

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

ANNUAL REPORT
26 May 2011 – 23 May 2012

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS, 2012**

SUPPLEMENT No. 19



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

ANNUAL REPORT
26 May 2011 – 23 May 2012

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS, 2012**

SUPPLEMENT No. 19



UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2012

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Sales No.: EOR 2012, SUPP. 19
Copyright © United Nations 2012
All rights reserved
ISBN-13: 978-92-1-880235-4
e-ISBN: 978-92-1-055707-8
Symbol: E/2012/39-E/ESCAP/68/24
ISSN: 0252-2284

Contents

[30 May 2012]

Page

List of abbreviations	v
Introduction	1
Chapter	
I Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention	1
II Work of the Commission since the sixty-seventh session	2
A. Activities of subsidiary bodies	2
B. Publications	2
C. Relations with other United Nations programmes	2
III Sixty-eighth session of the Commission	3
A. Attendance and organization of work	3
B. Agenda	5
C. Account of proceedings	6
Agenda item 1	
Opening of the session	6
Agenda item 2	
Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries	6
(a) Sustainable development and Pacific island developing countries: Preparation for Rio+20 and beyond	6
(b) Other matters	8
Agenda item 3	
Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the ESCAP regional institutions	8
(a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development	8
(b) Trade and investment	12
(c) Transport	14
(d) Environment and development	17
(e) Information and communications technology	21
(f) Disaster risk reduction	23
(g) Social development	26
(h) Statistics	31
(i) Subregional activities for development	32
Agenda item 4	
Management issues	35
(a) Report on evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2010-2011	35
(b) Programme changes for the biennium 2012-2013	36
(c) Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015	36
(d) Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions	36
Agenda item 5	
Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission	40

Agenda item 6	
Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission (2013)	41
Agenda item 7	
Policy issues for the Asia-Pacific region.....	41
(a) Key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific.....	41
(b) Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012.....	47
Agenda item 8	
Theme topic for the sixty-eighth session: “Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific”	54
Agenda item 9	
Other matters	57
Agenda item 10	
Adoption of the report of the Commission	57
IV Resolutions and other decisions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-eighth session	58
68/1 Reaffirming the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States with a focus on the Pacific.....	58
68/2 Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region	59
68/3 Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation.....	61
68/4 Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport	63
68/5 Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017	80
68/6 Asia-Pacific regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014	82
68/7 Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.....	84
68/8 Enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with regional organizations for promoting regional development.....	86
68/9 Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission	88
68/10 Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific.....	89
68/11 Connectivity for energy security	91
Annexes	
I Statement of programme budget implications of actions and proposals of the Commission	92
II Meetings of subsidiary bodies and other intergovernmental meetings held since the sixty-seventh session of the Commission	94
III Publications and documents issued by the Commission	96

List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
APCICT	Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development
APCTT	Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology
APTA	Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement
ARTNeT	Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAPSA	Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture
CSAM	Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GDP	gross domestic product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	information and communications technology
MTS	multilateral trading system
NEASPEC	North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation
PACER	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
PICTA	Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RTA	regional trade agreement
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Area
SIAP	Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
SPECA	United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAPCAEM	United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNNExT	United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific
UN-SPIDER	United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response
WASME	World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Notes: Values are in United States dollars unless otherwise specified.
The term “billion” signifies a thousand million.

Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held its sixty-eighth session in Bangkok from 17 to 23 May 2012. The present report covers the period from 26 May 2011 to 23 May 2012 and contains an account of the discussions and conclusions reached by the Commission.

Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

2. At its sixty-eighth session, the Commission adopted 11 resolutions for the attention of the Council.¹

¹ For the text, see chap. IV.

Chapter II

Work of the Commission since the sixty-seventh session

A. Activities of subsidiary bodies

3. During the period under review, the following intergovernmental meetings and meetings of subsidiary bodies were held:

- (a) Committees:
 - (i) Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction;
 - (ii) Committee on Environment and Development;
 - (iii) Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development;
 - (iv) Committee on Trade and Investment;
- (b) Governing councils:
 - (i) Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;
 - (ii) Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development;
 - (iii) Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture;
 - (iv) Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;
 - (v) United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery;
- (c) Other intergovernmental bodies:
 - (i) Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (ii) Ministerial Conference on Transport.

4. The dates, bureaux and document symbols of the reports of the meetings are given in annex II. The reports of those bodies reflect the discussions held, the agreements reached and the decisions taken by them.

5. In pursuance of Commission resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission, the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries was organized as a part of the Commission session, with the status of a committee of the whole. The meeting of the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries was held on 17 May 2012 during the senior officials segment.

B. Publications

6. Lists of publications issued in the reporting period 2011/2012 and pre-session documents submitted to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session are contained in annex III.

C. Relations with other United Nations programmes

7. The secretariat maintained close and regular liaison with United Nations Headquarters departments, as well as with the secretariats of the other regional commissions, on projects of common interest.

Chapter III

Sixty-eighth session of the Commission

A. Attendance and organization of work

8. The sixty-eighth session of the Commission was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok from 17 to 23 May 2012. The session comprised two segments: the senior officials segment, which was held from 17 to 19 May 2012, and the ministerial segment, which was held from 21 to 23 May 2012.

9. The session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members:

Members

Armenia	Pakistan
Australia	Palau
Bangladesh	Papua New Guinea
Bhutan	Philippines
Brunei Darussalam	Republic of Korea
Cambodia	Russian Federation
China	Samoa
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Singapore
Fiji	Solomon Islands
France	Sri Lanka
India	Thailand
Indonesia	Timor-Leste
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Tonga
Japan	Turkey
Kazakhstan	Tuvalu
Kiribati	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Lao People's Democratic Republic	United States of America
Malaysia	Uzbekistan
Maldives	Vanuatu
Marshall Islands	Viet Nam
Micronesia (Federated States of)	
Mongolia	
Myanmar	<i>Associate members</i>
Nauru	Hong Kong, China
Nepal	Macao, China

10. By virtue of rule 3 of the Commission's rules of procedure, representatives of Egypt, Czech Republic, Germany, Morocco and South Africa also attended.

11. The session was attended by a representative of the following office of the United Nations Secretariat: Regional Commissions New York Office; and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

12. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: International Trade Centre; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; United Nations Children's Fund; Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; and United Nations Population Fund.

13. Representatives of the following specialized agencies were present in a consultative capacity: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Telecommunication Union; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; Universal Postal Union; World Health Organization; and World Meteorological Organization.

14. The following intergovernmental organizations attended as observers: Asian and Pacific Coconut Community; Asian Development Bank; Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia; Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia; International Organization for Migration; International Pepper Community; and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

15. Observers were present from the following non-governmental organizations: Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development; Baha'i International Community; Disabled Peoples' International Asia-Pacific; International Planned Parenthood Federation; International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific; LDC Watch; National Council of Women of Thailand; Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association; Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations; World Assembly of Youth; World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises; and World Veterans Federation.

16. Representatives of the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability also attended the session.

17. The list of participants is given in document E/ESCAP/68/INF/2.

18. In accordance with rule 13 of its rules of procedure, the Commission elected H.E. Mr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul (Thailand) Chair.

19. Following its past practice, the Commission decided to elect the following heads of delegation Vice-Chairs:

H.E. Mr. Abul Maal Abdul Muhith (Bangladesh)
H.E. Dato Paduka Haji Ali Apong (Brunei Darussalam)
H.E. Mr. Ly Thuch (Cambodia)
H.E. Mr. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia (India)
H.E. Mr. Davood Manzoor (Islamic Republic of Iran)
H.E. Mr. Joe Nakano (Japan)
Hon. Tom Murdoch (Kiribati)
H.E. Mr. Alounkeo Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
Hon. Tony deBrum (Marshall Islands)
H.E. Mr. Gonchigzeveg Tenger (Mongolia)
H.E. Mr. Kan Zaw (Myanmar)
Hon. Deependra Bahadur Kshetry (Nepal)
H.E. Mr. Lee Si-hyung (Republic of Korea)
H.E. Mr. Gennady Gatilov (Russian Federation)
Hon. Sarath Amunugama (Sri Lanka)
Hon. Sosefo Feaomoeata Vakata (Tonga)
Hon. Lotoala Metia (Tuvalu)
H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyer Abdusamatov (Uzbekistan)
Hon. Alfred Rollen Carlot (Vanuatu)
H.E. Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam)

20. The senior officials segment of the session met in two Committees of the Whole. The following officers were elected:

(a) *Committee of the Whole I:*

Chair:

Ms. Noumea Simi (Samoa)

Vice-Chairs:

Mr. Yuba Raj Bhusal (Nepal)

Mr. Math Sounmala (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

(b) *Committee of the Whole II:*

Chair:

Mr. Md. Ghulam Hussain (Bangladesh)

Vice-Chairs:

Mr. Meas Bora (Cambodia)

Ms. Swarna Pushpa Wellapili (Sri Lanka)

21. The Commission also constituted a Working Group on Draft Resolutions, under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Sohail Mahmood (Pakistan), to consider draft resolutions submitted during the session. Mr. Mohammad Ali Zare Zare (Islamic Republic of Iran) was elected Vice-Chair of the Working Group.

B. Agenda

22. The Commission adopted the following agenda:

Senior officials segment

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries:
 - (a) Sustainable development and Pacific island developing countries: Preparation for Rio+20 and beyond;
 - (b) Other matters.
3. Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the ESCAP regional institutions:
 - (a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development;
 - (b) Trade and investment;
 - (c) Transport;
 - (d) Environment and development;
 - (e) Information and communications technology;
 - (f) Disaster risk reduction;
 - (g) Social development;
 - (h) Statistics;
 - (i) Subregional activities for development.
4. Management issues:
 - (a) Report on evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2010-2011;
 - (b) Programme changes for the biennium 2012-2013;

- (c) Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015;
 - (d) Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions.
- 5. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.
 - 6. Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission (2013).

Ministerial segment

- 7. Policy issues for the Asia-Pacific region:
 - (a) Key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific;
 - (b) Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012.
- 8. Theme topic for the sixty-eighth session: “Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific”.
- 9. Other matters.
- 10. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

C. Account of proceedings

Agenda item 1 Opening of the session

Senior officials segment

23. The senior officials segment was opened by the Executive Secretary on 17 May 2012. The Executive Secretary delivered a welcoming statement.

Ministerial segment

24. The Chair of the sixty-seventh session, Hon. Sarath Amunugama (Sri Lanka), declared open the ministerial segment of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on 21 May 2012. The Executive Secretary read out the message of the Secretary-General and delivered her welcoming statement.

25. Keynote addresses were made by Hon. Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi (Samoa) and Mr. Tommy Koh (Singapore) at the first part of the inaugural meeting of the ministerial segment on 21 May 2012. H.E. Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand, delivered a welcoming statement at the second part of the inaugural meeting on 21 May 2012.

Agenda item 2 Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries

Sub-item (a) Sustainable development and Pacific island developing countries: Preparation for Rio+20 and beyond

26. The Commission had before it the summary of Pacific preparations for Rio+20: The evolving “special case” of small island developing States (E/ESCAP/68/1).

27. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Fiji; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Micronesia (Federated States of); Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; and Tuvalu.

28. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered a statement and moderated a panel discussion. The panellists were: Mr. Lotoala Metia, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Tuvalu; Mr. Tom Murdoch, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Kiribati; and Mr. Ratu Meli Bainimarama, Permanent Representative of Fiji to ESCAP.

29. The Commission noted that the structural challenges faced by the Pacific island developing countries had heightened their vulnerability to environmental and economic shocks, such as high production, transport and service delivery costs, as well as the challenges of isolation, size and small populations, all of which had made establishing strong economic bases and economies of scale very challenging.

30. Several delegations noted that climate change was posing a threat to the survival of many Pacific island developing countries, with the effects of climate change already being felt, such as an increase in inundation by seawater. It was also noted that, given the strong likelihood that the process of ocean acidification would continue along with the destruction of coral reefs, traditional livelihoods would also be negatively impacted.

31. Several delegations appealed to the international community to provide concrete and additional support to Pacific island developing countries in order to address the effects of climate change, and to do so as part of an integrated and sustainable development approach.

32. It was noted that the climate change adaptation strategy for small island developing States needed to encompass factors associated with labour force mobility and migration. The Commission noted that youth in the Pacific were migrating as a result of the effects of climate change, as well as other environmental threats and limited economic opportunities. It was pointed out that training and employment opportunities for young people of the Pacific in receiving countries of the ESCAP region should be expanded. It was asserted that an inclusive development plan for the Pacific needed to include education and capacity-building for women, youth and vulnerable groups.

33. The Commission noted that the Pacific Ocean, covering one third of the earth's surface, was a global resource that required collective management and responsibility, and that, while Pacific island developing countries were taking the lead in managing ocean resources, they needed the support of other countries in Asia and the Pacific and globally. Such support included effective ocean governance, which was a global issue that required the efforts of governments in the Asia-Pacific region, and in distant nations dependent on fishing, to better regulate fishing and help combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

34. The Commission was informed of initiatives that were being undertaken by Pacific island developing countries to protect biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem services, such as the Phoenix Islands Protected Area in Kiribati, the largest marine protected area in the Pacific Ocean, and the Coral Triangle Initiative, which covered a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region, included the greatest extent of mangrove forests in the world and provided a critical spawning and juvenile growth area for tuna and other globally significant fish species.

35. The Commission noted that other initiatives being undertaken by Pacific island developing countries included the consideration of a Melanesian green economy road map and a blue carbon initiative, as well as significant commitments to renewable energy targets.

36. Several delegations called on the Commission to recognize the unique vulnerabilities of the Pacific island developing States and reaffirm the special case of small island developing States at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference). It was asserted that the Rio+20 process would need to be inclusive by reaffirming stakeholder alliances of the major groups from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and by including community perspectives in the institutional framework for sustainable development.

37. Several delegations expressed their appreciation to the Executive Secretary and the ESCAP secretariat for their efforts to focus greater attention and resources on small island developing States in the Pacific, and for the assistance provided to Pacific island developing countries in the preparation for the Conference.

38. The Commission adopted resolution 68/1 on reaffirming the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States with a focus on the Pacific.

Sub-item (b)
Other matters

39. No issues were raised by the Commission under the sub-item.

Agenda item 3
Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission,
including the work of the ESCAP regional institutions

40. The Commission had before it the subprogramme overview: Issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/68/2, sections I to VIII), the summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/68/3), and the programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011 (E/ESCAP/68/INF/3).

Sub-item (a)
Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development

41. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development on its second session (E/ESCAP/68/4) and the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture on its eighth session (E/ESCAP/68/5).

42. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Nepal; Pakistan; Russian Federation; and Thailand. In addition, the representative of LDC Watch delivered a statement.

43. The Commission was briefed on the macroeconomic performance, progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and development strategies of member countries.

44. The Commission noted the challenges facing the region, including the continuing debt crisis in the euro zone and slow recovery in other developed economies, which were leading to lower growth prospects in the region as well as the potential reduction in access to liquidity. It also noted that, despite the slowdown in Asia and the Pacific, the region remained the global growth pole and, therefore, its continued development was important for all countries.

45. The Commission also noted that high inflation across the region, particularly food and fuel inflation, remained a major concern that threatened economic growth, poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It

underlined the necessity to manage the balance between combating inflation and boosting economic growth, as well as the need for supporting the poor and vulnerable to cope with the adverse impacts of high food prices through targeted income transfer schemes, improved public distribution systems and enhanced agricultural productivity.

46. The Commission underlined the importance of maintaining comfortable fiscal conditions, both to strengthen the ability of countries to cope with external demand shocks and to achieve medium-term public debt sustainability. Fiscal consolidation, through measures, such as tax reforms and subsidy rationalization, should be a medium-term development priority for countries where the room for fiscal policy response is currently constrained.

47. The Commission emphasized the policy options relating to inclusive growth as highlighted by the analyses of the secretariat, and reaffirmed that growth should be inclusive and contribute to poverty reduction, creating opportunities for the poor through active participation in economic activities. The Commission underlined that development must be people-centred, including through good governance and public policies that promote health, education, skills development, decent job creation, gender equality and empowerment, as well as through measures to enhance social protection and social justice, while simultaneously addressing the challenges of increasing social disparity and income inequality.

48. The Commission emphasized that, in the light of the uncertain growth prospects of developed economies, regional economic integration could substantially contribute to sustaining the dynamism of Asia-Pacific economies. It attached great importance to enhancing regional connectivity, in particular between the region's most dynamic poles of economic growth and its least developed countries. It noted the progress of various institutional frameworks in deepening economic integration in the region and that South-South cooperation between countries in the region had become a major source of development assistance, investment and international trade, in particular for the least developed countries. It also noted with appreciation the commitment of members to further strengthening those linkages.

49. The Commission noted the commitment of members to accelerate the transition to a more developed, industrialized, innovative and knowledge-based economy, including through greater emphasis on science and technology development, as highlighted in their national development strategies. It underlined the important role of regional integration and cooperation in technology transfer and enhancing innovation.

50. The Commission also noted that poverty reduction and inclusive development had been the main development objectives of the periodic plans of least developed countries and landlocked developing countries in recent years. As a result, those countries had managed to increase their growth rates and reduce their poverty levels. The focus of those policies and plans had increasingly shifted to stabilizing commodity prices and lowering inflation, securing health and education for all, enhancing creativity and human capacities, establishing social justice, reducing social disparity, improving the capacity to tackle adverse impacts of climate change and firmly rooting democracy in the political arena. Although poverty levels had remained high in remote areas and marginalized communities, it was noted that those measures should put the least developed countries on course to realize most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It further noted with satisfaction that special measures, including positive discrimination policies, had been taken for women and vulnerable and marginalized groups to mainstream them in countries' development process.

51. The Commission noted that the region's least developed countries had placed great importance on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least

Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action).² In that context, several least developed countries expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action through various capacity-development activities and the provision of cutting-edge analyses of critical importance to least developed countries. The Commission recalled the leadership role played by the Executive Secretary in mobilizing regional support for the final review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (the Brussels Programme of Action)³ and in the formulation and adoption of the Istanbul Programme of Action by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which had been held in May 2011.

52. The Commission commended the secretariat for vigorously engaging the least developed countries in the regional implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. It acknowledged the importance of the Regional Road Map for Implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action in the Asian and Pacific Region from 2011 to 2020,⁴ adopted in Bangkok in December 2011 as an important step in further prioritizing the focus areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action. It noted with satisfaction the efforts of the secretariat in addressing the special needs of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, especially through capacity-building activities for the accelerated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the regional implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries.⁵ The Commission also commended the secretariat for assisting the least developed countries in mainstreaming their national development strategies and plans and addressing their graduation issues. It strongly urged the secretariat to continue and further strengthen its capacity-development activities in support of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries in reducing their development challenges and Millennium Development Goal gaps.

53. The Commission noted the intention of the Government of Bangladesh to hold a global conference for senior central bank and ministry of finance officials from the world's 48 least developed countries and their development partners in Dhaka in January 2013. The delegation of Bangladesh requested that the secretariat provide the Government of Bangladesh and its development partners with all necessary cooperation in organizing that important event.

54. The Commission underscored the importance of preventing a potential setback to the efforts of the developing countries aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals due to the effects of global economic and financial turmoil. It pointed out that efforts to achieve the Goals by 2015 should include technical cooperation, social protection for vulnerable populations and financial support to developing countries of the region.

55. The Commission noted that reducing poverty continued to be a high priority for developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region in the context of an uncertain global economic outlook, volatile food prices, climate change and concerns on

² *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.II.A.1), chap. II.

³ A/CONF.191/13, chap. II.

⁴ E/ESCAP/68/23, annex.

⁵ *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003* (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.

environmental sustainability. A number of member countries shared their experiences in implementing rural development and poverty reduction strategies, including people-centred, sustainable livelihood and safety net programmes that addressed the multidimensionality and dynamics of socioeconomic factors in rural and marginal areas. The need to increase agricultural production and productivity and develop export markets for agricultural products, and the role that cooperatives play in sustainable agricultural production were highlighted. Sustainable agriculture was considered an efficient tool to lift smallholder farmers from poverty, boost domestic income, and contribute to countries' efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

56. The Commission commended the work of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA), and expressed appreciation to the Executive Secretary for strengthening the Centre by providing human resources and other support. The Centre was recognized for the implementation of its Strategic Plan for 2011-2020,⁶ which focused on identifying options for sustainable agricultural development and market access for the poor to improve food security and reduce poverty, and for its pursuit of excellence in its new focus areas to serve the needs of the Asia-Pacific community. Member countries highlighted the need for the Centre to continue to provide assistance in the area of capacity-building.

57. The Commission recommended that CAPSA take steps to expand its programme to reach out to the larger membership of ESCAP. One delegation called upon CAPSA to assess opportunities for integrating work on agricultural cooperatives and "Sufficiency Economy" into its work programme. Acknowledging that South-South cooperation had become a major source of development assistance, several member countries expressed their willingness to cooperate and coordinate with other ESCAP member countries in order to better utilize the potential of the Centre for the region.

58. Some member countries reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the Centre by providing voluntary financial assistance, and examining opportunities to increase yearly contributions. One delegation proposed that ESCAP make available to CAPSA a share of programme support funds generated through technical cooperation grants for projects implemented by the Centre.

