



# Economic and Social Council

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**2022 session**  
Agenda item 15  
**Regional cooperation**

## **Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 21 July 2022**

*[on the recommendation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([E/2022/15/Add.1](#))]*

### **2022/11. A conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to advance sustainable development**

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Taking note* of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolution 78/2 of 27 May 2022, by which the Commission adopted a conference structure of the Commission to advance sustainable development,

*Endorses* the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to advance sustainable development, as set out in the annex to the present resolution.

*33rd plenary meeting  
21 July 2022*

#### **Annex**

#### **Resolution 78/2**

#### **A conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to advance sustainable development**

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

*Recalling* its resolution 73/1 of 19 May 2017 on a conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which it decided, inter alia, to conduct a review of its conference structure at its seventy-eighth session, in 2022, with a midpoint review at its seventy-fifth session, in 2019, and requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report in both cases, with a focus on the programme areas of the Commission, which would serve as a basis for that review,



*Recalling also* its decisions 75/16 of 31 May 2019 on the organization of the annual sessions of the Commission and 75/17 of 31 May 2019 on the review of the conference structure of the Commission,<sup>1</sup>

*Recalling further* its resolution 74/5 of 16 May 2018 on the transition of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture to an intergovernmental organization outside the United Nations system,

*Highlighting* the importance of accelerated action to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>2</sup> and emphasizing that the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic provides an opportunity to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific,

*Having considered* the note by the secretariat on the review of the conference structure of the Commission pursuant to resolution 73/1,<sup>3</sup>

*Having also considered* the reports of the governing councils of the regional institutions and of the committees, as well as the reports on the Asia-Pacific Forums on Sustainable Development and the ministerial conferences held since the seventy-third session of the Commission,

1. *Decides* to revise with immediate effect its conference structure to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular to update the terms of reference and issues to be considered by the committees subsidiary to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, as contained in the annex to the present resolution;

2. *Also decides* to reconstitute the Committee on Trade and Investment as the Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation, meeting biennially;

3. *Recalls* its resolutions 48/2 of 23 April 1992 and 64/1 of 30 April 2008 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission and 69/1 of 1 May 2013 on a conference structure of the Commission for the inclusive and sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific, and decides to rename the Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries as the Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States and to hold the deliberations of the Special Body during the ministerial segment of the Commission sessions;

4. *Reaffirms* that the conference structure of the Commission shall conform to the pattern outlined in the annex to the present resolution;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to continue to strengthen and promote cooperation and collaboration among the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system in Asia and the Pacific and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by members and associate members of the Commission in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of that implementation;

6. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to continue to conduct systematic monitoring and evaluation of the conference structure and its congruence with the programme priorities of the Commission with a view to increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and synergies of its work;

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<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 19 (E/2019/39)*, chap. I, sect. B.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1.

<sup>3</sup> ESCAP/78/31.

7. *Decides* to conduct a review of its conference structure at its eighty-third session, in 2027, with a midpoint review at its eighty-first session, in 2025, and requests the Executive Secretary to submit to the Commission a report in each instance, with a focus on the programme areas of the Commission, which will serve as a basis for that review.

## **Annex to resolution 78/2**

### **Conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

#### **I. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific shall meet annually under an overarching theme selected by member States, with each session comprising a senior officials segment followed by a ministerial segment, for a total of five working days, and the duration of each segment shall be decided by the secretariat in consultation with member States, to discuss and decide on important issues pertaining to inclusive and sustainable development in the region, decide on the recommendations of its subsidiary bodies and of the Executive Secretary, review and endorse the proposed strategic framework and programme of work and take any other decisions required in conformity with its terms of reference.
2. Deliberations of the Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States shall be held for a maximum of one day during the ministerial segment.
3. The Commission session may include a distinguished person's lecture; and high-level representatives of United Nations agencies may be invited to participate in panel discussions held during the session and corporate leaders and civil society organizations may be invited to participate in the session as appropriate, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission.
4. The Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, which convenes prior to the Commission session, shall be reconstituted as the Working Group on Draft Resolutions during the senior officials segment and shall have a status commensurate with the Committees of the Whole.
5. The number of simultaneous meetings of the Committees of the Whole, including their commensurate bodies, held during the senior officials segment of the annual session of the Commission shall not exceed two.
6. Draft resolutions shall reflect the substantive deliberations of member States; furthermore, without prejudice to rule 31 of the rules of procedure, members of the Commission intending to submit draft resolutions to the Commission are strongly encouraged to submit them to the Executive Secretary at least one month prior to the commencement of the session of the Commission in order to allow sufficient time for review by members and associate members of the Commission, and the Commission shall not consider draft resolutions submitted within one week of the first day of the Commission session.
7. The report of the Commission will be composed of the decisions and resolutions of the Commission. The draft record of proceedings of the Commission, prepared by the secretariat, will be circulated among members and associate members for comment within 15 days of the conclusion of the session. Members and associate members will be requested to provide comments within 15 days of receiving the draft record of proceedings. The secretariat's final record of proceedings of the Commission session will be issued within two months of the conclusion of the

session, taking into account the relevant comments of members and associate members.

