

Ministerial Council of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, held in Beijing on 2 November 2005, in which Participating States committed themselves to a strengthening of the Agreement,

*Recognizing* the uniqueness of the Agreement as the region's oldest such agreement, the largest regional trade agreement in terms of the population it covers and the agreement that spans the widest spectrum of subregions and levels of development, and noting that these unique characteristics could lay the foundation for strengthened economic integration in a manner consistent with the principles and rules of the multilateral trading system,

*Recognizing also* that trade facilitation is an essential condition for strengthening economic integration and international competitiveness,

*Acknowledging* the vital role of the business sector in development and poverty reduction, in particular through the generation of new investments, employment and financing for development,

*Underlining* the importance of policies conducive to the development of competitive small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular rural-based small and medium-sized enterprises, in recognition of the fact that most of the region's poor live in rural areas,

*Recognizing* that a conducive business climate facilitates the mobilization of investment and other forms of stable and predictable financing from domestic and foreign resources,

*Emphasizing* that in an economy where knowledge and innovation increasingly are determinants of increased productivity and competitiveness for small and medium-sized enterprises, the development of science-based knowledge and technology, particularly agricultural technology, including through the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, is also a vital component of a conducive business climate,

1. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, within existing regular budget resources, or through voluntary contributions, as available:

(a) To continue efforts, in collaboration with regional and global partners, to undertake policy-oriented analytical work and provide technical assistance to ESCAP members and, as appropriate, associate members in order to increase their human and institutional capacity:

(i) To negotiate, conclude and implement multilateral and regional trade agreements, with a specific focus on strengthening the World Trade Organization/ESCAP Programme of Technical Assistance for Asia and the Pacific;

(ii) To formulate and implement trade facilitation and e-commerce practices for enhancing international competitiveness;

(iii) To create a domestic policy environment conducive to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and the mobilization of stable financial and investment flows;

(iv) To promote a competitive knowledge-based economy through the development of science-based knowledge and the transfer of technology;

(b) To continue to evaluate and analyse regional and bilateral trade agreements involving ESCAP members and, as appropriate, associate members;

(c) To take measures upon entry into force of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement to strengthen the Agreement as an effective mechanism to promote regional cooperation in trade and related issues in conformity with the principles and rules of the multilateral trading system;

(d) To continue to organize policy dialogues in the context of managing globalization, not only among policymakers but also between government, private sector and civil society representatives, including through the Asia-Pacific Business Forum;

(e) In undertaking trade capacity-building assistance, to accord priority to the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States;

(f) To report to the Commission, at its sixty-fourth session, on the implementation of the resolution.

*5th meeting  
12 April 2006*

**62/7. Strengthening regional cooperation and coordination of early warning system arrangements for tsunamis through the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia<sup>8</sup>**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,*

*Recalling* the unprecedented tsunami disaster that struck the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian regions on 26 December 2004 and caused tremendous loss of life and livelihood, as well as socio-economic and environmental damage,

*Recognizing* the role of natural disaster management in economic and social development and poverty alleviation,

<sup>8</sup> See paragraphs 218 and 219 above.

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 59/279 of 19 January 2005, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster",

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolution 60/15 of 14 November 2005 welcoming the establishment of the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, hereafter referred to as the "Voluntary Trust Fund",

*Noting* the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster (A/60/86-E/2005/77),

*Recognizing* the role of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the United Nations agency responsible for coordinating and ensuring the inter-operability of tsunami warning systems established across the globe,

*Taking note of* the establishment of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS) by the coordination under the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for IOTWS,

*Recalling* the importance of regional cooperation in tsunami disaster preparedness, the need for partnerships in minimizing vulnerability to tsunami disasters, and the requests for technical assistance, including South-South cooperation, for the development of a regional early warning system for tsunamis,

*Noting* the Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster of 26 December 2004, adopted at the special meeting of leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005,

*Recalling* the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, as well as the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster, adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan from 18 to 22 January 2005,

*Noting* the Phuket Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements of the Phuket Ministerial Meeting of 29 January 2005, which, inter alia, emphasized the urgent need for concerted and coordinated regional efforts to develop systems for early warning of tsunamis and also invited interested parties to make contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund,

*Welcoming* the establishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund, administered by ESCAP, through an initial contribution of 10 million United States dollars from the Government of Thailand and a subsequent contribution

of 2.5 million United States dollars from the Government of Sweden,

*Recalling* that the Voluntary Trust Fund aims to contribute to narrowing the capacity gaps in the region and ensuring the development of an integrated regional tsunami early warning system based on adequate resources and comprising a network of collaborative centres,

*Noting* the efforts of ESCAP in the establishment and administration of the Voluntary Trust Fund, including its convening of the first and second regular meetings of the Advisory Council, held in Bangkok on 19 January and 28 March 2006 respectively,

1. *Emphasizes* the importance of international cooperation, including South-South cooperation, as regards planning, implementation, information collection and knowledge sharing, in regional tsunami early warning systems;

2. *Recognizes* the important role of the Voluntary Trust Fund as a means of contributing to the role of the International Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization through resource mobilization for building and enhancing tsunami early warning capacities at various levels, as well as through strengthening regional and subregional cooperation and coordination essential for effective early warning system arrangements for tsunamis;

3. *Invites* Governments, donor countries, relevant international organizations, international and regional financial institutions, as well as the private sector and civil society, to consider contributing to the Voluntary Trust Fund through financial contributions and technical cooperation;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to ensure that the Voluntary Trust Fund is administered efficiently, effectively and transparently, in accordance with the terms and conditions and objectives of the Fund;

5. *Invites* members and, as appropriate, associate members to accord priority to the mitigation of all natural disasters.

*5th meeting  
12 April 2006*

## **62/8. Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade<sup>9</sup>**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,*

*Recalling* the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which the heads of State and Government resolved to ensure that, by 2015, children

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<sup>9</sup> See paragraphs 226 to 233 above.