59. The Commission appreciated the high quality of documents prepared by the secretariat, particularly the in-depth policy analysis contained in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012*.⁷

60. The Commission adopted resolution 68/2 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region.

61. The Commission endorsed in general the recommendations contained in the documents referenced in paragraph 41 above.

62. The Commission elected, along with the host country, Indonesia, the following countries to the Governing Council of CAPSA for the period 2012-2015: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Fiji; Malaysia; Mongolia; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

⁶ E/ESCAP/65/25, annex IV.

⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.II.F.9.

Sub-item (b)
Trade and investment

63. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Trade and Investment on its second session (E/ESCAP/68/6), the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its seventh session (E/ESCAP/68/7) and the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery on its seventh session (E/ESCAP/68/8).

64. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; Mongolia; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand. The representative of the World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) also made a statement.

65. The Commission noted the importance of trade and investment for economic growth and poverty reduction and expressed concern that trade protectionism was increasing. In that regard, the Commission supported multilateral and regional trade agreements which contributed to a reduction of trade barriers.

66. The Commission emphasized the importance of the multilateral trading system (MTS) in maintaining stable global trade relations and avoiding trade protectionism in times of crisis and called for a conducive and early conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda.⁸ It also urged members to implement the recommendations of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO). On that point, one delegation pointed to the need for least developed countries to derive benefits from the MTS, including exemptions of new commitments under negotiation, full duty- and quota-free access of products from least developed countries to markets in developed countries, increased market access under Mode 4 in trade in services related to the movement of skilled labour from least developed countries, and an effective solution to the issue of preference erosion. Another delegation noted that various countries of the region were still not members of WTO and urged the secretariat to help those countries in the accession process.

67. The Commission noted the increasing importance of intraregional trade and, in that context, agreed that regional trade agreements (RTAs) were important mechanisms for increasing and facilitating intraregional trade, and that such agreements should also be building blocks of the MTS. One delegation noted that the secretariat had provided a good platform for discussing general trends, approaches towards regional integration, and best practices in trade and investment which could help towards the establishment of a free trade agreement covering Eurasia, such as the Eurasian Economic Commission.

68. The Commission took the view that the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) was a useful mechanism for promoting region-wide cooperation and integration, and noted with satisfaction the continuous support of the secretariat for that Agreement. Two delegations called for an early conclusion of the fourth round of tariff concessions under APTA.

69. The Commission emphasized the need for greater trade and transit facilitation and increased technical assistance from the secretariat in that area. On that point, the Commission expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its capacity-building activities in trade facilitation and, in particular, its support for the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum and the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT). The delegation of the Republic of Korea informed the Commission that it was fielding a draft resolution on a regional agreement on

⁸ See A/C.2/56/7, annex.

cross-border paperless trade and electronic data and documents exchange (E/ESCAP/68/L.6) and looked forward to the full support of other delegations. One delegation expressed the opinion that trade facilitation measures should be adopted on a best effort basis and be of a non-binding nature.

70. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the organization of the Second Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week, which the secretariat had held from 25 to 29 July 2011. The Week had consisted of useful multi-stakeholder events and activities, including the second session of the Committee on Trade and Investment, which had allowed country delegations to exchange experiences and learn about best practices in the area of trade and investment. The Commission called on the secretariat to continue such events and activities.

71. In addition, the delegation of Mongolia expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the technical assistance Mongolia had received in the area of promoting trade corridors, accession to APTA, development of a single window master plan, negotiation of free trade agreements and designing an investment promotion strategy, and looked forward to continued support from the secretariat in those areas. The delegation also expressed its appreciation for various useful publications the secretariat had prepared in the area of trade facilitation and paperless trade, development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and capacity-building work of the secretariat through the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT).

72. The delegation of Mongolia further informed the Commission that, pursuant to Commission resolution 67/1 on the Ulaanbaatar Declaration: Outcome of the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and other Development Gaps Faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries, the Government of Mongolia was currently working on a plan of action to implement the Multilateral Agreement on the Establishment of the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries and looked forward to receiving the secretariat's expertise in that area. The delegation called on member States to implement the provisions of the resolution and recommendations of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and urged landlocked developing countries of the region to expedite the signing and ratification of the Agreement.

73. The Commission noted the importance of entrepreneurship development and addressing the needs of SMEs in areas such as skills development and access to technology, and recognized the role of the secretariat in those areas.

74. The Commission noted the importance of investment and the need to establish a favourable investment environment. The Commission also noted the importance of foreign direct investment as a modality to transfer technology and requested the secretariat to provide technical assistance in that area. On that point, the Commission noted the importance of public and private investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and low-carbon goods and services.

75. The delegation of Thailand informed the Commission of the memorandum of understanding signed by the Department of Trade Negotiations of the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand with ESCAP and the International Institute for Trade and Development, which reflected the country's commitment to working closely with ESCAP in strengthening technical cooperation and capacity-building in the area of trade and investment. The cooperation under the memorandum would also cover technical assistance to neighbouring countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

76. The Commission held the view, based on the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT), that the Centre played an important role in bridging the technology capacity imbalance in the region and commended the work undertaken by the Centre in building the capacity of SMEs to manage technology transfer and innovation. The delegation of India, recalling the

support that it had extended to the Centre's work programme on "National Innovation Systems Phase II" and "Establishing an Institutional Cooperation Mechanism to Promote Renewable Energy", stated that it would be pleased to consider support through suitable modalities for the Centre's future initiatives related to the strengthening of SME technology transfer and innovation management capacity, and the establishment of the Renewable Energy Technology Bank. Some delegations emphasized that, in the context of the Istanbul Declaration,⁹ the Renewable Energy Technology Bank initiative assumed special importance, and they expressed their support for that initiative. One delegation supported the APCTT Governing Council recommendation to establish linkages between APCTT and national chambers of commerce and industry associations that were actually involved in the process of technology promotion and transfer.

77. The Commission reaffirmed its continued support for the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (UNAPCAEM) and its work programme, specifically the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Network for Testing Agricultural Machinery. One delegation expressed strong support for the Centre's capacity-building initiatives in post-harvest technology, combating desertification and rural alternative energy. Two delegations agreed to change the name of UNAPCAEM to "Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization" (CSAM). The delegation of China also agreed to the change of the Centre's name.

78. The Commission noted a statement made by WASME.

79. The Commission adopted resolution 68/3 on enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation.

80. The Commission endorsed in general the recommendations as contained in section II, trade and investment, of the subprogramme overview: Issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/68/2).

81. The Commission also endorsed in general the recommendations of the Committee on Trade and Investment as contained in the report of the Committee on its second session (E/ESCAP/68/6).

82. The Commission further endorsed in general the recommendations contained in the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its seventh session (E/ESCAP/68/7) and the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery on its seventh session (E/ESCAP/68/8).

83. The Commission elected, along with the host country, China, the following countries to the Governing Council of UNAPCAEM for the period 2012-2015: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Indonesia; Pakistan; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

Sub-item (c) **Transport**

84. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Ministerial Conference on Transport on its second session (E/ESCAP/68/9).

⁹ *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.II.A.1), chap. I.

85. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

86. The Commission noted the important role of transport infrastructure and services in strengthening regional economic cooperation and enhancing regional integration and commended initiatives undertaken by member countries as well as efforts by the secretariat in developing the transport sector in the region.

87. The Commission noted that ministers of the region had reaffirmed their vision of an international, integrated, intermodal transport and logistics system at the second session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Bangkok in March 2012. It also expressed the view that the Conference was a milestone in the development of transport in the region with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and its two annexes, the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016) and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport.¹⁰

88. The Commission noted that the full benefits of an international, integrated, intermodal transport and logistics system would not be realized unless both the physical infrastructure and non-physical issues were addressed comprehensively.

89. Many delegations apprised the Commission of the national initiatives and activities that were planned or being undertaken to develop and/or enhance transport linkages with neighbouring countries as part of expanding connectivity across the region and with other regions, including Euro-Asia Transport Linkages. Those initiatives included the development of major sections of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, including intercountry road and rail linkages, border-crossing terminals, dry ports and seaports.

90. The Commission welcomed the regional initiative made by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to construct a railway running east of the Caspian Sea. In that respect, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Commission that the railway section from Gorgan to Inche-Boroun (82 km) in Iranian territory would be completed by the end of 2012.

91. One delegation noted the potential benefits of a programme on coordinated development of roads, which would be launched under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the coming years.

92. The Commission requested the secretariat to consider a joint ESCAP-Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)-Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) project on interregional land and land/sea transport linkages, which would lead towards the preparation and formulation of relevant transport agreements between countries of the region.

93. The Commission recognized the role of the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport¹¹ as a primary guideline for transport policymakers to promote connectivity across the region and the need to develop an action plan for its implementation.

94. The Commission noted the importance of further accession to the United Nations transport facilitation agreements and conventions to form a harmonized legal regime for international road transport both within the region and between Asia and Europe. It also noted the important role of harmonization of railway legislation in view of the establishment of a more unified Euro-Asian legal framework for smooth railway transport operations between the two regions.

¹⁰ See E/ESCAP/68/9, Chap. I.

¹¹ Ibid.

95. One delegation encouraged the secretariat to continue its support for enhancement of cooperation among member countries for efficient negotiations of arrangements on transit traffic and transport facilitation.

96. The Commission noted the efforts of some countries to facilitate international transport and enhance regional connectivity by (a) setting up integrated check posts and terminals at land borders, (b) undertaking subregional coordination to identify projects for unrestricted cross-border movement of goods, people and services, (c) providing favourable conditions and facilities for transit traffic, (d) acceding to international transport facilitation conventions and (e) concluding bilateral transport agreements.

97. The Commission highlighted the importance of dry ports as an essential element in realizing the vision of a sustainable international, integrated, intermodal transport and logistics system and commended the secretariat on the progress made in developing an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports. A number of delegations expressed their willingness to participate actively in the forthcoming Ad hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on an Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, which was scheduled to be held in Bangkok from 20 to 22 June 2012, with the expectation that the draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports would be finalized and adopted during that meeting. One delegation, however, noted that the draft intergovernmental agreement might not be ready to be adopted and that further consultation at the regional level needed to be conducted before the final adoption. Meanwhile, some major issues remained to be discussed during the meeting.

98. The Commission noted that member States faced considerable financial constraints in meeting the level of investment that was needed to achieve efficient connectivity throughout the region. In that regard, it noted that an increasing number of countries were utilizing public-private partnerships in order to finance transport infrastructure development projects, including along sections of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks. It also urged donor countries and international financial institutions to make funds available for transport infrastructure projects and maintenance.

99. The Commission welcomed the invitation from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the third Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, which would be hosted in Tehran from 11 to 14 November 2012, and encouraged all member States to participate in the Conference.

100. The Commission reiterated the need for member countries to further consolidate their efforts to implement the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries.⁵ In that context, the delegation of Mongolia proposed to organize a round-table discussion on the sidelines of the Fourth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, which was to be held in Kazakhstan in September 2012, to discuss how to expedite ratification, acceptance or approval of the Multilateral Agreement on the Establishment of the International Think Tank for the Landlocked Developing Countries, 2010.¹² In that regard, the delegation of Mongolia invited countries to consider acceding to the agreement, if they had not yet done so. In that respect, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced its Government's readiness to assist the landlocked countries of the region in accessing international waters through its ports.

¹² The Agreement had been endorsed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries at their ninth Annual Meeting, on 24 September 2010 (see www.unohrrls.org/en/orphan/782).

101. Several delegations recognized the public health and development burden resulting from road crashes and stressed the importance of continuing advocacy and implementing initiatives in relation to road safety. One delegation highlighted its progress in reducing the number of road fatalities in recent years.

102. The Commission noted with appreciation the secretariat's work on raising awareness of, and assisting a number of developing countries in preparing national action plans for, the Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020.¹³

103. In addition, the Commission noted that, on 19 April 2012, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 66/260 on improving global road safety, which had been sponsored by the Russian Federation and co-sponsored by many other countries. In that resolution, the Assembly called on member States to implement road safety activities in each of the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.¹⁴

104. The Commission recognized the importance of adopting sustainable and inclusive transport policies that contributed to the quality of economic and social growth and to the alleviation of poverty. In that regard, the Commission noted the role of national transport policies aimed at providing safe, affordable and reliable transport infrastructure and services that were cost-effective and energy-efficient and supported social welfare and poverty alleviation. The Commission also noted the long-term advantages of intermodal public transport as a significant contributor to the sustainability and the inclusiveness of transport.

105. Several delegations apprised the Commission of their rural access programmes to connect rural communities in remote areas.

106. The Commission also underscored the importance of the secretariat's capacity-building activities, including in the areas of public-private partnerships and new approaches for financing road infrastructure projects, road safety and the development of dry ports.

107. The Commission also welcomed the offer of Japan to share its experience in improving the quality of transport with other countries of the region, and the offer of India to train road transport personnel at its many transport-related institutes and provide consultancy services to other countries in the region.

108. The Commission expressed its appreciation to donor countries and other development partners that were providing financial and technical support to the secretariat in the implementation of its work programme.

109. The Commission adopted resolution 68/4 on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport.

Sub-item (d)
Environment and development

110. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Environment and Development on its second session (E/ESCAP/68/10) and two information documents: the report of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in

¹³ See General Assembly resolution 64/255, para. 2.

¹⁴ Available from www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action/plan/en/index.html.

East and Southeast Asia (E/ESCAP/68/INF/4) and the report of the Mekong River Commission (E/ESCAP/68/INF/5).

111. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

112. A representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) also made a statement.

113. The Commission highlighted the importance of achieving sustainable development through the balanced integration of the three pillars of economic development, social development, and environmental protection and conservation.

114. The Commission emphasized the need for sustainable development policies to be inclusive, particularly with regard to the most vulnerable and the poor. One delegation noted that unsustainable development threatened not only the environmental and social livelihoods of people but also the in-depth cultural significance that is important for survival.

115. The Commission emphasized that significant challenges remain in implementing sustainable development policies, including the uncertainties in the global economic situation, inadequate resources, lack of capacity to implement national programmes and lack of knowledge and technology, and requested assistance from the international community with respect to those challenges.

116. The Commission recognized the importance of the upcoming Rio+20 Conference and highlighted that as an important opportunity to renew high-level political commitment and cooperation to supporting sustainable development. The majority of delegations also recognized that sustainable development should be based on the Rio Principles,¹⁵ and in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

117. The Commission expressed appreciation to the Republic of Korea for hosting the Asian and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Rio+20 Conference in October 2011 in Seoul. The Preparatory Meeting had adopted the Seoul Outcome, which was part of the report of that meeting, as the consensus input to the Rio+20 Conference from the Asian and Pacific region.¹⁶

118. Many delegations noted one of the themes of Rio+20, "green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication", but emphasized that the green economy should be viewed in the broader context of sustainable development.

119. Some delegations also noted that green economy policies and strategies should be applied in a flexible manner at the national level in recognition of the specific circumstances of each country and should not be used as an excuse for green protectionism. One delegation took the view that green economy policies should not be used as an excuse for technology-based discrimination.

120. Some delegations recognized the green economy approach as a means for economic growth in an environmentally sensitive manner, which had the potential to create new jobs and address unemployment.

¹⁵ See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex I.

¹⁶ The Seoul Outcome had subsequently been endorsed by the ESCAP Committee on Environment and Development (see E/ESCAP/68/10, chap. I).

121. The Commission recognized the importance of the other theme of the Rio+20 Conference, “an institutional framework for sustainable development” and highlighted the need for the Conference to agree on that issue.

122. The Commission was informed of the outcomes of other preparatory events for the Rio+20 Conference, such as the Delhi Ministerial Dialogue on Green Economy and Inclusive Growth, held in New Delhi in October 2011, and the High-Level Symposium on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Beijing in September 2011.

123. Several delegations underscored the importance of a timely start of the implementation of the Rio+20 outcome. Areas of possible intervention were mobilization of additional financing and expertise, facilitation of technology transfer necessary for the transition to a green economy, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing.

124. The Commission took note of the proposal that any discussion on sustainable development goals expected to be launched at the Rio+20 Conference should build on lessons learned in efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. One delegation emphasized the need for a systematic monitoring of sustainable development goals.

125. The Commission was informed of the progress of national efforts in implementing different environmental conventions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,¹⁷ the Convention on Biological Diversity¹⁸ and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,¹⁹ as well as conventions pertaining to the use of chemicals.

126. The Commission highlighted climate change as an enormous challenge for the region in achieving sustained economic growth in terms of enhancing food and water security, managing forests and agricultural productivity, resilience to disasters, and the development of mountains as well as coastal areas, and thus overshadowing the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the region. Several delegations underscored the need for further assistance from the international community, in particular, in enhancing the resilience and adaptability of vulnerable countries.

127. Some delegations noted the analytical work conducted by the secretariat on the region-specific issues pertaining to sustainable development, and commended in particular, the recent ESCAP publication *Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific: Turning Resource Constraints and the Climate Crisis into Economic Growth Opportunities*.²⁰ It was also underlined that member States should have the opportunity to choose policy options according to their nationally specific development priorities and experiences.

128. The delegation of Cambodia informed the Commission that its country was the first least developed country to have developed a national green growth road map and that it had established the national Green Growth Secretariat with a view to ensuring sustainable development. The delegation of Mongolia also informed the Commission that it was working on establishing a green growth committee.

129. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran urged the secretariat to contribute to an international dialogue on post-Kyoto mechanisms under the United

¹⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

¹⁸ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

¹⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

²⁰ ST/ESCAP/2631.

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,¹⁷ in which the historical responsibility of greenhouse gas emissions had to be further acknowledged. The delegation also drew the attention of the Commission to the ongoing transboundary dust and sandstorms phenomena triggered by drought intensification in neighbouring countries. In that context, it suggested the development of a joint initiative by ESCAP and the secretariat of ESCWA to facilitate bilateral and regional cooperation and technical solutions to manage the problem.

130. The Commission noted that countries of the region were urbanizing and that urbanization had created significant additional pressure on public infrastructure.

131. Several delegations commended the secretariat for documenting and sharing good practices and country experiences in eco-city development, promotion of public transportation, green buildings, 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) strategies, sustainable urban planning, solid waste management, water supply, sewerage, participatory approaches to urban management, promotion of public-private partnerships and municipal finance. They requested the secretariat to continue its work in those areas.

132. The Commission noted that capacity development for local authorities to integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of urban development was of crucial importance for sustainable urban development and that the activities of ESCAP in those areas could be greatly beneficial for member States.

133. The Commission was informed of the convening of the World Urban Forum in Naples, Italy, from 1 to 7 September 2012.

134. The Commission recognized the common goal of achieving energy security and noted the important role of clean energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy. It also noted the need to speed up technology transfer through regional cooperation, and enhance cooperation on energy connectivity at the regional and subregional levels.

135. The Commission noted different options and mechanisms utilized for improving energy consumption and promoting the use of renewable energy in the industrial, transport and residential sectors, such as the development of a national cleaner fuel policy, the establishment of revolving funds, tax incentives and the formulation of standards and regulations.

136. The Commission welcomed the confirmation given by the Russian Federation that it would host the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum at the ministerial level in May 2013 in Vladivostok. The Commission also urged member States to actively participate in the preparatory process as well as in the Forum itself.

137. The Commission recognized the need for integrated water resources management in the light of the floods in Thailand in 2011, which from an economic perspective had had ripple effects on the industrial supply chain as the floods had adversely affected the operations of major parts suppliers to manufacturers of cars and electronics. It noted the importance of establishing a platform to share beneficial experiences and best practices on disaster management and integrated water resources management. One delegation highlighted water scarcity and drought in some member countries, which would also require efficient water resource management and closer regional cooperation.

138. The Commission generally supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Environment and Development on its second session.

139. The representative of the United States stated that her delegation objected to the language in paragraph 116 above — specifically the recognition of sustainable development as being “based on the Rio Principles, and in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities” — which her Government regarded as

prejudging key portions of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and that, therefore, the United States could not support the environment and development section of the report.

Sub-item (e)

Information and communications technology

140. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its sixth session (E/ESCAP/68/12).

141. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Indonesia; Malaysia; Mongolia; Pakistan; Philippines; Russian Federation; Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

142. The Commission underlined the crucial contributions that information and communications technologies (ICTs) were making in accelerating economic growth and progressing towards inclusive and sustainable development in the region. ICTs offered new avenues for delivering basic services, including in areas such as agriculture, education, health, government, financial inclusion and access to knowledge. ICTs also offered opportunities to address sustainable development objectives and climate change challenges, and to provide livelihood opportunities for the poor and marginalized through job creation.

143. The Commission took the view that proactive Government policies were essential to harness ICTs for development. Such policies included awareness-raising activities, increased ICT literacy and the development of human capacities.

144. The Commission took note of a number of national initiatives, including the introduction of ICT strategies and legislation, that had contributed to the region's emergence as a global centre for ICT production and innovation.

145. The Commission underlined the role of ICTs in accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and noted that the region was on track in the implementation of a number of the objectives of the World Summit on the Information Society to be achieved by 2015.²¹ In that regard, it requested the secretariat to continue to track the progress realized.

146. The Commission noted with concern the persistence of the digital divide and last mile connectivity gaps within and across countries of the region. It called for a strengthening of regional cooperation in ICT connectivity, with special attention to the needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and Pacific island countries. The Commission noted with appreciation the announcement by the Russian Federation to provide the secretariat with financial support for technical assistance activities in Central Asia related to increasing ICT connectivity and creating a single regional information space.

