rich in energy resources, the prospects for mutual cooperation with Asian countries in the energy sector could also be investigated.

27. Assistance in developing an appropriate strategy for linkages with other members of the ESCAP region through transport route development and, in particular, land transport corridors with connections to seaports in neighbouring countries is vital, especially since almost all the economies in transition are landlocked. The regional cooperation programme will, accordingly, continue to accord special attention to improving land transport linkages through the implementation of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway projects, and improving land transport facilitation measures as integral parts of the Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID) project, with a view to identifying transport routes that are of regional and subregional importance for establishing rail and road linkages between these economies and the rest of the region.

28. In considering cooperative action for promoting trade relations and development in the Asian republics, the impact of specific trade-related projects might be evaluated. Among the projects which could be included are transit traffic facilities, including those proposed through the Islamic Republic of Iran. (The facilities have been offered to provide such landlocked countries with railroad access to the open sea.) The progress in the implementation of Commission resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, in countries in transition and their neighbouring States, could also be evaluated.

F. Inter-subregional cooperation

Studies on the current status of interaction

29. Regional economic cooperation arrangements in Asia and the Pacific exist at various levels and can

range from restricted schemes such as "growth triangles", to interregional schemes, and the establishment of preferential arrangements. Most of these schemes operate independently of each other. It is proposed that studies will be undertaken to examine the current status, objectives and possible linkages between members of the different regional economic cooperation arrangements. The studies will be disaggregated by the main sectors of economic activity in order to focus on policy-level initiatives that would promote cooperation in areas of shared interest. The studies will also suggest modalities for nurturing inter-subregional cooperation by initiating and encouraging interaction among the various subregional groups, including interaction even at the relevant programme or element level within each grouping. The role of the private sector and non-governmental organizations will also be included in such interaction.

30. The secretariat will focus on selected areas in further studies on subregional growth zones, such as cross-border trade, investment, human resources development and labour mobility, joint tourism development, agriculture and fisheries development, energy development, joint infrastructure networking and environmental protection.

52/11. Strengthening of subregional economic cooperation among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization¹¹

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 50/8 of 13 April 1994 on the strengthening of subregional economic cooperation in North-East Asia, in which the Commission recognized the need to promote and strengthen subregional economic cooperation as a stepping stone to regional economic cooperation and to the progress and sustained development of the ESCAP region,

Welcoming the initiative taken by the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its seventh and eighth meetings to give special attention to the North-East Asian subregion with a view to promoting and strengthening the structures facilitating cooperation in that subregion,

Noting with interest the efforts of the secretariat to strengthen cooperation among subregional organizations,

¹¹ See para. 125 above.

Noting that there is, among the south-western member countries of ESCAP, including the Economic Cooperation Organization member countries, great potential for sustainable development even though several of them are landlocked and some of them have economies that are in transition to the market system,

Convinced that many of the difficulties faced by countries that are landlocked and in transition to the market system can be overcome through the strengthening of cooperation,

Aware that subregional cooperation could benefit from the exchange of successful experiences among different subregions,

1. *Calls upon* members and associate members to support efforts to promote subregional economic cooperation and invites the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation to focus, in some of its future meetings, on promoting economic and technical cooperation in trade, investment, and transport and communications among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session on the progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

*13th meeting
24 April 1996*