8. The Commission shall serve as the regional platform for integrating the sectoral streams of the committees, with a view towards promoting sustainable development equitably through all of its three dimensions.

9. As a general principle and without prejudice to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the Chair of the Commission shall rotate among its five subregions.<sup>4</sup>

## II. Subsidiary structure

10. The subsidiary structure of the Commission shall consist of the following nine committees:

- (a) Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development;
- (b) Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation;
- (c) Committee on Transport;
- (d) Committee on Environment and Development;
- (e) Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation;
- (f) Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction;
- (g) Committee on Social Development;
- (h) Committee on Statistics;
- (i) Committee on Energy.

11. The nine committees shall each meet biennially for a maximum duration of three days for each session, with joint plenary sessions between multiple committees to discuss cross-cutting issues, when possible and desirable.

12. The Commission may mandate a specific committee or multiple committees to meet in the gap year where a particular topic becomes an urgent issue for the region.

13. Within their respective areas of purview, the committees shall:

- (a) Review and analyse regional trends in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (b) Identify, in consultation with member States, their priorities and emerging issues with regard to resilient, inclusive and sustainable development, and consult on regional approaches, taking into consideration subregional aspects;
- (c) Promote regional and, as appropriate, interregional dialogue, including on subregional synergies, and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes;
- (d) Consider common regional positions as inputs to global processes and promote regional follow-up to their outcomes;
- (e) Propose issues for consideration by the Commission as the basis for possible resolutions;
- (f) Monitor the implementation of Commission resolutions;

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<sup>4</sup> The five subregions of the Commission are East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, South and South-West Asia, South-East Asia, and the Pacific ([A/62/708](#), para. 321).

(g) Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges of the region, where appropriate, between Governments and civil society, the private sector, as well as the United Nations and other international organizations at the regional and subregional levels.

14. Further, within their respective areas of purview, the committees shall provide the secretariat, including its regional institutions, with guidance in reviewing the proposed strategic framework and programme of work.

15. The following areas shall be mainstreamed into the work of all committees:

(a) Implementation and monitoring the achievement of the relevant internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals, and a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development;

(b) Poverty reduction and sustained recovery from large shocks for a more equitable Asia and the Pacific;

(c) Gender equality;

(d) The priority needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;

(e) Science, technology and innovation and, in particular, digital technology for a safe and inclusive digital transformation.

16. Representatives of civil society and the private sector may, upon consultation with member States, be invited to join the Committee sessions as appropriate, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission.

17. The specific issues to be addressed by each of the nine committees in carrying out the above functions are listed in appendix I to the present document.

18. The subsidiary structure of the Commission shall also include the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The terms of reference of the Forum are listed in appendix II to the present document.

### **III. Ad hoc ministerial conferences and other intergovernmental meetings**

19. Subject to the approval of the Commission, ad hoc ministerial conferences and other intergovernmental meetings may be organized on specific and cross-sectoral issues.

20. No more than eight ad hoc ministerial conferences and other intergovernmental meetings shall be held in addition to the regular calendar of intergovernmental meetings during each biennium, and the total number of days shall not exceed 16, unless the Commission decides otherwise.

21. In those years when a ministerial conference or intergovernmental meeting is held covering issues normally discussed in a committee, the corresponding committee need not be convened. Subject to the approval of the Commission, a committee may be convened at the ministerial level on an ad hoc basis to ensure high-level engagement on the issues to be addressed.

### **IV. Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission**

22. The functions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission shall be in accordance with the terms of reference contained in appendix III to the present document.

23. The Advisory Committee may, if necessary, establish its own working groups on consideration of specific issues.

24. The Advisory Committee shall meet with sufficient frequency both in formal and informal meetings on topical subjects, especially prior to the Commission session. The number of formal meetings of the Advisory Committee per calendar year shall not be less than 6 or more than 12. Any additional meetings, formal or informal, will be held in consultation with the Advisory Committee and the Executive Secretary and may not require documentation by the secretariat, unless otherwise requested by the Advisory Committee.

25. Should the need arise to seek the views of United Nations entities or other intergovernmental organizations on subjects of interest to the Advisory Committee, members of the Advisory Committee can, if consensus has been reached, request the secretariat to invite representatives of particular United Nations entities or other intergovernmental organizations to attend a subsequent session of the Advisory Committee.