147. In that regard, the Commission was informed of the implementation by India of a national plan aimed at providing e-governance services and increasing access to the same in rural areas of the country, and its efforts to connect all institutions of higher learning and research through a high-speed data communications network to facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaborative research. The Commission noted the efforts of Bangladesh to mainstream ICTs into its national development strategies through the national initiative "Digital Bangladesh", and the implementation of a national programme in Mongolia for e-government from 2012 to 2016. The representative of Indonesia informed the Commission of various training and

²¹ See A/C.2/59/3, annex, and A/60/687.

capacity-building initiatives, including the development of common standards of competence for the ICT sector. The Commission was informed that the Philippines had built a critical mass of ICT competence through its National Computer Institute. The Commission was also informed that Thailand was expanding its broadband network under its “Smart Thailand” strategy and increasing wireless Internet connectivity in public areas and remote areas where fibre-optic networks were not yet available.

148. Several delegations expressed support for the Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and Development and requested the secretariat to continue to develop it for enhanced regional cooperation.

149. The Commission highlighted the importance of capacity-building in the use of ICTs for national development, including in the areas of promoting small and medium enterprises, delivering public services, enabling access to basic services — such as education, finance and health — and improving sustainable livelihoods as well as facilitating social transformation.

150. The Commission expressed strong appreciation for the work of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT). Many delegations described the in-depth partnership between their Governments and APCICT in implementing the Centre’s flagship ICT for development capacity-building programme, called the “Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders”. The activities conducted through such partnerships included organizing training workshops for government officials, translating the training modules into the local language, customizing the programme for Government chief information officers and institutionalizing the programme into national civil service training frameworks. The Commission was informed that the programme had been adopted in countries beyond the Asia-Pacific region. Some delegations noted the importance of extending ICT for development capacity-building to universities.

151. The Commission recognized the increasing value of ICT capacity-building in the region and took note of the demand for continued expansion of the Academy programme. Some of the areas highlighted for ICT capacity-building in the future were e-Government, Internet banking, distance learning and information security. In that context, the need for capacity-building for resource persons and further collaboration among partners was underscored.

152. The delegation of Indonesia informed the Commission of its Government’s plan to make an in-kind contribution of \$230,000 for the implementation of APCICT programmes and activities in Indonesia during 2012. The delegation of the Republic of Korea announced its Government’s decision to contribute the following amounts to support APCICT in 2012:

- (a) \$1,000,000 through the Incheon Metropolitan City;
- (b) \$720,000 through the Korea Communications Commission;
- (c) Approximately \$500,000 through the Korea International Cooperation Agency.

153. The Commission elected, along with the host country, the Republic of Korea, the following countries to the Governing Council of APCICT for the period 2012-2015: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Indonesia; Pakistan; Philippines; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

Sub-item (f)
Disaster risk reduction

154. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its second session (E/ESCAP/68/11) and two information documents: the report of the Typhoon Committee (E/ESCAP/68/INF/6) and the report of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones (E/ESCAP/68/INF/7).

155. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Pakistan; Philippines; Russian Federation; and Thailand. The representatives of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones each delivered a statement.

156. The Commission noted with appreciation the important contribution to regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction made by the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries, which had been established in 2005 with a \$10 million contribution from Thailand. The Commission recognized the importance of the Fund in promoting regional partnerships for disaster resilience, in particular the contribution to early warning systems through the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia. The Commission also noted the decision of the Fund's Advisory Council to approve six projects totalling more than \$2 million.

157. The Commission noted the importance of enhanced regional cooperation in building capacity in the use of space technology and geo-informatics, including the establishment of National Spatial Data Infrastructure for disaster risk reduction and management. The need for regional cooperation to establish a regional earth observation satellite constellation was highlighted. The Commission was informed about the focus of Thailand on establishing a regional hub for space-based disaster risk management and human resources development.

158. The Commission also noted that there was limited access to geographic information systems and remote sensing technology services, especially for countries with special needs. In that regard, the Commission was requested to provide technical assistance and capacity development through enhanced regional cooperation.

159. The Commission was informed of the pertinent use of geographic information systems and remote sensing in Pakistan, including for urban and regional planning, environmental management and disaster risk reduction and management. The Commission was requested to provide the necessary support regarding the draft resolution on Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017 (E/ESCAP/68/L.9).

160. The Commission was informed that several countries had made progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.²² It was also informed of recent initiatives that focused on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development by (a) analysing gaps, (b) assessing needs, (c) developing capacities, (d) developing sector-specific guidelines and tool-kits, (e) identifying disaster risk reduction experts, and (f) developing institutional frameworks, financial mechanisms, and community-based disaster risk management systems. All of those things had helped in reducing casualties and losses.

²² A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

161. Some delegations noted that climate-related disasters, such as floods, were destroying development gains. The representative of Thailand informed the Commission that, after the devastating floods of 2011, the importance of an accurate and user-friendly early warning system, risk assessments and damage analyses, a tracking system, and a culture of disaster awareness had been clearly recognized. It was important to enhance capacities with regard to climate risk management, including subnational risk governance, and to strengthen regional cooperation in order to address climate-related threats. The representative of Thailand informed the Commission of cooperation within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response,²³ which had led to the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management during the Nineteenth ASEAN Summit (Bali, Indonesia, November 2011). The Commission welcomed the role of Thailand as chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management through March 2013. One delegation noted that technologies for green growth and biodiversity-based management were useful and that networking in that field would be helpful for countries in the region.

162. The delegation of Japan expressed anew its deep gratitude for the warm assistance and solidarity extended by members and associate members of the Commission as well as the secretariat following the devastating great east Japan earthquake and tsunami. The delegation informed the Commission that Japan would hold a high-level international conference on large-scale disasters in July 2012 in the disaster-stricken Tohoku region to discuss ways to maximize capacities for disaster risk reduction and broaden cooperation and coordination among relevant stakeholders. The conference was expected to contribute to a post-Hyogo Framework for Action, which was expected to be agreed at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which Japan would host in 2015.

163. The Commission noted that efforts in disaster risk reduction should help member States to build a regional system for disaster risk reduction by supplementing the global efforts of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The Commission also noted the decision by the Russian Federation to launch a disaster mitigation capacity-building project in North and Central Asia.

164. One delegation also expressed its appreciation for the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2010*,²⁴ which had proved useful for policymakers.

165. It was noted that more training on practical disaster assessment methodologies would have a positive impact on the capacities of member States.

166. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Commission that the secretariat had provided close cooperation and support for the implementation of Commission resolution 67/4 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management. The delegation also informed the Commission that its Parliament had approved the establishment of the Centre and the first portion of the budget. At the regional level, consultations with the ESCAP subregional offices and partners, such as the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, were ongoing with support and coordination from the secretariat. The delegation invited member States and institutions in the region and international partners to participate, in various possible

²³ See www.aseansec.org/17579.htm.

²⁴ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, *The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, 2010: Protecting Development Gains—Reducing Disaster Vulnerability and Building Resilience in Asia and the Pacific*. Available from www.unescap.org/idd/pubs/Asia-Pacific-Disaster-Report%20-2010.pdf.

ways, in the process leading to the establishment of the Centre and in its future activities.

167. Some delegations stressed that the vulnerability of small island developing States had increased, but that that had not been matched by the capacity of those States to cope. One delegation called for special attention to countries with special needs, in particular the developing island States in the Pacific, and highlighted the need for various forms of assistance to address the vulnerabilities.

168. One delegation suggested three priorities that the secretariat could adopt: (a) optimizing resource utilization to avoid duplication; (b) paying attention to countries with special needs, especially the Pacific island countries; and (c) promoting substantial cooperation among disaster-prone countries in prevention, preparedness and post-disaster reconstruction.

169. The delegation of India, while noting the valuable work carried out by the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre to provide tropical cyclone-related forecasts and advisories to countries in the region, expressed support for the plan of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones to establish an integrated drought management programme to include various aspects of drought as well as socioeconomic impacts at the national and subnational levels. The delegation informed the Commission that, upon request from the Panel, India would support training programmes on tropical cyclone and storm research and forecasting systems for coastal areas.

170. The representative of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones took the view that climate change was one of the greatest challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region, as evidenced by a number of recent large-scale disasters. As a result, the Panel on Tropical Cyclones would have more important roles to play, through its intergovernmental process, in promoting measures to improve warning systems, disseminating technical information on research, and improving forecast-related operations to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of tropical cyclone-related disasters.

171. The representative of WMO expressed concern that many national meteorological and hydrological services in the region were marginalized in the larger discussion of disaster risk reduction and climate change at the global level despite major loss of life and economic damage caused by disasters. He informed the Commission that WMO was planning to hold an extraordinary session of the World Meteorological Congress, which would focus on the implementation plans and governing structure of the Global Framework for Climate Services. ESCAP was invited to attend the session, which would be held in Geneva in 2012.

172. The Commission welcomed and endorsed the suggestion of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction at its second session that the secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme and their development partners increase their support to building national capacities in the collection and analysis of disaster data for hazard and vulnerability assessments, disaster preparedness, mitigation and contingency planning,²⁵ as countries were facing challenges in obtaining access to the relevant data.

173. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the work of the secretariat in disaster risk reduction in the region and appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat in the area of space applications for disaster risk reduction and development.

174. The Commission adopted resolution 68/5 on Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017.

²⁵ See E/ESCAP/68/11, para. 6.

Sub-item (g)
Social development

175. In addition to the common documents considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals (E/ESCAP/68/13).

176. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

177. The Commission recognized the unique role played by ESCAP in promoting social development in the Asian and Pacific region. It commended the secretariat for its successful implementation of the programme of work in the field of social development and for the consistently high quality of its outputs.

178. The Commission acknowledged the progress that had been achieved by members and associate members in implementing a range of social development policies and programmes. Those included programmes to address poverty reduction, food security, gender equality and women's empowerment, social protection and services, education, health promotion, infant and maternal mortality, improved access to water and sanitation, and building resilience to disasters, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups including meeting the needs of rural and remote communities. The Commission noted that those efforts had contributed to supporting the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

179. The Commission noted the valuable role of ESCAP as an inclusive intergovernmental platform for promoting regional cooperation, including South-South cooperation, in the field of social development. It recognized the wealth of experience and good practices that existed in the region, and called upon the secretariat to continue to support the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices to promote gender equality, social development and poverty reduction.

180. The Commission acknowledged with appreciation the noteworthy progress that had been made in the lives of persons with disabilities through the course of the first and second Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons (1993-2002,²⁶ 2003-2012²⁷), including through the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific²⁸ and Biwako Plus Five: towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.²⁹ The Commission expressed gratitude to the Governments of China and Japan for their leadership during those two decades and thanked all members and associate members for their contribution to the implementation of those decades. The Commission also expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the effective support provided to members and associate members during the course of the two decades.

181. Several delegations reported on newly introduced policies and programmes to enhance rights-based disability-inclusive development in the region, including the introduction of anti-discrimination laws, official recognition and promotion of sign language, the expansion of education for persons with hearing impairment as well as efforts to provide cash transfers to persons with disabilities living in poverty and

²⁶ Commission resolution 48/3 of 23 April 1992.

²⁷ Commission resolution 58/4 of 22 May 2002.

²⁸ E/ESCAP/APDDP/4/Rev.1 (see also Commission resolution 59/3).

²⁹ E/ESCAP/APDDP(2)/2 (see also Commission resolution 64/8).

comprehensive medical and rehabilitation services. The Commission welcomed the announcement by the delegation of the Russian Federation that the Government would soon be ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.³⁰

182. In order to sustain the momentum that had been built and to accelerate further progress in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, including through regional and international cooperation, the Commission strongly supported the proclamation of a new Asian and Pacific decade of persons with disabilities for the period 2013 to 2022.

183. The Commission expressed appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for its hosting of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, which would be convened at the ministerial level in Incheon from 29 October to 2 November 2012. The Commission commended the secretariat for the successful regional preparatory activities in the lead-up to the High-level Meeting, including its efforts to ensure an inclusive preparatory process that had resulted in a high level of engagement of governments and stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities.

184. The Commission emphasized the significance of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, and noted that the Meeting would serve as a key regional platform for further promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, including through the launching of a new regional decade of persons with disabilities, 2013-2022. The delegation of the Republic of Korea encouraged all members and associate members to actively participate in the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. The delegation of Japan reiterated that its Government would contribute actively to the success of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. The delegation of the Russian Federation underscored the importance of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting and its outcome as a regional input to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities, which would be held in September 2013.

185. The Commission expressed appreciation to the secretariat for facilitating the preparation of the draft outcome document for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, namely the draft Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. That document had been developed based on inputs from governments as well as stakeholders through a regional survey and consultative meetings. The delegation of the Russian Federation indicated that it looked forward to the secretariat's early issuance of the second version of the draft outcome document that would take into account the recommendations made by government experts and stakeholders at the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, which had been held in March 2012.

186. The Commission noted the successful implementation by the secretariat of the "Make the Right Real" campaign to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,³⁰ including the national launches of the campaign in Bangladesh, India and the Philippines. The delegation of Japan referred to its Government's cooperation with ESCAP in supporting the campaign, which it noted had produced solid and tangible results, particularly through the effective and results-oriented management of the project by the secretariat.

³⁰ General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

187. The Commission noted the useful work of APCICT to support members and associate members in enhancing ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities.

188. The Commission commended the secretariat for the successful organization of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals, which had been convened in Bangkok from 6 to 8 February 2012 in partnership with seven other United Nations entities: the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women; and World Health Organization.

189. The Commission welcomed the outcome of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals, including the regional framework to support the implementation of international and region-specific commitments. It noted the importance of delivering on the commitments made by member States in the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted by the General Assembly at its High-level Meeting on AIDS as well as ESCAP resolutions 66/10 and 67/9.

190. Several delegations reported on progress made in their efforts towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 6, including promoting universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Those included policies and programmes to reduce new HIV infections, the mainstreaming of HIV into national development plans, and the integration of rights-based approaches, gender dimensions and non-discrimination into HIV responses. The Commission also noted that many countries were scaling up their HIV responses, including through strengthening their human resources capacity, enhancing legal frameworks and assistance, and providing affordable antiretroviral treatment.

191. The Commission emphasized that for HIV responses to be sustainable, it would be necessary for programmes to more effectively focus on young people and key affected populations and more comprehensively address legal and policy barriers, gender dimensions, and stigma and discrimination, including enhancing access to HIV services for migrants. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran was of the view that affordable antiretroviral treatment (generic drugs) should be provided to all people living with HIV, including through assistance by developed countries, and that intellectual property rights should not hinder access to such treatment. The representative further emphasized the importance of addressing sociocultural factors in HIV prevention.

192. The Commission noted the significance of regional cooperation and the sharing of knowledge and good practices related to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. It called upon the secretariat to work, in collaboration with UNAIDS and its co-sponsors, to support governments in conducting periodic reviews of regional progress in fulfilling the international and regional commitments to address HIV and AIDS.

193. The Commission noted that the Asia-Pacific region had made significant progress in addressing population and development issues since the adoption in 1994 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.³¹ The region had increased access to sexual and reproductive health services and reduced infant mortality and gender gaps in education. At the same time,

³¹ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

challenges still remained, including uneven progress regarding improvement in maternal health and the need to increase resources to reduce maternal mortality.

194. The Commission welcomed the regional preparatory activities to be undertaken by the secretariat in cooperation with UNFPA, as outlined in the note by the secretariat,³² to support the national and regional reviews of progress in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development as inputs for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, as called for in General Assembly resolution 65/234. It endorsed the proposal to postpone the convening of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference to 2013 to enable the Conference to serve as an intergovernmental platform for regional preparations for the above-mentioned special session of the General Assembly. The delegation of the Russian Federation highlighted the unique opportunity provided by the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference to arrive at a regional consensus to address issues such as reproductive health, HIV prevention and treatment, population ageing, gender equality, international migration, urbanization and education.

195. The Commission emphasized the significance of gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission noted that progress had been made by countries in the region in mainstreaming gender across a range of development programmes. Several delegations also reported on their efforts to meet gender-related international development goals, including those to achieve gender parity in education and increased economic participation of women in non-agricultural sectors. Several delegations reported on programmes under way in their countries directed at women's economic empowerment, such as dedicated funds for women's empowerment and social protection schemes, including cooperatives and livelihood creation and income support schemes aimed at reducing the number of women living in poverty and promoting the full social and economic inclusion of women. The Commission noted, however, that efforts were still needed to address the remaining challenges and to fulfil all the gender-related international development goals and targets.

196. Several delegations emphasized the importance of addressing the needs of older persons, particularly the provision of social protection and care services, as the region was undergoing a rapid demographic transition towards population ageing. The delegation of China informed the Commission of its ongoing cooperation with ESCAP in the area of ageing, and commended the secretariat for its efforts in preparing for the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing,³³ for which an Asia-Pacific intergovernmental meeting would be convened from 10 to 12 September 2012 in Bangkok.

197. In recalling ESCAP resolution 67/7 of 25 May 2011 on the role of cooperatives in social development in Asia and the Pacific and the proclamation by the General Assembly of the year 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives,³⁴ the delegation of Mongolia informed the Commission of its active role in partnership with other countries in supporting the cooperative movement, and requested assistance from the secretariat and other international organizations in developing cooperatives in order to enhance the participation and social inclusion of women and persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

³² See E/ESCAP/68/2, para. 113.

³³ *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

³⁴ See General Assembly resolution 64/136 of 18 December 2009 on cooperatives in social development.

198. The representative of UNFPA indicated that the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference would be an important opportunity for Asian and Pacific countries to shape the future of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 and to ensure that population dynamics were fully integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. The representative stated that UNFPA was pleased to be working closely with ESCAP in the regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the Programme of Action. It was expected that the regional review would address issues related to sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and youth empowerment as well as emerging future challenges, such as low fertility, population ageing, international migration, rapid urbanization and the impacts of environmental change on population.

199. The representative of UNAIDS recalled the successful convening of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals in Bangkok from 6 to 8 February 2012, which had brought together member States, some of which had included representatives of key affected populations in their national delegations, and representatives of civil society, including faith-based organizations, to review progress, exchange good practices and address barriers to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. The representative indicated that UNAIDS had been particularly pleased to have joined ESCAP and six other United Nations entities as a joint secretariat to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. The representative further stated that UNAIDS was prepared to support member States in the implementation of the regional framework for action, as adopted by the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, which would contribute to realizing the goal of zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

200. The representative of the International Planned Parenthood Federation congratulated the secretariat for its effective engagement with civil society organizations, particularly in the Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support, which had been held in Bangkok on 30 and 31 March 2011. The representative urged the secretariat to continue to include civil society in such regional platforms. In emphasizing the importance of population issues in the context of overall development, the representative further commended the secretariat for its proactive efforts to support the region in considering population and development issues in the lead-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. The representative requested the secretariat to consider holding consultations on universal access to reproductive health, including during the forthcoming sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference.

201. The Commission noted with appreciation the generous financial support of the Governments of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation as well as the government of Macao, China, to the work of the secretariat in the field of social development.

202. The Commission endorsed the recommendations contained in the documents considered under agenda item 3 (g).

203. The Commission adopted resolutions 68/6 on Asia-Pacific regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 and 68/7 on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.

Sub-item (h)
Statistics

204. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventh session (E/ESCAP/68/14).

205. Representatives of the following countries made statements: China; India; Japan; Malaysia; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

206. The Commission emphasized the importance of timely and reliable statistics in planning, monitoring and evaluating effective policies for inclusive, sustainable and resilient development. In that regard, the Commission expressed appreciation for the outcomes of the second session of the Committee on Statistics,³⁵ which provided long-term direction for the development of statistics that would meet the need for evidence-based decision-making in the region.

207. The Commission also expressed appreciation for the roles the Bureau and the secretariat played in leading the implementation of the decisions of the Committee on Statistics at its second session. In particular, the Commission acknowledged the broad country engagement in developing regional plans on economic, agricultural and rural statistics and in developing a strategy for improving the coordination of statistical training. Several delegations stressed their commitment to the work of the Committee on Statistics, specifically by participating in the steering and technical advisory groups that had been established by the Committee.

208. The Commission acknowledged the value of the Committee on Statistics as a regional forum for countries to exchange experiences and good practices. One delegation noted the need to tap into the potential of the Committee to strengthen the engagement and contribution from the region towards the development of international statistical standards through technical and expert discussions.

209. The Commission expressed appreciation for the analytical work that was done by the secretariat, as demonstrated in the regional report on the Millennium Development Goals³⁶ and the *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2011*,³⁷ and acknowledged the improved quality of analysis and information in those publications.

210. In recognition of the importance of statistical training in achieving the strategic goals of the Committee on Statistics, the Commission took note of the view expressed by the representative of one delegation that the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) should report to the Commission through the Committee on Statistics, rather than directly to the Commission.

211. Several delegations committed to providing monetary contributions to support the work of SIAP. The Commission took particular note of the continued generous support that Japan, the host government for SIAP, had maintained for SIAP

³⁵ See E/ESCAP/67/12, chap. I.

³⁶ Asian Development Bank, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Development Programme, *Accelerating Equitable Achievement of the MDGs: Closing Gaps in Health and Nutrition Outcomes – Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2011/12* (Bangkok, ESCAP, 2012). Available from www.unescap.org/pdd/calendar/CSN-MDG-NewDelhi-Nov-2011/MDG-Report2011-12.pdf.

³⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.II.F.1.

in spite of the 2011 tsunami and the increased in-kind contributions it had directed towards upgrading the training environment at SIAP.

212. The Commission stressed the need for in-kind contributions to support the work of SIAP in the form of expertise and experts. On that point, the representative of India expressed a commitment to strengthen collaboration with SIAP, including through the provision of room and board for outreach programmes as well as resource persons. The representative of China also expressed a commitment to strengthen collaboration between ESCAP and the China International Statistical Training Centre.

213. The Commission welcomed information provided by several delegations on their country initiatives to further strengthen statistical systems and the progress achieved in recent years, including through strengthening legislative infrastructure for statistics and developing and implementing national statistics development strategies.

214. The Commission welcomed the increased support to the work of the Committee on Statistics by the Russian Federation through the provision of financial resources for improving ICT support for census operations and economic statistics, and noted the need to assess and report on the results of completed programmes and projects.

215. The Commission endorsed the recommendations contained in the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventh session and commended the achievements of SIAP in developing statistical capacity in the region through training. The Commission expressed support for the current work programme of SIAP and pointed to the need for further strengthening training to continue meeting existing and emerging demands.

Sub-item (i)

Subregional activities for development

216. The Commission had before it three documents related to the agenda item: (a) Subprogramme overview: Issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/68/2); (b) Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/68/3); and (c) Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011 (E/ESCAP/68/INF/3 and Add.1).

217. Representatives of the following countries made statements: China; Fiji; India; Japan; Kazakhstan; Micronesia (Federated States of); Mongolia; Nauru; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Solomon Islands.

East and North-East Asia

218. The Commission noted the important role of the Subregional Office and the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) vis-à-vis the subregional coordination of the efforts of member States to protect endangered species, address the environmental impact of transboundary air pollution, and mitigate dust storms and sandstorms under the framework of NEASPEC. The Commission also noted that the Government of China would host the 17th Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC in October 2012.

219. The Commission noted that the Subregional Office had successfully implemented programmes to support meeting the special needs of member States, in particular Mongolia, by carrying out activities aimed at improving trade facilitation (in collaboration with the Trade and Investment Division) and environmentally friendly economic growth.

220. Considering the importance of advancing multilateral cooperation and building a strong sense of a North-East Asian community among governments and

people, the Commission invited all member States to make good use of the significant potential of the Subregional Office as a key platform for initiating and facilitating subregional cooperation.

221. The Commission recognized the successful progress of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia in developing and implementing subregional cooperation programmes in the economic, social and environmental fields in line with the priorities of ESCAP and the distinctive situations of the member States in the subregion.

222. The Commission commended the Subregional Office for acting as the subregional development arm of the United Nations, supporting the work of ESCAP and enhancing the visibility of ESCAP in the subregion by, among other things, facilitating subregional cooperation and disseminating information on good practices, thereby bringing ESCAP closer to governments and people in the subregion.

223. The Commission took the view that the Subregional Office needed to further enhance the work related information sharing on good practices and lessons learned with regard to disaster risk reduction strategies, to carry out programmes in accordance with the priority areas identified by member States, and to ensure timely and proper communication with the Governments of member States, in particular the host country, regarding meetings and events.

North and Central Asia

224. The Commission noted with satisfaction the progress made on: (a) the establishment of the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, including the finalization of the Administrative and Financial Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Kazakhstan; (b) the staffing process; (c) the renovation of the office building; and (d) the creation of a website.

225. The Commission noted that the overall objective of the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia was to achieve internationally agreed development goals by building connectivity and promoting inclusive and sustainable social and economic development of member States. It noted further that the work of the Office was focused on subregion-specific priorities, such as:

(a) *Transport and trade facilitation*: developing better transport links, including Euro-Asian transport corridors; transit and transport cooperation, including improved border crossing; introducing trade facilitation measures; and reducing trade barriers;

(b) *Water, energy and environment*: management of water and energy resources, protection of the environment and climate change adaptation.

226. The Commission noted that the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia had become fully operational within its first year and begun implementation of various activities related to subregion-specific development priorities. It also noted that the Subregional Office had built two-way linkages between ESCAP headquarters and member States, established working relations with sectoral ministries and governmental organizations and forged partnerships with financial institutions and intergovernmental organizations based in North and Central Asia.

227. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the Subregional Office had started implementing a project on the economic and social recovery of Afghanistan with a focus on the development of small and medium enterprises and the creation of additional jobs. The Commission also noted that two specific projects — related to safety assessment of small hydraulic installations and disaster risk reduction in Central Asia — were likely to be finalized in the near future and implemented in 2012-2013 with the financial support of the Russian Federation.

228. The Commission applauded the head of the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia for his leadership and efficient work, which had resulted in the Office becoming fully operational at an early stage, and reiterated the support of member States for the work currently carried out by the Office in accordance with the mandates given to it by the member States.

229. The Commission noted that the Subregional Office coordinated the activities under the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) which was supported by ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Europe and covered five Central Asian economies as well as Afghanistan and Azerbaijan. The Commission was informed that the 2012 SPECA Economic Forum, which was scheduled to be held in Bangkok on 27 and 28 November under the theme “Strengthening regional economic cooperation and integration in Central Asia by sharing the Asian experience”, would provide a good opportunity to learn about the best practices associated with regional economic cooperation in Asia and the Pacific in order to strengthen regional cooperation in SPECA countries against the backdrop of new global challenges.

230. The Commission noted the importance of coordination between ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Europe on initiatives to promote key areas, such as transport and intermodal linkages, and highlighted the significant role the SPECA programme could play in facilitating those efforts.

231. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed confidence that all heads of subregional offices would plan and implement activities according to the priorities and tasks incorporated in the strategic framework of the Commission and approved by the member States.

The Pacific

232. The Head of the ESCAP Pacific Office delivered a statement on subregional activities for development in the Pacific subregion.

233. The Commission expressed appreciation for the work of the ESCAP Pacific Office and the support it had provided for members in the subregion, particularly its technical assistance and capacity-building activities in the areas of sustainable development, green growth, and the integration of social, environmental and economic outcomes.

234. The Commission commended the work that the Pacific Office was doing to assist Pacific island developing country members in preparing for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

235. The Commission appreciated the collaborative partnership approach adopted by the ESCAP Pacific Office in working with Pacific subregional organizations and with other United Nations bodies in the subregion.

South and South-West Asia

236. Several delegations expressed support for the subregional offices and the secretariat’s active implementation of its subregional programme of work.

237. The Commission noted that the key priorities of the Subregional Office included: (a) accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through inclusive growth, gender equality and policy advocacy by means of regional knowledge networks; (b) strengthening connectivity, and trade and transport facilitation; (c) promoting regional economic integration, regional cooperation for food and energy security, and disaster risk reduction; and (d) assisting the least developed countries in building productive capacity.

238. The Commission was informed about recent activities of the Subregional Office, including the hosting of the High-level Subregional Forum on Accelerating Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in South Asia, policy dialogues on the economic and social development outlook in the subregion for 2012, and the development of knowledge products, including a development paper series, a development monitor newsletter and deeper content delivery through its website (<http://southwest-sro.unescap.org>).

239. Noting with satisfaction that the Subregional Office had opened in New Delhi in December 2011, the delegation of India reiterated its full support for the Subregional Office and highlighted the Subregional Office's potential and location as a springboard of ideas for the entire ESCAP system. The delegation informed the Commission that the Subregional Office could play a useful role in assisting both members and the secretariat in implementation of the ESCAP programme of work by acting as an outreach arm. The delegation noted that the work of the Subregional Office had already begun in earnest and expressed confidence that the relationship between the Subregional Office and ESCAP headquarters would be synergistic and complementary.

240. The Commission generally endorsed the recommendations contained in the documents under agenda item 3 (i).

Agenda item 4 **Management issues**

Sub-item (a) **Report on evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2010-2011**

241. The Commission had before it the report on evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2010-2011 (E/ESCAP/68/15).

242. In introducing the agenda item, the Executive Secretary indicated that evaluation was a critical part of the agenda of ESCAP and its commitment as a learning organization, and expressed her commitment to the implementation of evaluation recommendations and follow-up actions. The Executive Secretary stated that the 16 evaluation exercises carried out by the secretariat during 2010-2011 had contributed to organizational effectiveness, knowledge, learning and accountability. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary highlighted the value of formalized frameworks for coordination, including the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), to enhance accountability and coordination with other stakeholders in all aspects of the work of ESCAP and to bring the United Nations family together to deliver as one at the regional level.

243. In referring to the entire agenda item, one delegation expressed support for the Executive Secretary's strong emphasis on results, partnerships and learning. In that context, the delegation stressed the importance of assessing the impact of ESCAP activities and how those activities were making a difference across the region. The delegation held the view that an objective impact evaluation should, among other things, help keep the work of ESCAP in sharp focus and fully aligned with the Organization's mandate and the priorities of member States. The delegation also expressed its support for efforts to strengthen partnerships between member States and the secretariat. In that regard, emphasis was given to the importance of close consultations and to engagement with all subregions through dialogue and project implementation in a balanced manner. In terms of cooperation with subregional organizations, the delegation proposed that linkages with the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization be strengthened. Finally, the delegation expressed support for efforts aimed at building synergies and ensuring maximum coherence between the work of ESCAP headquarters and that of its subregional offices as well as that of other United Nations agencies. It recognized the RCM as an important vehicle for advancing the latter.

244. The Commission took note of the report.

245. The Commission adopted resolution 68/8 on enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with regional organizations for promoting regional development.

Sub-item (b)

Programme changes for the biennium 2012-2013

246. The Commission had before it a note by the secretariat containing the proposed programme changes for the biennium 2012-2013 (E/ESCAP/68/16).

247. The Commission was informed that the proposed programme changes would contribute to the achievement of the expected accomplishments and had no additional regular programme budget implications for the biennium 2012-2013.

248. The representative of the Russian Federation made a statement.

249. The Commission endorsed the proposed programme changes for the biennium 2012-2013 set out in the document under consideration, subject to the deletion of the reference to the postponement of the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport.

Sub-item (c)

Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015

250. The Commission had before it the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/ESCAP/68/17 and Corr.1).

251. Representatives of the following countries made statements: India; and Indonesia.

252. In introducing the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015, the Executive Secretary emphasized that it had been developed through an unprecedented level of interaction between the secretariat and member States, setting the direction for how ESCAP would work in 2014-2015 towards achieving its vision to be the most inclusive multilateral platform for promoting cooperation among member States to achieve inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific. The draft drew on the mandates, expertise and comparative advantages of ESCAP as a regional intergovernmental platform that was striving to make optimal use of its multidisciplinary approach and growing South-South cooperation. The Commission was informed that the document reflected the outcomes of the prior reviews undertaken by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission on two occasions.

253. The Commission endorsed the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 as set out in the document under consideration.

Sub-item (d)

Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions

254. The Commission had before it the overview of technical cooperation activities and extrabudgetary contributions (E/ESCAP/68/18).

255. Representatives of the following countries made statements: China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

256. In her introductory remarks, the Executive Secretary highlighted three key drivers underpinning the mandate and role of ESCAP: results, partnerships and building ESCAP as a learning organization. The Executive Secretary informed the Commission about the steps the secretariat had initiated to strengthen the results-oriented focus of its technical cooperation work, which included: (a) larger, longer-term and better aligned capacity development projects, with emphasis on improved performance through strengthened results-based management; (b) a resource mobilization strategy that provides a framework for a more proactive approach to partnerships and donor relations, and the establishment of a Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Section; (c) continued efforts to strengthen relations with partners through meetings with a number of member States and donor agencies; and (d) enhanced engagement with some private sector counterparts as partners in promoting and delivering capacity development. The Executive Secretary also highlighted examples of how the secretariat's technical cooperation programme had been implemented with capacity development, knowledge-sharing and South-South cooperation as central features.

257. The Commission noted that total contributions received by the secretariat for technical cooperation activities in 2011 from the regular budget of the United Nations as well as voluntary sources amounted to approximately \$15.5 million, with the total volume of technical cooperation delivery in 2011 being approximately \$18.2 million.

258. The delegation of China emphasized the priority attached by its Government to technical cooperation activities conducted jointly with ESCAP. Noting that ESCAP and China had undertaken more than 200 projects, the delegation highlighted the priority given to South-South cooperation in that context. The delegation underscored its Government's relationship with the secretariat, which was built on trust and efficient communication, as well as the importance of increasing communication between the secretariat and member States generally, listening to the priorities of member States, fully utilizing available resources and promoting innovation. The delegation affirmed its Government's continued funding support for the technical cooperation programme of ESCAP and for the work of UNAPCAEM specifically.

259. The delegation of the Russian Federation welcomed the high level of results achieved through cooperation between ESCAP and its Government. It pointed out that secretariat projects funded from voluntary contributions of the Russian Federation had been implemented in accordance with the expectations of recipient countries. The delegation expressed appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat to work out administrative arrangements for cooperation with the Russian Federation.

260. The delegations of India and the Republic of Korea specifically highlighted the performance and importance of APCICT in human and institutional capacity development. The delegation of the Republic of Korea reiterated the importance of ICT as a key enabler of development which contributed to progress across all sectors. It noted that the work of APCICT had been adopted and institutionalized in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

261. The Commission noted the following contributions pledged by members and associate members for 2012.

262. *Bangladesh.* The secretariat received written notification that the Government of Bangladesh would make the following contributions:

APCICT	\$5,000
APCTT	\$5,000
CAPSA	\$1,000
SIAP	\$3,000
UNAPCAEM	\$3,000

263. *China*. The delegation of China indicated that its Government would make the following contributions:

China-ESCAP Cooperation Programme	\$200,000
	and RMB 1,500,000
SIAP	\$50,000

In addition, the delegation of China informed the Commission that its Government would make an annual contribution to UNAPCAEM in an amount to be specified later, and to APCTT in the amount of \$30,000, pending confirmation.

264. *India*. The delegation of India indicated that its Government would make the following contributions:

APCICT	\$20,000
APCTT	\$200,000
Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia	\$79,000

The delegation informed the Commission of its active consideration to provide enhanced contributions to SIAP and UNAPCAEM. It noted that the Government of India had released the sum of \$154,000 during 2011 and 2012 to support the establishment of the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia in New Delhi.

265. *Indonesia*. The delegation of Indonesia indicated that its Government would make the following contributions:

APCTT	\$10,000
SIAP	\$30,000
UNAPCAEM	\$29,982

In addition, the delegation of Indonesia informed the Commission of its intention to make in-kind contributions equivalent to \$230,000 to APCICT and equivalent to \$100,000 to CAPSA, and to strive to maintain its overall level of contributions to ESCAP.

266. *Iran (Islamic Republic of)*. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated that its Government would make the following contributions:

APCTT	\$10,000
ESCAP programme of work	\$40,000
SIAP	\$15,000
UNAPCAEM	\$15,000

In addition, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Commission of its intention to contribute to the third Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, which would be held in Tehran in November 2012.

267. *Japan*. The delegation of Japan indicated that its Government would make the following contributions for the period April 2012 to March 2013:

Japan-ESCAP Cooperation Fund	\$72,250
SIAP	\$1,652,000

The delegation indicated that its Government intended to make an in-kind contribution equivalent to \$1,283,000 to SIAP for the period from April 2012 through

March 2013. In addition, the delegation informed the Commission of its Government's intention to provide fellowships for 67 participants in specific training courses on official statistics as part of its technical cooperation programme through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, in cooperation with SIAP.

268. *Macao, China.* The secretariat received written notification that the government of Macao, China, would make the following contributions:

APCICT	\$5,000
APCTT	\$5,000
CAPSA	\$3,000
SIAP	\$20,000

269. *Malaysia.* The delegation of Malaysia informed the Commission that its Government would continue to support the regional institutions of ESCAP by making the following contributions:

APCTT	\$15,000
CAPSA	\$10,000
SIAP	\$20,000

270. *Mongolia.* The delegation of Mongolia indicated that its Government would make the following contributions:

APCICT	\$2,000
ESCAP programme of work	\$5,000
SIAP	\$10,000

271. *Pakistan.* The delegation of Pakistan indicated that its Government would make the following contribution:

SIAP	\$15,000
------	----------

In addition, the delegation indicated that contributions to other regional institutions were under consideration and would be notified in due course.

272. *Philippines.* The secretariat had received written notification that the Government of the Philippines would make the following contribution:

SIAP	\$17,500
------	----------

273. *Republic of Korea.* The delegation of the Republic of Korea indicated that its Government would make the following contributions:

APCICT	\$2,200,000
Korea-ESCAP Cooperation Fund	\$300,000
Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia	\$1,426,000

In addition, the delegation informed the Commission of its Government's intention to make an in-kind contribution equivalent to \$300,000 to support the work of APCICT in building human and institutional capacity in ICT in the region.

274. *Russian Federation.* The delegation of the Russian Federation indicated that its Government intended to make a voluntary contribution of \$1,200,000 for the year 2012 for the implementation of mutually agreed technical cooperation projects.

275. *Thailand.* The delegation of Thailand indicated that its Government would make the following contributions:

APCTT	\$15,000
CAPSA	\$10,000
SIAP	\$30,000
UNAPCAEM	\$15,000

The delegation of Thailand also noted that its Government might provide in-kind support to CAPSA through best practice sharing and by sending experts to assist in the fields of production and production control.

276. In concluding, the Executive Secretary thanked the Commission for its wisdom and support of the secretariat's technical cooperation programme. The Executive Secretary expressed appreciation to the members and associate members that had pledged financial support for 2012 for their generosity and assured the Commission that the secretariat would use the financial resources available to it efficiently and effectively to achieve results that would enhance the lives and prospects of people across the region. The Executive Secretary emphasized the value of peer learning in a changing world and the importance of putting such learning into practice in order to improve the work of the secretariat in support of member States.

277. The Commission expressed its appreciation and support for the technical cooperation work of the secretariat, including the five regional institutions.

Agenda item 5

Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

278. The Commission had before it the report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (E/ESCAP/68/19). In his capacity as Rapporteur of the Advisory Committee, the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to ESCAP presented the highlights of the activities of the Committee during the preceding year.

279. Representatives of Thailand and the Russian Federation made statements.

280. Since the sixty-seventh session of the Commission, the Advisory Committee had held five regular sessions and one special session to review the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015, and seven meetings of the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions.

281. A key activity of the Advisory Committee during the period under review had been the review of its terms of reference, a task which had been entrusted to it under resolution 67/15. An informal working group had been established, and with a view to strengthening the role and effectiveness of the Advisory Committee, member States had proposed some changes to its terms of reference.

282. The Advisory Committee had also considered an analysis of the current state of documentation, prepared by the secretariat, in line with Commission resolution 67/15 with a view to moving towards paperless Commission sessions with fewer but higher quality documents and had endorsed the recommendations contained in the report of the informal working group.

283. The Advisory Committee had also provided comments regarding the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/ESCAP/68/17 and Corr.1) as well as suggestions for changes, which had been presented to the Commission.

284. Another key focus of the work of the Advisory Committee during the period under review had been to provide guidance on the implementation of the 15 resolutions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.

285. The Commission noted the important role of the Advisory Committee in the constructive dialogue between member States and the secretariat, and as a channel for members of the Commission to participate effectively in, and contribute to, the implementation by the secretariat of the decisions of the Commission.

286. The Commission adopted resolution 68/9 on the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

Agenda item 6

Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission (2013)

287. The Commission had before it a note by the secretariat entitled “Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission (2013)” (E/ESCAP/68/20).

288. The representative of Thailand made a statement.

289. The Commission decided to hold its sixty-ninth session in Bangkok in April/May 2013. The exact dates would be determined in consultation with the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission. The delegation of Thailand expressed satisfaction with the Commission’s decision to hold the sixty-ninth session at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. It also offered to facilitate the logistical arrangements and to render other support to the secretariat as and when it would be required to ensure the success of the sixty-ninth session.

290. One delegation expressed a preference that the theme topic be on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). However, it would join the consensus of the meeting.

291. The Commission endorsed “Opportunities to build resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises” as the theme topic for its sixty-ninth session.

Agenda item 7

Policy issues for the Asia-Pacific region

Sub-item (a)

Key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

Policy statement by the Executive Secretary

292. The Executive Secretary commenced her statement by reminding the Commission that, in the period of great transition following the Second World War, Asia-Pacific leaders and policymakers of vision and foresight had come together to forge new ties of solidarity, cooperation and friendship. The Commission had acted as the inclusive regional platform to shape policies and build institutions needed to translate visionary leadership into development action and reality.

293. The Executive Secretary noted that the Commission was instrumental in creating such bodies as the Mekong River Commission, which, at the time of its establishment in 1957,³⁸ was the largest single United Nations development project ever undertaken. Subsequently, ESCAP played a critical role in establishing other regional institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in 1966, to fund

³⁸ Then known as the Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin.

the regional fight against poverty and the Typhoon Committee and Panel on Tropical Cyclones, which brought new coordination to regional efforts to save lives. Furthermore, the Commission had provided leadership to help craft regional treaties and instruments, such as the agreements on the Asian Highway³⁹ and Trans-Asian Railway networks,⁴⁰ which had defined the region's growth and development.

294. The Executive Secretary observed that the challenge of the time would be growing better together, as described in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012*,⁷ and the 2012 theme study, *Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century*,⁴¹ and as seen in the draft resolutions being considered at the sixty-eighth session on such issues as energy connectivity, paperless trade and sustainable development. It was clear that development in Asia-Pacific economies could no longer continue to be resource- and carbon-intensive, environmentally damaging and non-inclusive. The Executive Secretary added that many communities were still, unfortunately, off-track in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline, and that governments needed a final Asia-Pacific impetus. Poverty needed to be eradicated and exposure to vulnerabilities must be reduced, especially in least developed countries and Pacific small island developing States. Also, the region was estimated to have 75 per cent of its poor living in middle-income countries as well as those who were often affected by conflicts, disasters, and the growing illegal economy. A new paradigm for development would be essential to find new engines of growth and sustainable ways to drive them forward. The region would need to reset its way of thinking and create new policy frameworks and regional instruments to build a future for shared prosperity.