26. The Advisory Committee shall periodically review the work of subregional offices and regional institutions and actively follow up and report on the implementation of resolutions by member States. The secretariat shall facilitate the reporting on resolutions by preparing the requisite guidelines and templates.

## **V. Regional institutions under the auspices of the Commission**

27. The following institutions under the auspices of the Commission shall continue to function as prescribed in their respective statutes and terms of reference:

- (a) Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;
- (b) Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;
- (c) Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization;
- (d) Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development;
- (e) Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management.

28. The Commission may constitute additional regional institutions that support the achievement of its strategic and programmatic objectives.

## **VI. General provisions**

### **A. Rules of procedure**

29. Unless otherwise specified by the Commission, the rules of procedure of the Commission, including those pertaining to the decision-making process, shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the committees and other meetings and conferences convened under its conference structure.

### **B. Informal session**

30. An informal session among the heads of delegations during the ministerial segment of each Commission session may be organized but shall not be institutionalized. The agenda of the informal session shall be decided by consensus and the annotated agenda shall reach members at least 30 days before the opening of the session to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the session. Simultaneous interpretation shall be provided.

## **Appendix I**

### **Issues to be addressed by committees subsidiary to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

The issues listed below are the primary issues to be addressed by each committee. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific may adjust the list of issues for any committee at any time, as appropriate; the committees shall likewise retain the flexibility to address new or emerging issues brought to their attention by the secretariat, upon consultation with member States.

1. Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development:

(a) Macroeconomic policies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and poverty reduction;

(b) Regional cooperation on macroeconomic and financing for development issues and developing common regional positions as inputs to global processes while ensuring regional follow-up to their outcomes;

(c) Financing for development, including financing strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals such as domestic fiscal resources, innovative, sustainable and digital financing instruments and mechanisms, and capital market development.

2. Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation:

(a) International trade and investment as an engine for development, including regional cooperative mechanisms and agreements on trade and trade facilitation, such as the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) Domestic and international public-private partnerships, business partnerships, investment, and small and medium-sized enterprise development and finance;

(c) Innovation, including the digital economy, inclusive business, impact investing, and innovation policies and regulations;

(d) Development, transfer, adaptation and application of technologies relevant to the region.

3. Committee on Transport:

(a) Efficient and resilient transport, logistics, mobility and connectivity, including through international transport agreements such as the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network, on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and on Dry Ports, and shipping and maritime transport;

(b) Sustainable, efficient and environmentally friendly transport systems and services, as well as policies and strategies, sustainable urban mobility, and application of smart transport technologies;

(c) Safe and inclusive transport and mobility, including policies and strategies for improving road safety, gender-responsive transport and enhancing inclusiveness and universal accessibility of transport systems;

(d) Harmonization of transport standards and documents.

4. Committee on Environment and Development:

(a) Enhancing environmental sustainability of development in a holistic and integrated manner, including through, but not limited to, climate action, air pollution

reduction, sustainable use of the oceans and seas, and sustainable management of water resources;

(b) Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources;

(c) Promoting inclusive and sustainable urban development;

(d) Promoting sustainable production and consumption, including through sustainable agricultural mechanization and technology transfer, for the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals.

5. Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation:

(a) Access to information and communications technology and digital technology and innovation, including through universal Internet connectivity and a digital society, digital transformation and inclusion, including through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative;

(b) Application of space technology and integrated geospatial information for sustainable development;

(c) Development of human skills and institutional capacity in the use of information and communications technology and digital technology applications for the digital age in support of sustainable development.

6. Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction:

(a) Regional cooperation for multi-hazard disaster risk reduction and mitigation, climate adaptation, and resilience;

(b) Regional cooperation mechanisms for strengthening disaster risk management and resilience-building;

(c) Integrated multi-hazard risk assessment, preparedness, early warning and response to disaster risks, including mitigating cascading risks related to biological and other natural hazards, including through the use of innovative technology tools;

(d) Disaster information management and multi-hazard early warning, including for sand and dust storms.

7. Committee on Social Development:

(a) Review the regional implementation of the internationally agreed goals and commitments on social development;

(b) Assess population and development trends, including international migration and population ageing, and their impacts on development;

(c) Address issues of inequality and strengthen social protection and health systems;

(d) Promote gender equality and women's empowerment;

(e) Promote the social inclusion of older persons, persons with disabilities and other people in vulnerable situations.

8. Committee on Statistics: enable and empower national statistical systems to lead development of and to deliver innovative, trusted and timely products and services, recognizing the importance of urgent and evolving statistical requirements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while bearing in mind the action areas of the document entitled "Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community".



9. Committee on Energy:
  - (a) Energy transition in Asia and the Pacific, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 7, and the Paris Agreement;
  - (b) Regional cooperation to promote access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, including through energy connectivity;
  - (c) Regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy through regional agreements and mandates, including the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum;
  - (d) Assess and review implications of the energy transition.