295. The Executive Secretary drew the attention of the Commission to the increasing inequalities within and between member States. Furthermore, the region faced multiple development shocks: food, fuel and finance; resource constraints; natural disasters; weak institutional capacities; and poor governance arrangements. Inclusive growth and sustainable growth were interlinked and interwoven and therefore should not be addressed separately. Instead, they would require integrated and multi-sectoral approaches.

296. The Executive Secretary emphasized that the region could make use of its growing capacity to manage its development and to take charge of its future. Countries in the region should build on their strong economic cooperation with each other to sustain regional growth. The region needed to close its development gaps, which would also create new drivers of regional economic dynamism. At a time of transition, policies and institutions were required which focused on policy challenges, such as managing growth and inflation, coping with currency flows, addressing jobless growth and unemployment, especially among youth, dealing with disaster risks and rebalancing economies towards better-quality growth. Massive and still-rising levels of urbanization would require new ways to make cities safer, greener, more liveable, energy- and water-efficient and sustainable. There was a regional and a global responsibility to support Pacific island member States in managing "blue economies" effectively. The regional economy would also need to radically reduce the resource intensity of energy use and improve energy efficiency.

297. The Executive Secretary added that the success of the region in addressing the challenges and shared vulnerabilities would depend on good leadership, enlightened policy choices, partnerships, strong institutions and democratic governance. She informed the Commission that the work of the secretariat had been focused on four key areas to direct and shape efforts to deal with the challenges and vulnerabilities: sustaining Asia-Pacific dynamism; building social inclusion and

³⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

⁴⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2596, No. 46171.

⁴¹ ST/ESCAP/2629.

equity; pursuing sustainable development and resilience; and working for greater regional economic integration and support for countries in transition.

298. The 2012 theme study⁴¹ had discussed how greater regional economic integration could become a key opportunity for Asia and the Pacific in an era of global turbulence and volatility. It proposed a four-pronged policy agenda as a part of a long-term strategy to build an Asia-Pacific economic community in order to best exploit the potential of regional economic integration and achieve a more resilient and sustainable Asia-Pacific region, founded on shared prosperity and social equity.

299. The Executive Secretary then outlined the four-pronged policy agenda to that end:

(a) First, to build a broader, more integrated Asia-Pacific market designed to connect high- and low-growth countries in economic “corridors of prosperity” to spread the benefits of regional growth to all;

(b) Second, to ensure seamless regional connectivity, which would require linking less developed landlocked areas to the more prosperous coastal zones and better connecting countries in the region in general in order to reduce dependence on the advanced economies. The Ministerial Conference on Transport, which had held its second session in Bangkok from 12 to 16 March 2012,⁴² had outlined priority areas of work to realize the vision of an international, integrated, intermodal transport and logistics system. Moreover, the theme study indicated that, given the uneven distribution of energy resources across the region, it would be highly desirable to consider an integrated regional power system — in effect creating an Asian energy highway;

(c) Third, to enhance financial cooperation and more efficiently deploy regional savings for productive purposes, and close infrastructure gaps in the region by further developing regional financial architecture. The Chiang Mai Initiative, funding for which had recently been doubled to \$240 billion, was a good example of such expanded cooperation. A way forward for infrastructure financing could be the creation of a regional lending facility designed to catalyse infrastructure investments across the region;

(d) Fourth, to coordinate a regional response to shared vulnerabilities, including development challenges, such as social inequalities, social inclusion and social grievances. The Executive Secretary underscored that countries could use the Commission to choose a new development path which would be low on carbon but high on prosperity, high on poverty reduction and high on human security. The region needed to find fresh solutions to persistent problems through research, innovation and technological development, as well as by unleashing the creativity, entrepreneurship and agency of citizens, especially the youth.

300. The Executive Secretary concluded by saying that the people of the region and of the world looked to Asia and the Pacific to provide the growth and stability needed to build a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient human future. The region had to be more innovative and more catalytic, and should lead by advocacy, build new capacities, and empower people and nations to come together and to advance together. The task of the Commission was to shape regional actions, institutions and instruments to enable the countries of the region to grow better together.

Summary of messages from the High-level Panel on Steering Inclusive Development amidst Global Turbulence and Volatility

301. The High-level Panel on Steering Inclusive Development amidst Global Turbulence and Volatility focused on the policy challenges for the region as countries

⁴² See E/ESCAP/68/9.

faced a global economic environment of renewed turbulence and volatility. The panellists were:

- Mr. Kittiratt Na-Ranong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Thailand
- Mr. Lotoala Metia, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning of Tuvalu
- Mr. Bakhtiyer Abdusamatov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investment and Trade of Uzbekistan
- Mr. Hafiz Pasha, Convener of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, Dean of the Beaconhouse National University and former Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of Pakistan
- Mr. Oh-Seok Hyun, President of the Korea Development Institute

302. The Executive Secretary served as the moderator of the panel. In her introductory remarks, she highlighted the key areas of concern for economies in the short and medium term, and the key messages of the *Survey*.⁷ The region had experienced a V-shaped recovery from the start of the crisis in 2008, but had recently suffered a renewed slowdown in growth. The slowdown stemmed from the worsening debt crisis in the euro zone and a slow recovery in the economy of the United States. Despite the slowdown, growth in the region remained relatively robust in general terms, with the region serving as an anchor of stability for the world economy. It was, however, subject to a number of downside risks, which included a worsening of the euro zone crisis, a surge in the price of oil, excessive speculative short-term capital inflows leading to asset bubbles, exchange rate appreciation and inflationary pressures. The challenges for the region were to maintain a balance between growth and inflation, manage short-term capital inflows, reduce rising socioeconomic inequalities, deal with jobless growth, and increase social safety nets. The region also had to take steps to increase resilience to the growing frequency and scale of natural disasters. A long-term challenge highlighted in the *Survey* was the quest to maintain shared prosperity in the presence of a “new normal” of a long-term trend of high and volatile commodity prices.

303. Mr. Kittiratt Na-Ranong noted that, in 1999, a number of international agencies had recommended that Thailand should invest in water management. However, that had not happened, perhaps because the suggestions had been issued shortly after the Asian financial crisis, when the country had faced budgetary difficulties. In the light of the devastating floods in 2011, which had resulted in damage and losses of \$40 billion and cut the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate to close to zero, disaster risk reduction had become a key priority for Thailand. In that context, the country had prepared and would soon begin implementing a master plan for flood management that included both short-term and long-term components. Thailand was in a transition period towards a more inclusive pattern of economic growth and, in his view, the role of a country's finance minister was not just to create growth but, more importantly, to deliver well-being while maintaining economic stability. It was also important for countries to work together so that they could mutually benefit from their increased prosperity. To conclude, he observed that a recent assessment of his country's policy to increase the minimum wage had shown encouraging results in terms of increasing productivity, boosting the purchasing power of workers and reducing inequality.

304. Mr. Lotoala Metia pointed out that growth in the Pacific island developing economies had been robust in 2011, with a marked improvement as compared to 2010. However, that good performance was largely due to the subregion's largest economy, Papua New Guinea, which had benefited from higher commodity prices, while high growth for many Pacific island countries remained elusive. Most economies in the subregion continued to face significant development challenges, which were compounded by vulnerability due to small populations, geographical

remoteness and extreme susceptibility to external shocks, such as natural disasters and volatile food and fuel prices. The impacts of climate change posed a real threat to many Pacific island developing nations, several of which were already suffering from a higher intensity and incidence of storm surges and flooding, which, in turn, was threatening their freshwater supply. Despite not having contributed to global warming on any scale, Tuvalu, a small island State stretched over a vast oceanic area with a very narrow economic base, was committed to implementing green growth initiatives as a way of moving towards sustainable development and finding the right balance between economic, social and environmental objectives. In particular, the country was committed to achieving complete independence from fossil fuels in its power generation by 2020. However, cooperation with development partners was necessary to secure additional financial resources and the appropriate technology to achieve that target.

305. Mr. Bakhtiyer Abdusamatov described the transformation of Uzbekistan from a centralized economy to a more market-based system over recent decades. Various structural reforms were implemented to enhance national competitiveness and social well-being, such as improvements in the automation of production, transport and logistics, telecommunication, and banking services. As a result, the business climate had improved, leading to an increasing role for small and medium-sized enterprises. Economic growth performance had been solid amid the global economic turmoil of recent years. The industrial sector had expanded in a robust manner into high value-added products in the automotive, chemical and furniture industries, among others. There had also been a strengthening of exports and an improvement in the trade surplus. In the difficult global economic environment, the Government's efforts had focused on ensuring macroeconomic stability with an annual growth target of at least 8 per cent. Structural reforms needed to be continued to sustain high economic growth and further boost labour productivity. Programmes were ongoing to enhance physical connectivity in the areas of land and air transport, modernization of cargo handling and regional cooperation.

306. Mr. Hafiz A. Pasha explained that Asia and the Pacific had witnessed a lack of buoyancy in agriculture and food production over the past decades, which had caused the region to become a net food importer. A factor behind that transition was the lack of focus on the agricultural sector and rural development in the development strategy of many countries in recent decades. Since the onset of the current global crisis, the increase in energy prices had led to a rise in overall commodity prices, and subsequently, increased costs throughout transportation and distribution chains. Nevertheless, rising commodity prices had increased the purchasing power of the rural population, especially for large farmers. On the other hand, the incidence of urban poverty had gone up significantly due to the increasing price of food items. Regarding South-South cooperation, he noted a number of key aspects. First, trade among developing countries in the region had grown rapidly, and that one-third of trade involving South Asia was linked to developing countries in Asia. Second, some major developing countries, such as the Republic of Korea and Turkey, had raised their development assistance to other countries in the region to very significant levels. Third, several emerging economies, including China, had become major sources of foreign direct investment flows to Asia and Africa. With respect to the G20, there was a concern that the group would be occupied with rescuing the euro zone and therefore the international community could not provide sufficient funds for other regions. That increased the need for a regional institution, such as an Asian monetary fund, to assume the task of crisis management for the region. The prospects for trade in South Asia had improved with new initiatives of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the awarding of most favoured nation trading status to India by Pakistan. The region needed to accelerate cooperation through technical assistance programmes and knowledge-sharing in areas such as microfinance, rural employment guarantee programmes, the knowledge-based economy, and public housing initiatives. A regional infrastructure was necessary in energy as energy availability had emerged as a key barrier to continued economic development.

307. Mr. Oh-Seok Hyun provided an overview of macroeconomic management during the global crises based on the experiences of the Republic of Korea. Historically, the country had been hit harder by external shocks than other economies in the region due to the high share of exports in its growth. To mitigate the adverse impacts of the crises, the Government had focused on three areas: (a) improving competitiveness and promoting diversification; (b) pursuing bilateral free trade agreements on a preferential basis to provide a solid basis for market expansion; and (c) permitting currency depreciation to support the export sector. Another type of external shock faced by the country was the volatility of capital flows as seen during the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 2008-2009 global financial crisis. In order to manage such large flows of capital, the country had introduced macro-prudential liquidity management measures to protect its banking system from large capital flows. As that had not proved sufficient to deal with the scale of inflows, the Government had, in 2010, adopted a number of new regulations. Economies in the region had traditionally managed the risk of sudden capital stops and reversals by accumulating foreign exchange reserves. However, it was not clear that those approaches provided sufficient protection. It was therefore necessary to increase global financial safety net arrangements through the International Monetary Fund, regional agreements, such as the Chiang Mai Initiative, and bilateral currency swap arrangements. The most important policy to be implemented to contain such financial market pressure was to provide confidence to the financial markets.

308. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran noted that many of the deficiencies in regulation that had caused the international financial crisis still needed to be addressed, and that little had been done to rectify systemic imbalances and reverse the over-financialization of the global economy. In that context, there was a need for strengthening financial regulation and convening a second Bretton Woods conference under the auspices of the United Nations to address the new realities and to make decisions on the structural reform of the financial system. Mr. Hafiz Pasha acknowledged the need for reform of the international financial architecture and suggested some areas for improvement, such as increasing the voting shares and role in management structures of large developing economies in the international financial institutions, and increasing the funds available for poorer countries to navigate the challenging economic environment.

309. The delegation of the Philippines noted that many economies of the region were undergoing a demographic transition, with some countries reaping a “demographic dividend” while others faced a “demographic tax”. The panellists were asked to give policy options for countries to take advantage of the complementarities that might exist among countries in the region with different population age structures. Mr. Hafiz Pasha acknowledged the existence of such complementarities but noted that the region’s capital mobility could play as important a role as labour mobility, as such mobility would allow productive job creation in labour-surplus countries.

310. The representative of Mexico’s G20 Presidency noted the priority areas that the Commission and the G20 had in common: promoting inclusive growth; rebalancing global demand; strengthening international financial architecture; enhancing food security; addressing food price volatility; and attaining sustainable development and green growth. He also welcomed the work of the secretariat in bringing the perspective of non-G20 countries to the G20 agenda.

311. Emphasizing that globalization should be based on the principles of sustainability and inclusiveness, the delegation of Malaysia stated that efforts to steer development should include cooperation in the areas of trade and human capacity development. In that context, the delegation asked for stronger regional cooperation and economic integration.

Sub-item (b)

Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012

312. The Commission had before it the summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012 (E/ESCAP/68/21) and the summary of the theme study for the sixty-eighth session (E/ESCAP/68/22).

313. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Armenia; Australia; Bangladesh; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Tonga; Tuvalu; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

314. The Commission noted that, as analysed in the *Survey*,⁷ the global economic downturn was threatening the pace of economic progress in the region. In particular, a high dependence on exports to developed economies had made many countries in the region vulnerable to external shocks. The ongoing debt crisis in the euro zone and the weak recovery in the United States were thus posing serious challenges to many Asia-Pacific economies.

315. The Commission noted that, despite the slowdown in 2011, the region as a whole continued to be an anchor of stability and played the leading role in driving the world's economic recovery. The region also continued to act as a growth pole for other developing regions. The Commission noted that the region's share of world GDP currently exceeded 30 per cent and that it could exceed 50 per cent by 2050.

316. The Commission observed that consumer prices were being driven by higher commodity prices, particularly for food and energy. Those increases posed serious challenges to the Asia-Pacific region and might have an impact on the recovery of the global economy. The living conditions of the poor had been heavily affected due to the need to spend high shares of their income on food.

317. The Commission recognized that volatile capital flows posed another key challenge for the region. Further macroeconomic policy coordination was required to jointly tackle challenges stemming from higher commodity prices and greater volatility in capital flows to the region. The Commission noted with concern the impact of growing protectionism on flows of goods, capital, services, technologies and labour.

318. The Commission emphasized the need to assess and strengthen the resilience of economies in the region to external economic shocks. The Commission was informed that several countries had implemented accommodative monetary and fiscal policies to counteract the economic slowdown.

319. The Commission emphasized that prosperity should be shared by the whole of society by promoting policies that fostered growth with equity. It recognized that the Asia-Pacific region remained home to almost two thirds of the world's poor and that there were visible disparities between rural and urban areas, between different social and ethnic groups, and between regions within countries.

320. The Commission highlighted that higher income inequality combined with social inequality had undermined the benefits of growth. The region had also witnessed insufficient job creation in the formal sector, while youth unemployment and vulnerable employment remained alarmingly high, signalling that the linkage between GDP growth and employment growth should be strengthened.

321. The Commission called for achieving inclusive growth by creating appropriate opportunities and an enabling environment. Poverty reduction should be

an integral element of human development. Social protection programmes could help combat income inequalities. Special attention should be given to the vulnerable sections of societies, such as persons with disabilities, senior citizens, ethnic minorities and people living in remote areas. The Commission noted the importance of establishing synergies between the public and private sectors in reducing poverty. The Commission emphasized that increasing the empowerment and the participation of women in economic activities was critical to reducing income and social inequalities. The Commission also noted challenges and opportunities for inclusive development that had arisen after internal conflicts.

322. The delegation of Japan informed the Commission of its willingness to share its experiences at the forthcoming regional review of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.³³ It highlighted the priority it placed on disability-related issues, as evidenced by both its co-sponsoring a draft resolution on a new Asian and Pacific decade of persons with disabilities which was before the Commission (E/ESCAP/68/L.11), and by contributing to the development of the strategic action framework for the new decade.

323. The Commission was informed that many member States had incorporated the Millennium Development Goals into their development plans. It noted, however, that many countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, still faced challenges in making further progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, the Commission urged the international community to give priority in addressing their special needs. The Commission requested the secretariat to continue assisting countries in accelerating their progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

324. The Commission emphasized that regional economic integration was key to maintaining dynamism, addressing common risks and vulnerabilities, and promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the region. The Commission commended the secretariat for its continued efforts to harness the power of regional integration for development and noted the proposals for greater regional integration as contained in the theme study,⁴¹ including the convening of an Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on regional economic integration in 2013.

325. The Commission noted that regional integration should not only enable countries to grow more rapidly but also reduce disparities among them. It also noted that, in order to avoid widening trade imbalances, regional economic integration policies must take into account differences in levels of development. The Commission called on development partners and multilateral agencies to play a more supportive role in assisting least developed countries to overcome unfavourable social and economic conditions.

326. The Commission recognized that trade and investment were important engines of economic growth and poverty reduction and played an important role in forging greater levels of regional economic integration. While recognizing that trade liberalization was best pursued under the rules-based MTS, the Commission noted that expanded regional trade and investment cooperation could reduce dependence on exports to developed Western economies. In that respect, the Commission observed that regional trade agreements could serve as building blocks for the MTS.

327. One delegation requested the secretariat to conduct a feasibility study on a multilateral trade agreement for the Asia-Pacific region, while another called for the exploration of an East Asian free trade area. Still another delegation called for a South Pacific-wide regional trade agreement which would be inclusive and sustainable.

328. Many countries held the view that subregional frameworks for cooperation provided the building blocks for broader and stronger integration at the regional

level. Such frameworks fostered better resource management and resource sharing to deal with increasing resource constraints, helped countries manage common vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters, and fostered sustained economic growth. The Commission noted the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity*⁴³ and SAARC as examples of effective subregional cooperation frameworks. The Commission observed that establishing close ties with other regional and subregional organizations and institutions, including the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Community, was important for sustainable and inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific. The delegation of India recognized the work of ESCAP in establishing the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia and informed the Commission that its Government was committed to facilitating the work of the Office and contributing direct financial assistance.

329. The Commission called for greater trade facilitation to enhance regional connectivity and was informed of the initiatives that various member States had implemented in that area, including single window facilities.

330. The Commission was informed of the accession of Samoa to WTO,⁴⁴ and the processes of accession of both the Russian Federation and Vanuatu.

331. The Commission noted the importance of regional financial cooperation in building sound macroeconomic foundations. Such cooperation could provide a buffer in the event of major financial shocks. The Commission emphasized the need for adequate trade financing for economic growth and, in that regard, called for increased assistance from WTO and regional development banks.

332. The Commission called on member countries to cooperate in providing appropriate aid for trade to build the supply-side capacities of countries with needs in that area and ensure that developing countries could participate in regional value chains. In that regard, the Commission recognized the role of entrepreneurship, research and development, innovation and technology transfer in boosting production and supply capacity-building and the need for technical assistance in that area.

333. The Commission recognized the importance of the private sector in generating growth. In particular, it noted the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises, which played a role in providing social safety nets, and called for active support to that sector.

334. The delegation of Myanmar informed the Commission of its political and economic reform programme and that marked progress had been made in promoting trade and investment. In order to maintain momentum and build supply-side capacities, the delegation requested technical assistance from the secretariat in areas such as small and medium-sized enterprise development and technology transfer.

335. The Commission expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the work undertaken to promote transport connectivity across the region, in particular through activities related to the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway. The Commission stressed that the efficiency of the networks would be enhanced through the development of intermodal transport, such as dry ports and logistics activities. In that respect, the Commission expressed support for the efforts of the secretariat towards the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports and noted the offer of the Russian Federation to continue to support the transport subprogramme of ESCAP, including the development of such an agreement. In that connection, the

⁴³ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2010). Available from: www.aseansec.org/documents/MPAC.pdf.

⁴⁴ On 10 May 2012, Samoa had become the 155th member.

Commission noted that India had nominated 34 dry ports of international importance for inclusion in the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.

336. The Commission was informed of the efforts of member States to develop intercountry transport linkages in support of regional or subregional master plans. In that respect, it noted that Bangladesh was developing its transport infrastructure to facilitate transit through its territory, while the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity*⁴³ was providing a framework for Thailand to implement projects that would enhance connectivity with China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Viet Nam, and noted that Indonesia was planning to invest \$400 billion towards the development of six growth corridors under a national master plan covering the period 2015 to 2025.

337. The Commission noted the invitation to all member States from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to participate in the Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, which would be hosted in Tehran from 11 to 14 November 2012.

338. The Commission was informed that member States were working with development banks and donor agencies to finance improvements in the efficiency of transport. In that respect, it noted that financing was critical to support infrastructure development and remained a major challenge for many member countries. The Commission noted that there were many options to access financing for infrastructure development, including the private sector. In that regard, it acknowledged increased efforts by member States to implement public-private partnerships and initiatives taken to facilitate private sector involvement, including the necessary legislation. The Commission noted that public-private partnerships were a new finance mechanism for many member States and requested the secretariat to facilitate the sharing of experiences and expertise among countries. The Commission noted the recommendations of the ESCAP workshop on public-private partnerships for development held in January 2012 in Yangon, Myanmar, which included addressing a broad range of constraints and barriers to the implementation of public-private partnerships and developing a policy framework to address specific areas relating to public-private partnerships.

339. The Commission noted that the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) was an important global forum for placing the world on a more sustainable path. In that regard, several delegations noted the need to shift to a more resource-efficient, green economy and to attain a better quality of growth. It was also emphasized that development strategies needed to adequately address the social, economic and ecological dimensions of sustainable development.

340. The Commission noted the opportunity that the Rio+20 Conference offered to make progress on key social development issues, such as strengthening social protection systems and empowering women and youth. The Commission affirmed the need to strike a balance between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. The Commission observed that inequality and vulnerability created persistent challenges in achieving sustainable development. Several delegations noted the positive effect of human resources development on sustainable development.

341. The Commission welcomed the appointment of the High-Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda by the Secretary-General. It held the view that the Millennium Development Goals would continue to be relevant after 2015 and that extreme poverty and hunger would likely still need to be addressed. The Commission noted that the development agenda beyond 2015 would need to build upon the lessons learned and achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference.

342. Many delegations held the view that climate change, related natural disasters and necessary adaptation and mitigation were posing formidable challenges for developing countries, especially the least developed, and were undermining the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially in the light of the increasing frequency and magnitude of natural disasters. One delegation underscored the need to include climate change as an issue to be considered in any discussion on regional integration. The Commission noted that the International Conference of Mountain Countries on Climate Change, which had been held in Kathmandu on 5 and 6 April 2012, had dealt with the increasing glacier meltdowns and the concomitantly increasing risks.

343. The Commission underscored the need for (a) a steady flow of funding for adaptation and mitigation, (b) access to affordable, low carbon and clean technologies, and (c) increased trade opportunities. Several delegations held the view that enhanced regional integration would make that possible, and two delegations highlighted South-South technology development and transfer as successful practices.

344. Several delegations noted the central role of the energy sector in fostering closer regional integration. It was noted that regional energy connectivity could act as a buffer against energy shortages and as an opportunity for increased intraregional trade and shared prosperity. The role of transport links, especially railways, in improving energy trade opportunities was also highlighted.

345. The delegation of Kazakhstan noted that water resources were of strategic importance for the region and took the view that ESCAP could play a catalytic role in implementing General Assembly resolution 65/154, in which the Assembly had declared 2013 the International Year of Water Cooperation.

346. A number of delegations emphasized the inter-linkage of food, water and energy security. In that regard, the Commission took the view that regional and global cooperation should be strengthened to cope with those issues. The Commission noted the need to better manage water and land resources in order to strike a balance between the provision of food, feed and bio-fuel on the one hand and sustainable development on the other. The Commission also noted the key step in eradicating poverty would be to improve access to basic services, such as energy, water and sanitation.

347. The Commission noted success stories and good practices related to environmental issues. The topics covered were: (a) green development; (b) a resource-conserving and environmentally friendly society; (c) increasing the share of non-fossil fuels in the national energy mix; (d) improving energy efficiency and measures to reduce CO₂ emissions; (e) reforming subsidies to reduce fossil fuel use and waste and improve resource efficiency and poverty reduction efforts; (f) electricity trade and exchange; (g) integrated energy and water planning; and (h) addressing climate change impacts with green development plans.

348. The Commission also noted that the Singapore Cooperation Programme had provided capacity development support in the areas of environment and urban planning to developing countries in the region, and had established a partnership with the secretariat for similar development support to Myanmar in 2012. In that regard, many countries underlined the need for continuous capacity development assistance from the secretariat in order to formulate sound natural resources management policies as well as green growth/green economy policies.

349. The Commission noted that technology, particularly ICT, had emerged as an enabler of innovation and a driver of knowledge-led growth in the region with the potential to accelerate the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

350. The Commission noted that the digital divide and connectivity gaps were of particular concern for least developed countries and Pacific small island developing

States and that those two problems would require regulatory reforms aimed at promoting competition and public-private partnerships for the development of infrastructure and in order to attain universal access. While noting that various initiatives were under way, in particular the various contributions that member States were making to the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity*,⁴³ the Commission requested the secretariat to increase its focus on both intraregional and interregional ICT connectivity issues.

351. The Commission was informed that the key challenges facing the region included the increasing frequency and magnitude of natural disasters. In that connection, the Commission noted that recent large-scale disasters in the region, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, and the 2011 earthquakes in New Zealand and Japan, highlighted the importance of disaster management and prevention work. The Commission also noted that disasters caused by natural events, including frequent but low-intensity disasters, hampered socioeconomic development and created severe disruptions to trade, investment and value chains.

352. The Commission observed that many developing countries, particularly least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, were highly vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by disasters and were faced with the risk of a reversal of their hard-won development gains as resources were diverted to rehabilitation. The Commission noted that countries needed to improve their capacity to respond and their resilience to disasters. In that regard, one delegation stressed the importance of intergovernmental processes and cooperation in connection with prevention, preparedness and post-disaster reconstruction.

353. The Commission observed that member States were engaging in South-South cooperation related to disaster prevention and disaster risk reduction and management. It noted with satisfaction that some member States had supported other developing countries in their efforts to reduce vulnerability to disasters and to build capacity in disaster risk management, and had provided disaster relief and aid to countries struck by disasters. Noting the disruptions that had occurred in regional and global supply chains as a result of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the floods in South-East Asia, the Commission held the view that regional economic integration and growth could not be attained if shared vulnerabilities and risks were not addressed.

354. The representative of Japan, while expressing gratitude for the warm assistance extended by the international community following the great east Japan earthquake and tsunami, informed the Commission that Japan would take steps to share its experience and lessons learned on the various preventive and risk reduction measures which mitigated damage. Japan would take a leading role in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and establishing a resilient society and work in cooperation with ESCAP.

355. In emphasizing the importance of capacity-building and social inclusion for sustainable development, the delegation of Japan expressed appreciation for the role of SIAP for its training in statistics and pointed to the need for collecting and using data disaggregated by social groups for government policy planning. The delegation of Myanmar expressed appreciation for the role of ESCAP in statistical capacity-building in the country and its assistance with the population census to be conducted in 2014. Delegations stressed that gaps in comprehensive statistics remained a challenge for policy formulation and continue impeding the design of effective policies. One delegation also informed the Commission that its country had adopted a national strategy for the development of statistics to improve data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

356. The Commission noted that small island developing States continued to face environmental and economic shocks, due to the challenges of isolation, size and small population, resulting in higher production, transport and service delivery cost. It requested the secretariat to work with regional organizations and development partners to improve transport infrastructure in the Pacific, particularly in shipping and aviation. The Commission also noted that Pacific island developing States were prone to natural disasters. Those natural disasters place a great deal of strain on fiscal resources of those countries, which also had an impact on their development gains as resources were diverted to rehabilitation work.

357. The Pacific small island developing States highlighted that the term “green economy” was understood in the context of safeguarding the valuable and dwindling resources of the “blue ocean”. For many of the Pacific small island developing States, the path to a green economy required achieving green growth, which would ensure the preservation of valuable biodiversity of global significance. The Coral Triangle Initiative on coral reefs, fisheries and food security was cited as an important platform for helping place Pacific island countries on a path to sustainable development.

358. The Commission recognized the importance of inter-island shipping to the economies of Pacific island developing countries. In that respect, it noted the efforts of one member State in developing domestic and international wharf facilities with assistance from Japan, ADB and other donors. One delegation requested the secretariat to increase its efforts to assist island developing countries with regard to inter-island shipping.

359. The Commission noted the special case of small island developing States. Several delegations recognized the need for concrete steps to be taken at the Rio+20 Conference to support them in their efforts to combat the effects of climate change. One country appealed to developed countries to fulfil numerous pledges to mitigate the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, and to advance the sustainable development agenda to achieve meaningful results at the Rio+20 Conference and beyond.

360. The Commission called for greater market access through zero duties and quotas for products from least developed countries. The Commission took the view that trade-related foreign direct investment to least developed countries could address the skills gap in those countries.

361. The Commission was informed by one least developed country of its efforts towards graduation from the least developed country category. However, the Commission noted that the recurrence of global economic and financial crises seriously threatened that country’s efforts and continued to undermine the development gains made thus far. Another least developed country expressed concern that the United Nations had identified it as a possible candidate for graduation based in part on the Economic Vulnerability Index criterion, which, in that country’s view, should not be made mandatory for graduation as the country was highly vulnerable to external shocks.

362. The Commission recognized that countries in the region were at different levels in terms of economic and institutional advancement and human and social development. It noted, in that regard, that the integration process in the region should not only enable each member to grow more rapidly, but also reduce disparity among its members. It took the view that assistance from economically developed countries and multilateral funding agencies should play a more supportive role to enable low-income countries, especially fragile and vulnerable countries, to overcome unfavourable socio-economic conditions.

363. The Commission commended the high analytical quality of the comprehensive documentation prepared by the secretariat pertaining to the challenges facing the region as contained in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the*

*Pacific 2012*⁷ and the 2012 theme study, *Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century*.⁴¹

Agenda item 8

Theme topic for the sixty-eighth session: “Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific”

364. The Commission held a ministerial round table, moderated by the Executive Secretary, on the theme topic. The round table was composed of the following:

Speakers:

- Mr. Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Minister of Finance of Bangladesh
- Mr. Cham Prasidh, Senior Minister, Minister of Commerce of Cambodia, and Chair of the ASEAN Economic Community Council
- Mr. Tom Murdoch, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Kiribati
- Mr. Gennady M. Gatilov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Special guests:

- Mr. Bindu N. Lohani, Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, Asian Development Bank
- Mr. Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

365. Representatives of the following members of the Commission made statements and shared their experiences on regional economic integration: India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Lao People’s Democratic Republic; and Pakistan.

366. In her introductory remarks, the Executive Secretary noted that regional economic integration could help make the development process in Asia and the Pacific more inclusive and sustainable. If development gaps in physical infrastructure could be closed and best practices in trade and transport facilitation adopted, thus enabling all countries of the region to be connected seamlessly, the region’s lagging economies would be able to access the largest and most dynamic markets in the world, contributing to a more balanced pattern of regional economic development. In addition, regional cooperation could help Asia-Pacific countries address their shared vulnerabilities and risks, such as food and energy insecurity, disasters, pressures on natural resources and sustainability, social exclusion and rising inequalities.

367. Mr. Abul Maal Abdul Muhith expressed appreciation for the 2012 theme study, *Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century*,⁴¹ and emphasized five key areas of regional economic integration: (a) trade, investment and labour; (b) finance; (c) infrastructure development for greater connectivity; (d) macroeconomic cooperation and crisis management; and (e) regional public goods. He highlighted the importance of trade facilitation and investment cooperation to increase trade volumes and emphasized the need to facilitate the movement of migrant workers. In his view, ADB and public-private partnerships should play a greater role in infrastructure financing and underlined the importance of regional cooperation in the energy sector. In addition, he called for a vast expansion of Internet connectivity across the region. Furthermore, he emphasized that Asia and the Pacific had vast savings, which could be mobilized to finance the region’s large development needs. With regard to common macroeconomic challenges, such as inflation, volatile capital inflows and rising fiscal deficits, he emphasized the importance of developing regional surveillance and warning systems, as well as swap arrangements. Based on the recent euro zone experience, macroeconomic policy coordination mechanisms were essential for

regional integration. With regard to regional public goods, there was a need for cooperation in dealing with issues related to agriculture, environment, tourism, health, communicable diseases, security and education through an inclusive and sustainable partnership among all Asian and Pacific countries. The Government of Bangladesh was actively engaged in the development of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, and the Prime Minister had made it a policy goal for Bangladesh to serve as a transit country for the region.

368. Mr. Cham Prasidh provided his views on the path that ASEAN was taking towards becoming an integrated economic community by 2015. He emphasized the importance of deepening and broadening integration among ASEAN members in order to narrow development gaps and build resilience to adverse shocks, for which three institutional mechanisms had been put in place. The ASEAN Economic Community was aimed at building a single market and production base through the free movement of goods, services, investment and skilled labour, and through less restrictive capital flows. The ASEAN Framework for Equitable Economic Development,⁴⁵ which had been endorsed by the leaders at the Nineteenth ASEAN Summit (Bali, Indonesia, November 2011) was a critical component to ensure that growth would be equitable and inclusive. The Framework for Equitable Economic Development was supported by, among other initiatives, the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity*⁴⁶ and the ASEAN Policy Blueprint for SME Development.⁴⁶ The objectives of the ASEAN Framework for Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership were to harmonize arrangements between ASEAN member States, to enhance the dialogue with development partners, and to ensure that private sector businesses benefited from the integrated economic community. He remarked that the Framework for Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership would eventually lead to the formation of one of the world's largest regional blocs, which would comprise more than half of the global population.

369. Mr. Tom Murdoch noted that, due to small populations, isolation and underdeveloped transport infrastructure, the Pacific island countries faced very high shipping and air transport costs. In addition, those countries shared a large number of vulnerabilities to natural disasters and the potential adverse impacts of climate change. Those conditions did not necessarily present the Pacific island countries as an attractive option for foreign investment. Therefore, regional economic integration was a high priority for those countries because it could help them overcome their isolation from opportunities and enhance their resilience. A particular challenge for the Pacific island countries was the creation of productive employment, for which proper regulation of international migration that prioritizes the interests of the migrants, as well as benefits both receiving and sending countries, was needed. Another key area of interest for the Pacific island countries was the "blue economy" and the efficient management of fisheries, especially tuna, through the proper issuance of licences and increased monitoring and surveillance. Those countries also had a keen interest in seeking opportunities for cooperation in climate-proof infrastructure development and energy security. Although the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA)⁴⁷ and Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER)⁴⁸ Plus were promising for the Pacific island countries, he expressed the view that a greater degree of integration between Asia and the Pacific was highly desirable.

370. Mr. Gennady M. Gatilov stated that the ministerial-level Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, which would be held in Vladivostok, Russian Federation, in May 2013, could facilitate a multilateral dialogue on energy security, which was lacking in the region. He noted that ESCAP, in the light of its successful experience with similar initiatives, was in a good position to take the lead in that area. He reaffirmed the

⁴⁵ Available from www.asean.org/26745.htm.

⁴⁶ Available from www.aseansec.org/pdf/sme_blueprint.pdf.

⁴⁷ Available from www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/PICTA.pdf.

⁴⁸ Available from www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/PACER.pdf.

participation of the Russian Federation in a number of regional integration initiatives, such as the Customs Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan and the country's continued cooperation with various partners in Asia and the Pacific in such areas as energy, transport and space technologies. Regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific was proceeding through various agreements and at different paces. In that context, he suggested that promoting a dialogue between different groups, a bottom-up approach, was a feasible shorter-term goal towards broader economic integration in the region, while establishing an agreement encompassing all of Asia and the Pacific could be a long-term goal. He emphasized that regional economic integration must be based on sound economic principles and agreed political commitments.

371. Mr. Bindu N. Lohani highlighted a number of current areas of cooperation between the secretariat and ADB, including the Asia-Pacific Millennium Development Goals reports, studies on regional infrastructure and trade facilitation. Three additional areas of common interest, for which further cooperation could be mutually beneficial in overcoming the middle-income trap, were inclusive growth, green growth and knowledge-based growth.

372. Mr. Tuiloma Neroni Slade noted that isolation, the fundamental problem for Pacific island countries, could be tackled through a greater degree of economic integration with the rest of Asia. In that respect, the presence of large and growing markets in Asia represented an enormous opportunity for those countries. The challenge, however, was to seize such opportunities in the light of the very high transportation costs, small population sizes and low capacities and connectivity prevailing in Pacific island countries. He concluded by emphasizing the need for partnerships with Asia, which could be beneficial in the areas of tourism, agriculture, fisheries and mining.

373. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran noted that the international financial crisis was caused by deficiencies in regulation and an unsustainable pattern of consumption in some developed countries. In that context, there was a need for instituting a new international economic order that would put stability and development at the top of the agenda and reduce the predominance of finance over the real sector.

374. The delegation of India informed the Commission about the progress of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and mentioned that the country had virtually eliminated its list of sensitive goods from the least developed member countries of SAARC.

375. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic urged the Commission to give special consideration to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States as it formulated ways to enhance regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific.

376. The delegation of Pakistan asked the panellists about a reasonable time line for the implementation of the recommendations to enhance regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific put forward by the secretariat in the theme study.⁴¹ Mr. Abul Maal Abdul Muhith acknowledged that such an agenda could not be put in place immediately, but he expressed confidence that, by 2025, there would be an integrated Asia and the Pacific.

377. In her concluding remarks, the Executive Secretary thanked the panellists, commentators and delegations for their insightful remarks at the ministerial round table. She noted that, while the challenges to boosting regional economic integration and cooperation across the Asia-Pacific region were formidable, she believed that the Commission had taken a fundamental first step in initiating a policy discussion on that important subject. The secretariat stood ready to continue supporting the Commission in future steps to promote inclusive and sustainable development across the region.

378. The Commission adopted resolution 68/10 on enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific.

379. The Commission also adopted resolution 68/11 on connectivity for energy security.

Agenda item 9

Other matters

380. No other matter was discussed.

Agenda item 10

Adoption of the report of the Commission

381. The report of the Commission on its sixty-eighth session was adopted unanimously at its fifth plenary meeting, on 23 May 2012.

Chapter IV

Resolutions and other decisions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-eighth session

Resolution 68/1

Reaffirming the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States with a focus on the Pacific⁴⁹

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling Agenda 21,⁵⁰ which recognized that small island developing States and islands supporting small communities were a special case for both environment and development,

Also recalling the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,⁵¹ which acknowledged that small island developing States were a special case for both environment and development,

Further recalling the outcome document of the High-level Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,⁵² recalls since 1992, the vulnerability of Pacific small island developing States has become of increasing concern while their capacity to cope had not, and that this was due in no small part to the additional pressures of climate change, climate variability and sea-level rise, which had been compounded by the international fuel, food and financial crises,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 65/2, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the unique and particular vulnerabilities of the small island developing States and called for improved and additional measures, and for coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to be taken at all levels to further implement the Mauritius Strategy,

Noting that, occupying about one third of the earth's surface, the Pacific Ocean provides a significant global environmental, economic, social and developmental contribution to sustainable development,

Recognizing that Pacific small island developing States share the same vulnerabilities as those of other small island developing States and are economically and ecologically fragile and vulnerable, while their small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets place them at a disadvantage economically and prevents economies of scale,

⁴⁹ See paras. 26 to 38 above.

⁵⁰ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

⁵¹ Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002*) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap I, resolution 2, annex).

⁵² General Assembly resolution 65/2.

Noting the joint statement issued by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and the Secretary-General at the forty-second Pacific Islands Forum, in Auckland, New Zealand, on 7 and 8 September 2011,⁵³

Welcoming the support provided by the secretariat of the Commission, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific to Pacific small island developing States in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,

1. *Reaffirms* the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of Pacific small island developing States for sustainable development;

2. *Invites* members and associate members, as appropriate:

(a) To recognize the importance of the oceans and the sustainable development of ocean resources to Pacific small island developing States, including the need for the conservation and sustainable management of the Pacific Ocean and coastal environments for the benefit of small island developing States and as a global resource;

(b) To support efforts for the sustainable management, conservation and use of ocean resources;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, international financial institutions, other organizations and bilateral donors:

(a) To continue to support capacity development and capacity supplementation for Pacific small island developing States to pursue sustainable development and to increase their resilience, including in response to the challenges of climate change;

(b) To improve access to finance so that Pacific small island developing States can transform their economies towards sustainable development and climate resilience;

(c) To promote and support voluntary technology transfer as a contribution to the sustainable development of Pacific small island developing States;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its seventieth session.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Resolution 68/2

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region⁵⁴

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 63/227 of 19 December 2008 on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, in which it, inter alia, decided to convene, as

⁵³ Joint Statement of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Annex 3 of the Forum Communiqué of the forty-second Pacific Islands Forum, Auckland, New Zealand, 7-8 September 2011 (Available from www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/newsroom/press-statements/2011/joint-statement-of-pacific-islands-forum-leaders-un-secretary-general.html).

⁵⁴ See paras. 41 to 60 above.

called for in paragraph 114 of the Programme of Action,⁵⁵ the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level in 2011,

Also recalling its resolution 64/6 of 30 April 2008 on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCAP region, in which it, inter alia, requested the Executive Secretary to assist countries in the region in achieving the Goals, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Pacific island developing countries,

Expressing concern at the slow pace of progress in the least developed countries in closing these development gaps,

Reaffirming that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (the Istanbul Programme of Action),⁵⁶ which was adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, has as an overarching goal to overcome the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, sustain inclusive growth and improve the quality of life,

Emphasizing the need for continued international support and mobilizing technical and financial resources to achieve internationally agreed development goals to enable graduation from least developed country status in the stipulated time,

Noting the need to further intensify the engagement of the international community in the attainment of the goals and targets agreed in the Istanbul Programme of Action, including the mobilization of additional international support measures and action in favour of the least developed countries and the formation of a renewed partnership between these countries and their development partners,

Noting with appreciation the convening, from 14 to 16 December 2011 in Bangkok, of the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, which adopted a Regional Road Map⁵⁷ containing a set of capacity development activities and identifying the key agencies and entities that could be involved in delivering these activities,

1. *Urges* the countries of the region and international and regional organizations to accelerate the implementation, as appropriate, of the recommendations contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action⁵⁶ and the Regional Road Map for Implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action in the Asian and Pacific Region from 2011 to 2020⁵⁷ in particular;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist the Asia-Pacific least developed countries in implementing the Regional Road Map;

(b) To continue to assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(c) To submit to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

⁵⁵ A/CONF.191/13, chap. II.