## **Appendix II**

### **Terms of reference of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development**

#### **I. Overall functions**

1. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development is an annual, inclusive intergovernmental forum. It supports preparations for the high-level political forum on sustainable development in the context of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.
2. The Forum will serve as a regional platform for:
  - (a) Supporting countries, in particular countries with special needs, including through enhancing their capacity for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
  - (b) Providing a regional perspective on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by identifying regional trends, and consolidating and sharing best practices and lessons learned, taking into account the contributions of other United Nations system bodies at the regional level, other regional and subregional organizations and relevant stakeholders;
  - (c) Supporting follow-up and review of progress on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals at the regional level through: assessing progress and providing opportunities for peer learning related to the theme and goals that will be reviewed at the high-level political forum; supporting the presentation of voluntary national reviews; and undertaking periodic reviews of progress of the road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.
3. These functions will benefit from inter-agency support, including through the United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism.

#### **II. Conduct of the Forum**

4. As part of the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Forum will be convened annually as an inclusive intergovernmental forum ahead of the high-level political forum. The theme of the Forum should be consistent with that of the high-level political forum and the cluster of goals to be reviewed in depth should be identical to the cluster of goals under the high-level political forum.
5. The Forum will not get ahead of or prejudice the decisions of the high-level political forum, increase the reporting burden of member States or increase the regular budget of the Commission beyond what has already been approved by the General Assembly.
6. The current format, including the election of the Bureau for each session, could be maintained and provide space for multi-stakeholder engagement for

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in consultation, as appropriate, with member States.

7. The outcome of the Forum will be in the form of a report with a Chair's summary annexed to the report.

8. The Forum may consider subregional perspectives on the themes addressed by the Forum. Preparatory meetings of stakeholders may be convened, within existing resources.

9. The Forum, including stakeholder engagement, will be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission as well as the modalities of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, as long as there is no conflict between them.

10. During each session, a member of the Bureau of the previous session could report on the discussions at the intervening high-level political forum and on the conclusions of the previous session of the Forum.

11. The conduct of the Forum will avoid duplication with other regional forums and platforms; in the interest of efficiency, where appropriate, the Forum will be convened in coordination or collaboration with other forums and platforms.

### **III. Relationship of the Forum with the conference structure of the Commission**

12. The report of the Forum as defined in paragraph 7 will be brought to the attention of the subsequent session of the Commission by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Forum.

13. The Forum could receive inputs from the committees that are subsidiary to the Commission as well as other relevant stakeholders.

14. The Forum could benefit from advice provided by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission as a modality for consulting member States between sessions of the Forum.

15. In the years when the high-level political forum meets under the auspices of the General Assembly at the summit level, which is every four years, the Forum may converge with the Commission session in April/May, and the Commission and the Forum will share the same theme, where appropriate. In other years, when the high-level political forum meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the Forum shall meet at the senior technical level.

16. If requested by member States, the terms of reference of the Forum may be revised upon recommendation of the Forum and endorsement by the Commission, taking into account new inputs from the high-level political forum and based on periodic reviews by member States.

### **Appendix III**

#### **Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission**

The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission shall have the following functions:

(a) To strengthen close cooperation and consultation between the member States and the secretariat, including by providing advice and guidance to be taken into account by the Executive Secretary while undertaking the respective activities;

- (b) To serve as a deliberative forum for substantive exchange of views and provide guidance on the formulation of the agenda of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and in connection with economic and social developments that have an impact on the Asia-Pacific region;
  - (c) To advise and guide the Executive Secretary in drawing up proposals for the strategic framework, programme of work and theme topics for sessions of the Commission consistent with the guidance provided by the Commission;
  - (d) To receive, on a regular basis, information on the administrative and financial functioning of the Commission;
  - (e) To advise and guide the Executive Secretary in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Commission's programme of work and resource allocation;
  - (f) To review the draft calendar of meetings prior to its submission to the Commission at its annual session;
  - (g) To advise and guide the Executive Secretary on the provisional agenda of sessions of the Commission and committees subsidiary to the Commission, consistent with the need to ensure a results-oriented and focused agenda that is aligned with the development priorities of member States, as defined by them, as well as chapter II of its rules of procedure;
  - (h) To advise and guide the Executive Secretary on the identification of emerging economic and social issues and other relevant issues for incorporation into the provisional agendas and on the formulation of the annotated provisional agendas of Commission sessions;
  - (i) To be informed of collaborations and related arrangements between the secretariat and other international and regional organizations, in particular on long-term cooperation programmes and joint initiatives, including those to be proposed by the Executive Secretary and conducted under the aegis of the Regional Coordination Mechanism;
  - (j) To carry out any other tasks entrusted to it by the Commission.
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