⁵⁶ *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.II.A.1), chap. II.

⁵⁷ See E/ESCAP/68/23.

Resolution 68/3

Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation⁵⁸

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Conscious of the importance of trade as an engine of growth and development and of the need to increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of international trade transactions to maintain the competitiveness of the region,

Recognizing that electronic commerce enhances the expansion of trade opportunities, the importance of avoiding barriers to its use and development, and the need to promote uniformity in the application of international standards and to aim for interoperability of paperless trade systems,

Also recognizing the potential of paperless trade in making international trade transactions more efficient and transparent,

Noting that the trade and supply-chain security initiatives under implementation in major export markets will make it increasingly necessary for all actors in the international supply chain to exchange data and documents electronically,

Considering the fact that many countries in the Asia-Pacific region are currently engaged in implementing national electronic single window or related systems to expedite the processing of trade documents,

Aware that the benefits from these and related paperless trade systems would be greatly enhanced if the electronic documents generated by them could be used across borders,

Also aware that facilitating the cross-border recognition and electronic exchange of trade documents between landlocked and transit countries would significantly contribute to the implementation of Commission resolution 67/1 on the Ulaanbaatar Declaration: Outcome of the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and other Development Gaps Faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries as well as the Almaty Programme of Action,⁵⁹ which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/201 of 23 December 2003,

Recalling that, during its sixty-seventh session, the Commission supported the intent of the secretariat to promote and develop innovative projects that made effective use of information and communications technology in the area of transport, and the use of information and communications technology in the area of trade,⁶⁰

Emphasizing the need to enable the cross-border use and recognition of electronic trade data and documents, and the need for all countries to adopt single window and mutual recognition of documents, as part of efforts to facilitate exports from least developed and landlocked developing countries,⁶¹

⁵⁸ See paras. 63 to 79 above.

⁵⁹ *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003 (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.*

⁶⁰ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2011, Supplement No. 19 (E/2011/39-E/ESCAP/67/23)*, para. 158.

⁶¹ See E/ESCAP/68/6, para. 32.

Taking note of the proposal of the Committee on Trade and Investment supporting a regional agreement on electronic trade data and document exchange,⁶²

1. *Invites* member States to work towards the development of regional arrangements on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade;

2. *Encourages* all members and associate members:

(a) To support and participate in the knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, including the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum and related activities supported by regional and international organizations active in the field of trade facilitation;

(b) To initiate or accelerate the implementation of national paperless trade systems, including national single windows defined in United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business recommendation No. 33⁶³ and related recommendation No. 35;⁶⁴

(c) To take into account, and whenever possible adopt, available international standards made by relevant United Nations bodies, such as the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and other international organizations, such as the World Customs Organization and the International Organization for Standardization, when implementing these systems so as to facilitate their interoperability;

(d) To participate in the development of new international standards to achieve the seamless exchange and recognition of trade-related information and documents across borders among all relevant stakeholders from both the public and private sectors;

(e) To share lessons learned and the outcomes of existing bilateral and subregional pilot projects on the recognition and exchange of trade-related electronic data and documents with other members and associate members, and to initiate new ones;

(f) To consider entering into bilateral and subregional agreements on the cross-border recognition and exchange of trade-related documents as building blocks towards regional and global cross-border paperless trade;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To support and facilitate the process for the development of regional arrangements on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade, including by conducting studies, developing potential options, and organizing expert review and member consultations, and in this regard to present its results to the Committee on Trade and Investment at its third session;

(b) To ensure that the regional arrangements take into account and are consistent with the existing international and regional agreements, mechanisms, and undertakings as well as build on existing international standards and conventions and are developed in consultation with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the World Customs Organization and other relevant international bodies;

(c) To continue and further strengthen the secretariat's support for capacity-building activities related to trade facilitation and paperless trade, including transit facilitation, particularly with regard to least developed and landlocked

⁶² See *ibid.*, para. 3.

⁶³ United Nations publication, Sales No. 05.II.E.9.

⁶⁴ ECE/TRADE/401.

developing countries and for the preparation, in consultation with member States, of such regional arrangements;

4. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventieth session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Resolution 68/4

Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport⁶⁵

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Welcoming the successful outcome of the Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Bangkok from 12 to 16 March 2012,⁶⁶

1. *Endorses* the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport,⁶⁷ as contained in the annex to the present resolution;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme and the Regional Strategic Framework;

(b) To carry out in 2016 an evaluation of the implementation of phase II of the Regional Action Programme and submit a report with recommendations to the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session;

(c) To report to the Commission at its seventy-first and seventy-third sessions on the implementation of the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Annex

Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific

We, the Ministers of transport and representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific attending the Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Bangkok from 12 to 16 March 2012,

Recognizing the crucial importance of efficient, reliable and safe transport infrastructure and services to regional integration and the sustainable and inclusive economic and social development of countries in the ESCAP region,

Recalling Commission resolution 63/9 of 23 May 2007 on the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the

⁶⁵ See paras. 84 to 109.

⁶⁶ See E/ESCAP/68/9.

⁶⁷ See E/ESCAP/68/9, chap. I.

Pacific⁶⁸ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011), and Commission resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia,

Recalling also the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries,⁶⁹ the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,⁷⁰ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (the Istanbul Programme of Action),⁷¹

Recognizing the need for long-term commitment and continuity in addressing critical issues in the transport sector to support sustained economic growth, improve the living standards of our peoples and further increase the competitiveness of economies of the region,

Encouraged by the successful regional cooperation that led to the entry into force of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network⁷² and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network,⁷³ and progress in the formulation of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports,

Recognizing that growth in intraregional trade can be further supported if regional transport corridors are expanded and bottlenecks removed,

Reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, and the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia,

1. *Adopt* the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016),⁷⁴
2. *Adopt* the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport,⁷⁵
3. *Request* the Executive Secretary to continue to accord priority to the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific⁶⁸ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), especially to assist regional members and associate members in their efforts to realize the vision of a sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system,

⁶⁸ E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. V.

⁶⁹ *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003* (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.

⁷⁰ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁷¹ *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7) (United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.II.A.1), chap. II.

⁷² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

⁷³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2596, No. 46171.

⁷⁴ Appendix I.

⁷⁵ Appendix II.

4. *Also request* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To ensure effective coordination with other United Nations and multilateral agencies as well as subregional organizations;

(b) To collaborate effectively with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and private sector investors and international organizations to mobilize further financial and technical support for the wider development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway and the Asian Highway;

(c) To convene a ministerial conference on transport in 2016 to assess and evaluate the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and to consider a future programme of work.

Appendix I

Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)

Now more than ever, the region's development is reliant on its transport system. Whether to carry manufactured and agricultural products to international markets, food to rural and urban communities, workers to their jobs, the young to schools or the sick to hospitals, transport is essential. While development patterns across the region vary, countries that have been able to improve transport capacities and efficiency have been the most successful. For the future, improved transport connections to fast growing regional markets will further stimulate economic and social development.

The overarching goal of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific⁷⁶ and its Regional Action Programme⁷⁷ is to foster regional transport cooperation and economic integration in support of inclusive and sustainable development. The Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016), will provide continuity and build on the substantial progress that has been achieved over the past five years.

In each of the substantive areas, capacity-building and exchanges of experience will be a central theme in continuing to work towards the creation of a sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system as the long-term vision for the development of the region's transport system and to meet the challenges of globalization.

In the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016), the ESCAP secretariat will continue to work closely with key United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other collaborating institutions.

1. Policy guidance at the ministerial level

Given the rapid pace of change in the region, there is a need for timely policy direction at the ministerial level to maintain and accelerate progress in moving towards the realization of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system in the region. The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport at its first session, held in Bangkok from 14 to 18 December 2009, provided substantive guidance and direction⁷⁸ that was subsequently welcomed by the Commission in its

⁷⁶ E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. V.

⁷⁷ Commission resolution 63/9, annex.

⁷⁸ See E/ESCAP/66/11.

resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia.

Immediate objective: to promote regional cooperation and policy leadership at the ministerial level for the advancement of transport as a key to regional development.

Outputs:

1. A meeting of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport at the midpoint of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016);
2. Ministerial consideration and direction to transport policies in the region.

Indicators of achievement:

1. High level participation in the meeting of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport.
2. Documented decisions by transport ministers leading to a greater degree of coordination and consistency between countries on issues of mutual interest.

2. Transport infrastructure development

While the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks provide the foundation for regional connectivity, the quality and capacity of this infrastructure across the region is uneven, and some links are still missing. In most countries, intermodal transport is limited due to a lack of capacity in dry ports.

Immediate objective: to promote regional and interregional connectivity and cooperation through the further development and upgrading of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks as well as Euro-Asian transport linkages and dry ports.

Outputs:

1. Meetings of the working groups on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway;
2. Intergovernmental agreement on dry ports;
3. Studies, meetings and capacity-building on integrated transport development, upgrading and maintenance (asset management) of the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, dry ports of international importance and seaports;
4. Studies on international intermodal transport corridors serving inter- and intraregional trade;
5. Updated information and data measuring progress in the development of regionally important transport infrastructure and operations;
6. Activities within the joint UNESCAP-UNECE project on the development of Euro-Asian transport links.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Adopted amendments to the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network and Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network.
2. Member States negotiate and sign an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.
3. Measures taken by member States to upgrade and expand the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and internationally recognized dry ports in their countries.
4. Measures taken by member States to incorporate study recommendations for regional and interregional intermodal transport corridors.

3. Transport facilitation

Despite efforts to eliminate non-physical barriers in transport, progress has been slow due to the complexity of this challenge. This can be seen most clearly in international land transport, which still faces substantial difficulties across the region. To help resolve this problem, a number of subregional agreements on cross-border/transit transport have been negotiated and signed, but few have been fully or effectively implemented. In many countries of the region, international transport by road is restricted by the number of transport permits issued and is only allowed near borders or along a limited number of routes. While progress has been made, lengthy delays at border crossings are common. Similarly, with regard to railways, simplifying and harmonizing documents and procedures and expanding intercountry services remain major outstanding challenges. All of these restrictions raise costs and create delays in international land transport.

Immediate objective: to promote efficient and smooth movement of goods, passengers and vehicles by road and rail across the region, including at border crossings.

Outputs:

1. Establishment of a regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation and the development of an action plan for the implementation of the regional strategic framework for the facilitation of international road transport;
2. Workshops/studies on regional and subregional cooperation under the regional strategic framework for facilitation of international road transport;
3. A study to identify the issues surrounding regional cooperation for the facilitation of international railway transport;
4. Assistance in acceding to and implementing international transport facilitation conventions and agreements, including those recommended in ESCAP resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, and in formulating and implementing subregional agreements related to the facilitation of international transport by road and/or rail;
5. Advisory services/workshops on the establishment or strengthening of national facilitation coordination mechanisms and on joint controls at borders to facilitate international road and/or rail transport;
6. Studies/workshops on the application of information and communications technology and other new technologies as well as the time/cost-distance toolkit to facilitate international road and/or rail transport.

Indicators of achievement:

1. A regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation established.
2. Measures taken by member States and regional and subregional organizations/institutions to implement the regional strategic framework for the facilitation of international road transport.
3. Measures taken by member States to accede to and implement international facilitation conventions, in particular those recommended by the Commission in its resolution 48/11, and steps suggested to be taken for signing, ratifying and/or implementing subregional agreements.
4. National facilitation coordination mechanisms established or strengthened, and measures towards joint controls taken, by the member States.
5. Measures taken by member States to apply new technologies and time/cost-distance methodology to improve efficiency of international transport processes.

4. Transport logistics

In many countries of the region, the logistics industries are still at a nascent stage and therefore face challenges associated with high costs and poor performance. To develop an efficient logistics system, all relevant issues need to be addressed comprehensively. In this respect, an enabling environment, including a policy and regulatory framework, needs to be put in place. Transport logistics policy is a very important component of overall logistics policy, and its development can act as an entry point and contribute to wider logistics policy goals. Other measures for enhancing the professionalism and competence of logistics service providers include the establishment of minimum standards and codes of conduct at the national level, the sharing of knowledge and experiences at the regional level, and the establishment of sustainable training and capacity-building programmes at the national, subregional and regional levels.

Immediate objective: to assist countries in developing transport logistics policies and in enhancing the professionalism and competence of logistics service providers.

Outputs:

1. Guidelines for the development of transport logistics policies;
2. Guidelines for the establishment of minimum standards and codes of conduct for logistics service providers;
3. Regional meetings of freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers and their national associations;
4. Technical assistance and support to the industry and to governments for a sustainable training programme.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to incorporate guidelines for transport logistics policies into national logistics policies.
2. Measures taken by member States to incorporate guidelines for logistics service providers into national legislation and/or industry regulations.

3. Experience and knowledge shared among freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers.

4. Sustainable training programmes on freight forwarding, multimodal transport and logistics established by countries.

5. Finance and private sector participation

There is massive demand for investment in the transport sector in terms of infrastructure and services as well as maintenance. Most countries are constrained by limited budgets, however. Some countries in the region have been successful in establishing innovative mechanisms for finance and investment, including public-private partnerships (PPP) and other revenue-generating approaches that have created new and expanded financing opportunities, but the application of partnership processes is hampered by numerous constraints, including a lack of skills and experience in the areas of PPP project development, implementation, contract management and the streamlining of administrative processes.

Immediate objective: to promote regional cooperation between the public and private sectors for financing and maintaining infrastructure.

Outputs:

1. Studies on investment in Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway sections and in intermodal linkages, including dry ports, river ports and seaports;

2. Investment forums to promote partnerships and the sharing of experiences in financing the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, internationally recognized dry ports, river ports and seaports;

3. Assessment and promotion of policy options and initiatives for the financing of road maintenance;

4. Support for regional cooperation and networking among PPP units/programmes;

5. Assistance to member countries and institutions through the sharing of good practices and the delivery of PPP capacity development programmes;

6. Technical assistance in assessing PPP readiness.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to increase investment in transport and logistics infrastructure, including through public-private partnerships, in line with the secretariat's proposals and policy advice.

2. Measures taken by member States to incorporate recommendations for the maintenance of road transport.

3. Recorded exchanges of information and reports of meetings.

6. Sustainable transport development

The transport sector is the third largest energy user in the region. Transport is also one of the fastest growing sectors in the region. Expectations are that energy costs will continue to rise, thus increasing pressure on all sectors to seek greater efficiency, and that the levels of harmful emissions will continue to increase unless

appropriate measures are taken. In the transport sector, substantial gains can be made through modal shifts and improved organizational efficiency.⁷⁹

Immediate objective: to increase awareness and understanding of alternative freight transport policy options that can reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Outputs:

1. Proposals to encourage, through appropriate mechanisms, a modal shift from road to rail and water transport, and the use of the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and dry ports for the intermodal distribution of goods and carriage of people;
2. Regional meetings to share experiences in the adoption of energy-efficient and more environmentally friendly freight transport logistics systems;
3. Inclusion of sustainable transport-related issues in the *Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific*, the *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific* and ad hoc regional transport policy studies;
4. Capacity-building to increase awareness and promote environmentally sustainable transport development.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to promote modal shift policies in line with the secretariat's proposals and policy advice.
2. Measures taken by member States to consider sustainable transport issues when designing transport policies and projects.

7. Road safety

Road accidents cause human tragedies every minute of every day. In the Asia Pacific region, 700,000 lives or approximately half of the global road fatalities occur each year. The issue of road safety has received greater prominence in recent times with the Ministerial Declaration on Improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific (November 2006)⁸⁰ and the United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/255 (2 March 2010). Despite these global initiatives, road safety in many countries of the region is still not receiving priority in national planning or policies.

Immediate objective: to assist countries in the region in meeting their commitments under the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).⁸¹

Outputs:

1. Meetings and technical assistance to aid countries in building road safety management capacity in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety, including data collection and monitoring progress;
2. Meetings to advocate high-level commitment to road safety interventions and to exchange best practices in improving road safety;

⁷⁹ Technology improvements related to motive power and energy sources will be dealt with under parallel programmes implemented by the Environment and Sustainable Development Division of ESCAP and other partners.

⁸⁰ E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. IV.

⁸¹ See General Assembly resolution 64/255, para. 2.

3. Advisory services and technical support to national road safety campaigns and related awareness creation activities;
4. A web-based road safety network.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to implement policies and programmes on road safety in line with the goals of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.
2. Measures taken by member States to improve road safety data and information collection systems.
3. Documented best practices in improving road safety, shared through meetings and a web-based road safety network.

8. Transport and the Millennium Development Goals

While the Millennium Development Goals do not include specific references to transport, it is now widely accepted that transport infrastructure and services play a critical role in addressing the Goals. Many countries in the region suffer large spatial inequalities with regards to income, wealth and opportunity. This is due to a lack of all-weather roads to villages, infrequent or unreliable transport services to outlying areas and islands, poor access to deeper hinterlands and weak rural-urban connectivity. Poor maintenance of infrastructure, particularly roads, reduces their asset value and increases vehicle operating costs, transit times and safety risk for users. There is tremendous potential to enhance the contribution of transport interventions to efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. To realize this potential, Governments must integrate poverty reduction and Goal-related policy objectives into their transport programmes and projects during the early stages of formulation and programming.

Immediate objective: to encourage the inclusion of Millennium Development Goals considerations in the planning and implementation of regional transport interventions.

Outputs:

1. Studies and workshops on mainstreaming Millennium Development Goals considerations into transport planning and policies as appropriate, in particular, in infrastructure development, farm-to-market logistics, food security and road safety;
2. The exchange of experiences between member countries regarding the development of transport infrastructure and services to provide rural communities with physical access and connect them to national and regional trunk road systems;
3. Preparatory activities in support of the 10-year review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2013.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to mainstream Millennium Development Goals into transport programmes and policies, with particular focus on relevant areas of the Regional Action Programme.
2. Adoption of recommendations from the regional input document at the global meeting on the 10-year review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

9. Inter-island shipping

The provision of efficient, reliable and affordable shipping services to, from, between and within island and archipelagic developing countries presents a number of unique constraints and challenges. These include long voyage distances, imbalanced cargo flows and low unit values of exports as well as challenges in matching ship size, service speed, port capacity, safety and comfort with low and often irregular traffic volumes. In some cases, these challenges lead to unprofitable routes or “cherry-picking” of the most lucrative or profitable shipments, leaving the less attractive shipments to others. This results in a “vicious downward spiral” as the regularity, reliability and affordability of services deteriorates. These challenges can arise domestically, subregionally and internationally.

Immediate objective: to assist in identifying possible approaches to enhancing the regularity, reliability and affordability of the shipping services of archipelagic and island developing countries.

Outputs:

1. Studies, capacity-building activities and policy recommendations on effective strategies for securing regular, reliable and affordable inter-island shipping services for the consideration of archipelagic and island developing countries;
2. Advisory services and technical support to member countries, upon request, regarding the implementation of policy measures to support inter-island shipping.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to incorporate recommendations on inter-island shipping in line with the secretariat’s proposals and policy advice.

10. Connecting subregional transport networks

Across the Asia-Pacific region, intergovernmental organizations and programmes have been active in promoting physical and institutional connectivity within their own subregions. The conclusion of the associated agreements and the implementation of initiatives have led to the establishment of differing legal and operating regimes for the inter-subregional movement of goods, vehicles and passengers. These differences can act as physical and non-physical barriers to smooth and efficient transport between subregions.

Immediate objective: to identify physical and non-physical constraints to inter-subregional connectivity and to provide a platform for building closer collaboration among subregional entities in the development of transport.

Outputs:

1. Draft documents outlining potential issues that need to be addressed in order to improve physical and institutional connectivity between subregions;
2. Meetings of ESCAP member countries, subregional organizations and subregional programmes (back-to-back with relevant legislative meetings) to consider collaborative actions that support inter-subregional connectivity;
3. Technical assistance and support in the implementation of inter-subregional connectivity initiatives for the development of transport.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States on improving subregional connectivity in line with the secretariat's proposals and policy advice.
2. Inclusion of proposals and issues raised by the secretariat in the agendas of meetings of member countries and subregional organisations/programmes.

Appendix II

Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport

The objective of the regional strategic framework is to help regional member countries and their development partners increase the effectiveness of facilitation programmes and projects and accelerate the development of international road transport through long-term targets.

The framework provides general direction for member countries and their development partners when formulating facilitation policy, agreements, programmes and projects as well as related measures. It also helps promote common approaches to addressing facilitation issues with a view to reducing the complexity of the present system.

The framework also helps bring together national, bilateral, subregional and regional efforts in a more coordinated way to accelerate the process of transport facilitation.

Recognizing the prerequisite nature of some of the non-physical barriers that prevent international road transport, it is proposed that the regional strategic framework initially focus on the fundamental elements of international road transport and the key modalities for facilitation.⁸²

I. Fundamental elements of international road transport

A. Road transport permits and traffic rights

1. Description of the issue

Across Asia, international movement by road is largely confined to border areas and a limited number of roads. Most transport permits are issued for only a single trip along a designated route by a specified individual vehicle. Another constraint to international road transport is the restriction of transit operations. As a result, goods carried by road often have to be trans-shipped at border areas or loading points along a designated route. This adds needless costs and delays to the transport process.

2. Target

Wider application of multiple-entry transport permits issued to a carrier for any compliant vehicle in its fleet. Such permits, valid for one year, could be used on multiple routes or road networks for both interstate and transit transport operations. In addition, multilateral transport permits should be promoted for wider application in parallel with bilateral transport permits.

⁸² If a country has more liberalized and simplified arrangements for some of the listed areas, it may focus on other recommended areas.

3. Process

When member countries formulate or renew their bilateral and multilateral agreements on international road transport or hold consultations on the implementation of the agreements, they may consider adopting transport permits valid for multiple entries with one year validity and/or on multiple routes or road networks and allow their competent authorities to issue the permits to their carriers instead of particular vehicles.

B. Visas for professional drivers and crews of road vehicles

1. Description of the issue

Unlike seafarers and aircrews, professional road vehicle drivers do not benefit from streamlined global arrangements for the issuance of visas or temporary entry to undertake international transport operations. Visa issuance for professional road vehicle drivers is largely subject to bilateral agreements on visas. In recent years, some countries have tried to address the issue through subregional arrangements. International organizations have also made an effort to help facilitate visa issuance for professional road vehicle drivers. In spite of this, there is still no specific visa category for vehicle drivers in many countries and in most countries in the region they are considered either visitors or foreign labourers for the purpose of visa issuance.

Professional road vehicle drivers have to go through complicated and difficult procedures to apply for visas and are generally granted only a single-entry visa each time. In some countries, drivers are required to apply for visas in person at embassies or consulates in major cities and wait a week or more to either obtain a visa or to learn that their application has been rejected.

As a result, visa difficulties continue to cause delays in the delivery of goods and sometimes require the changing of vehicles or at least drivers at border crossings.

2. Target

As a minimum target, regional member countries may pursue multiple-entry visas valid for one year for professional drivers and crews of road vehicles. Countries may also agree to a uniform set of documents and basic procedures.

3. Process

In order to achieve this target, the competent national authorities for international road transport can act as intermediaries to facilitate the issuance of visas by embassies or consulates. The competent national authority in one country may, as appropriate, prepare a list of professional drivers and exchange it with their counterpart in another country for onward transmission to ministries of foreign affairs, embassies or consulates. Alternatively, the competent national authorities may provide certifying letters along with guarantees from carriers when drivers apply for visas.

The transport authorities need to consult with ministries of foreign affairs when they negotiate subregional facilitation agreements that include clauses for visa arrangements. If necessary, they should request relevant authorities to negotiate bilateral/subregional visa arrangements for professional drivers.

C. Temporary importation of road vehicles

1. Description of the issue

In most countries where vehicles are permitted to cross borders, it is common to use a guarantee of some sort (such as a bond, a cash deposit through a local agent

or the payment of a one-time charge upon each entry) to satisfy the requirements of the Customs authorities. Only a few countries in the region do not impose such requirements.

There exist a few international conventions relating to temporary admissions to which most countries in the region have not acceded.

The use of unified subregional agreements and a subregional guarantee system is not the most convenient solution for carriers, but it does help avoid cash or bond deposits or charges at each border and for travel through several countries. However, charges for the use of the documents and guarantees issued under this system can be a major concern. If such charges are higher than the one-time charge of a fixed amount at border crossings, the guarantee system loses its advantages.

2. Target

As a minimum regional standard, the application of international conventions on temporary importation should be encouraged.

3. Process

The countries that have not acceded to the international conventions on temporary importation⁸³ should take steps to gradually promote the same. These conventions have identical commitments with respect to the temporary importation of vehicles. The countries that are already contracting parties may take action to ensure that practical arrangements for full implementation are put in place.

D. Insurance of vehicles

1. Description of the issue

Insurance is commonly required to be purchased at each border crossing throughout the region, which causes delays and obliges drivers to obtain individual receipts for cash payments. Although subregional insurance schemes have been planned for many years, much remains to be done before such schemes can become operational.

2. Target

Third-party insurance should be used as a regional minimum standard for vehicles undertaking international road transport through the use of either the Green Card system⁸⁴ or a similar subregional system.

3. Process

It is desirable for member countries to join the Green Card system. Countries in subregions that have road transport links with Europe may adopt the Green Card system for easy access to Europe. Countries in other subregions may develop subregional motor vehicle third-party insurance schemes compatible with the Green Card system while maintaining the long-term goal of acceding to the Green Card system. For countries that are not participating in any subregional insurance scheme, bilateral or trilateral arrangements based on the Green Card system may be considered.

⁸³ The Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles and/or the WCO Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul Convention).

⁸⁴ See, for example, ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2009/6.

E. Vehicle weights and dimensions

1. Description of the issue

For many regional member countries, damage to roads and bridges caused by overweight vehicles is a serious problem which can be compounded by overloaded foreign vehicles. The problem exists partly because different countries have different technical standards on permissible weights and dimensions, and partly because some carriers desire to turn a higher profit through fewer runs with heavier loads.

At the same time, repeated weighing and inspections at border crossings and inland weight stations for international vehicles impede transport efficiency. Carriers have requested that weighing procedures be simplified and that the number of weighings and inspections within countries reduced.

There is no international or regional standard on weights or dimensions of vehicles permitted to travel on roads. Member countries have been trying to harmonize or unify standards at the subregional level. Bilateral agreements on international road transport normally require carriers to observe the domestic standards of host countries, which are mostly different from the countries where the carriers are registered.

2. Target

For healthy and sustainable development of international road transport in the region, it would be helpful if permissible weights and dimensions of vehicles, including axle loads, became unified at the bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral and subregional levels.

3. Process

A practical approach could be to unify such standards through bilateral and multilateral, including trilateral, quadrilateral and subregional arrangements.

Member countries may also consider negotiating a control system for overloaded vehicles through bilateral and multilateral agreements. The control system may include fines together with warning notices and suspension of transport permits.

F. Vehicle registration and inspection certificates

1. Description of the issue

Currently, ESCAP member countries use bilateral or multilateral agreements to mutually recognize vehicle registration and inspection certificates. However, the use of characters of national languages in registration certificates and number plates is still common. This causes difficulties when border crossing officials attempt to clear vehicles for entry. It also causes difficulties for traffic police and will cause further difficulties when electronic clearance systems are introduced.

For mutual recognition of vehicle registration certificates, standardized distinguishing signs of the State of registration, detailed requirements of technical conditions and periodic inspections of vehicles as well as the standardized registration number plates or marks of vehicles need to be used. The registration number plates or marks should be composed of either Arabic numerals or Arabic numerals and capital Latin characters, as defined in the Convention on Road Traffic [1968].

2. Target

Adoption of the standards on vehicle registration certificates, number plates or marks, and country distinguishing signs, as contained in the Convention on Road Traffic [1968], should be encouraged.

3. Process

Countries that have not yet become contracting parties to the Convention on Road Traffic [1968] need to take measures to accede to it.

Countries that would find it difficult to accede to the Convention in the short term may consider adopting the standards contained in the Convention, as well as exploring the possibility of using other mechanisms that are consistent with that convention and avoiding the use of different standards in any bilateral and multilateral agreements into which they may enter.

II. Key modalities for facilitating international road transport

Valuable experience has been gained in the region, and a wealth of knowledge exists at the national, subregional and regional levels with respect to successful and less successful approaches to both the formulation and subsequent implementation of transport agreements. To provide a focus for collaborative efforts, cooperation and exchange of experiences among member countries, the key modalities described below are suggested.

A. Building an effective legal regime

International conventions, subregional and bilateral agreements have a vital role to play.

1. Establishment of a regional network of legal experts on transport facilitation

Promoting and implementing international facilitation conventions, formulating and implementing subregional agreements, concluding bilateral agreements and harmonizing documentation and procedures all rely on national, subregional and international legal experts. A regional network of national and subregional negotiators and legal experts from governments, transport associations and academic institutions could therefore play a vital role by providing advice and promoting the harmonization and coordination of different legal instruments on transport facilitation.

Through the network, member countries and subregional organizations/institutions would be able to do the following:

- Exchange information
- Coordinate with each other
- Pinpoint areas of legal conflict between different subregional agreements and their implications
- Suggest solutions to legal conflicts where a country is party to two or more agreements
- Suggest ways to connect countries located in different subregions that are party to different agreements the existence of which impedes
- Share experiences

The network might also help promote international facilitation conventions and the formulation and implementation of subregional facilitation agreements and assist in the development and improvement of bilateral agreements on international road transport. It would become a network of core professionals on legal issues surrounding road transport facilitation in the region, providing legal support for formulation and implementation of agreements.

The network may exchange information through electronic communication, seminars, training, expert meetings, group studies and individual studies. The ESCAP secretariat may provide secretarial support to the network and financial support for some years. In the long run, the network would operate independently with the secretarial support of ESCAP and undertake studies as requested by governmental agencies, ESCAP and other organizations/institutions.

2. Accession to selected international facilitation conventions

Commission resolution 48/11 provides countries in the region with a common and harmonized set of standards in the field of international land transport facilitation through an initial set of conventions⁸⁵ to which countries in the ESCAP region could accede.

A study undertaken by the secretariat in 2006, as requested by the Commission, concluded with the proposal that three further international legal instruments were added to complement those recommended in resolution 48/11:

- (a) The Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road, 1978;
- (b) The revised Kyoto Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures, 1999;
- (c) The Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul Convention), 1990.

Together, the 10 international legal instruments can provide a consistent framework for simplification and harmonization of regional facilitation initiatives in line with international standards.

Member countries that have not acceded to the core conventions, as amended, need to consider doing so. If acceding involves a prolonged process due to internal procedures, then member countries should consider adopting the standards set in the conventions at the level of national legislation as a transitional measure.

Effective implementation of the international conventions is as equally important as accession to the conventions. Member countries need to review the obligations of the international conventions together with their existing legislation and practices, and to adjust, as appropriate, their legislation, documentation and procedures relating to international road transport.

3. Subregional agreements

The key intention behind subregional agreements on international road transport facilitation is to open up subregional traffic, harmonize and simplify

⁸⁵ Convention on Road Traffic, 1968; Convention on Road Signs and Signals, 1968; Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), 1975; Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles, 1956; Customs Convention on Containers, 1972; International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982; and Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), 1956.

formalities and procedures and establish common standards while maintaining consistency with international conventions. Effective implementation of subregional agreements has become an important but challenging task for most regional member countries.

The implementation of subregional agreements involves many ministries and authorities. It also requires amendments to domestic legislation, existing formalities and procedures, and the functions of some agencies and authorities. Strong political support from member countries is needed in order to implement such agreements. Financial and technical support from international organizations and institutions is also needed. Regional advocacy needs to be enhanced to help draw the attention of national Governments and the international community to this important issue.

4. Bilateral agreements

In view of difficulties in the management and implementation of numerous bilateral agreements on international road transport faced by many countries in the region, a regional strategy may be taken to apply international conventions and subregional agreements wherever possible and using bilateral agreements to cover the areas which cannot be realized through international conventions and subregional agreements. The development of a model guideline with a recommended standard structure for bilateral agreements on international road transport could assist member countries in better formulating and implementing numerous bilateral agreements while at the same time working towards greater harmonization.

B. Wider applications of new technologies

The application of new technologies, including information and communications technology applications can significantly enhance road transport facilitation. Building modern border crossings and international road transport equipped with new technologies and electronic declaration systems should be further promoted. The use of new technologies to facilitate border-crossing controls for international road transport is still relatively new within the region. Before such technologies can be fully utilized, legislation needs to be amended and existing formalities and procedures need to be simplified. Regional experience with innovative and integrated applications of new technologies to clearances and inspections for international road transport can be promoted through the exchange of experience, which may lead to greater levels of harmonization in the region.

C. Development of professional training for international road transport

As the part of the regional strategic framework, professional training of all stakeholders, including policymakers, managers and drivers for international road transport needs to be developed to ensure that they are competent to fulfil their tasks in international operations. Over the mid- to long term, it is desirable to establish national training institutions for national policymakers, managers and drivers undertaking international road transport. However, in South Asia and South-East Asia, subregional training institutions focusing on courses on subregional operations would be more helpful and effective in the short term and help overcome some of the financial and capacity constraints. In Central Asia and West Asia, which have stronger links to Europe, training for subregional operations may be undertaken in parallel with courses for interregional operations.

The ESCAP secretariat could provide assistance, defining the main subjects to be included in the curricula of training institutions, in order to promote the setting of common standards in professional training.

D. Establishment/strengthening of national facilitation coordination mechanisms

A comprehensive and integrated approach, with the involvement of relevant government ministries/agencies and the private sector, is required to address transport facilitation challenges effectively. Such collaboration is crucial to the formulation and implementation of various facilitation measures. Some countries in the ESCAP region have in place coordination mechanisms that could fulfil all of the tasks required and should be further strengthened to ensure that they are fully effective. In addition, mechanisms should be developed to promote the exchange of experiences.

E. Promotion of joint control at border crossings

Joint control at border crossings at the bilateral level, including single window clearance, single stop inspection, joint customs control, establishing priority clearance for certain kinds of goods (for example, perishable goods) on a reciprocal basis and reduction of control agencies at border crossings should be promoted in line with international standards. However, the complexity of joint controls and differences from border crossing to border crossing in the implementation of joint controls needs to be fully recognized and specific comprehensive and detailed studies and designs for each border crossing need to be undertaken before implementing joint control. In this regard, the sharing of experiences among member countries can help in ensuring optimum design in terms of infrastructure and operations.

F. Promotion of economic zones at border crossings, dry ports and logistics centres

Recent developments in free economic zones and joint free economic zones at border crossings, as well as dry ports and logistics centres, have provided new opportunities for authorities and road transport operators to overcome many difficulties in international road transport. The potential benefits in terms of facilitating international road transport and logistics need to be exploited.

G. Further application of facilitation tools

Facilitation tools, such as the time/cost-distance methodology, can help identify impediments to international transport as well as possible remedies. They should be further expanded and promoted with the support of transport ministries and other authorities as well as transport operators. The use of facilitation tools can help refine projects and measure the benefits derived.

Resolution 68/5

Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017⁸⁶

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing the importance of regional cooperation in the areas of disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management as well as environment and development,

Convinced that applications of space technology and the Geographic Information System contribute significantly to addressing issues relating to disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management as well as environment and development,

Cognizant of the efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in the applications of space technology and the Geographic Information System, such as the Asia-Pacific

⁸⁶ See paras. 154 to 174 above. See also paras. 110 to 137 above.

Regional Space Agency Forum, which was established in 1993 and has created initiatives, such as Sentinel Asia, Space Applications For Environment, and the Regional Readiness Review for Key Climate Missions, as well as the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization,

Taking note of the contributions of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) Beijing Office to the provision, for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, of all types of space-based information and services relevant to disaster management to support the full disaster management cycle,

Taking note also of the contributions of Sentinel Asia to disaster management in the Asia-Pacific region, such as by bringing together space agencies and disaster management agencies, and noting with satisfaction that the final phase of this initiative will start in 2013 with the objective of establishing a comprehensive disaster management support system,

Acknowledging the capacity-building and development activities undertaken by the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific to assist members in enhancing their knowledge of space technologies and the Geographic Information System,

Recognizing contributions made by the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific as an important initiative of ESCAP in promoting regional cooperation in space applications, in particular through its education and training network,

Mindful of the need for enhanced efforts at the national and regional levels to make practical and operational use of space technology and the Geographic Information System to support disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to address issues relating to environment and development in socially beneficial areas, such as water resource management, food security, public health, forest monitoring and biodiversity,

1. *Proclaims* the period from 2012 to 2017 the Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, to commence on the first day of World Space Week, 4 October 2012;
2. *Decides* that the objective of the Asia-Pacific Years of Action should be to enhance efforts at the national and regional levels to broaden and deepen the contribution of space technology and the Geographic Information System to addressing issues related to disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management as well as environment and development by increasing relevant activities at the national, subregional and regional levels;
3. *Welcomes* the proposed holding of the Intergovernmental Meeting to Prepare a Plan of Action for the Asia-Pacific Years of Action, to be hosted by a member State by the end of 2012;
4. *Encourages* all members and associate members to participate actively in the Intergovernmental Meeting and its preparatory process;
5. *Invites* United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations and other stakeholders to participate in and contribute to the Intergovernmental Meeting and its preparatory process;

6. *Invites* members to make use of programmes offered by the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific for capacity-building in space technologies and the Geographic Information System;

7. *Calls for* continued support to activities under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in promoting space technology applications;

8. *Invites* member States to carry out activities relevant to the Asia-Pacific Years of Action, including:

(a) Hosting workshops in cooperation with United Nations bodies and other international/intergovernmental organizations as well as regional and subregional entities, such as the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization and the Asian Development Bank;

(b) Promoting initiatives such as Sentinel Asia, Space Applications For Environment, the Regional Readiness Review for Key Climate Missions, and Asia-Oceania experiments of Global Navigation Satellite Systems that include the Quasi-Zenith Satellite System;

9. *Invites* all relevant specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system as well as intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations and other stakeholders to take action in support of the Asia-Pacific Years of Action;

10. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to facilitate the organization of activities associated with the Asia-Pacific Years of Action in collaboration with other regional initiatives;

11. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution and at its seventy-fourth session on the progress made in the attainment of the objectives of the Asia-Pacific Years of Action.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Resolution 68/6

Asia-Pacific regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014⁸⁷

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling that the General Assembly, in its resolution 65/234 of 22 December 2010, decided to convene a special session during its sixty-ninth session in order to assess the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,⁸⁸ and to renew political support for actions required for the full achievement of the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action,

Also recalling that the General Assembly, in the same resolution, called upon the United Nations Population Fund to undertake an operational review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, and invited all other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to contribute, as appropriate, to the special session as well as to its preparation,

⁸⁷ See paras. 175 to 203 above.

⁸⁸ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

Further recalling that the General Assembly, in the same resolution, also encouraged Governments to undertake reviews of the progress achieved and the constraints faced therein in the implementation of the Programme of Action at all levels, particularly at the national level and at the level of international cooperation,

Recalling its resolution 66/12 of 19 May 2010 on the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, in which it requested the Executive Secretary to convene the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in Bangkok in 2012 in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system,

Taking note of the proposed regional preparatory activities to be undertaken by the secretariat in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund to support members and associate members in preparing for the special session,⁸⁹

Mindful of the significant linkage between the International Conference on Population and Development and the Asian and Pacific Population Conference and the need to align the convening of the forthcoming sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference with the global process leading up to the special session in order to achieve synergies and impact,

1. *Decides* to postpone the convening of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in Bangkok to 2013 with a view to utilizing the Conference as an intergovernmental platform for regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014;

2. *Also decides* that critical population and development issues, such as (a) sexual and reproductive health, including maternal health, family planning and prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, (b) gender equality and women's empowerment, (c) population ageing, (d) international migration, (e) urbanization, (f) education, and (g) regional and international cooperation in the field of population and development, be considered in the work of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference as part of the process of assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development⁸⁸ and recommending actions required at all levels for the full achievement of its goals and objectives, with particular attention to accelerating the reduction of maternal mortality and access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for all, especially for young people and vulnerable groups;

3. *Further decides* that the outcome of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference serve as a regional input to the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014;

4. *Emphasizes* the need for all members and associate members to recommit themselves to fully implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;⁸⁸

5. *Also emphasizes* that financial resources should be used effectively by recipient countries to meet national population and development objectives, so as to assist donors to secure commitment to further resources for programmes;

6. *Further emphasizes* the need for complementary resource flows from the international community, including donor countries, for the implementation of the

⁸⁹ See E/ESCAP/68/2, para. 113.

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

7. *Underlines* the need for national capacity-building for population and development and transfer of appropriate technology and know-how to developing countries to be core objectives and central activities for international cooperation at the programme level. It should be stressed that the international community was called on to consider such measures as the transfer of technologies to developing countries to produce and distribute high-quality items for reproductive health services in order to strengthen the self-reliance of these countries;

8. *Encourages* all members and associate members to undertake national reviews of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the constraints faced therein;

9. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To prepare a regional overview on the basis of the national reviews of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the constraints faced therein for the consideration of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference;

(b) To report to the Commission at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Resolution 68/7
Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022⁹⁰

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons,⁹¹ the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities⁹² and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,⁹³

Recalling also previous General Assembly resolutions on the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in which the Assembly recognized the collective responsibility of Governments to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level, and stressed the duty of member States to achieve greater justice and equality for all, in particular persons with disabilities,

Recalling its resolutions 48/3 of 23 April 1992 and 58/4 of 22 May 2002, in which it proclaimed the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons from 1993 to 2002, and its extension from 2003 to 2012, as well as the establishment of the United Nations trust fund for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons,

Expressing appreciation to the members and associate members as well as to the other stakeholders in the Asian and Pacific region, including persons with disabilities, for their commitment to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, including through their financial contribution to the aforementioned fund and other funds,

⁹⁰ See paras. 175 to 203 above.

⁹¹ A/37/351/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex, sect. VIII, recommendation I (IV).

⁹² General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex.

⁹³ General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

Recognizing the positive impact of previous regional decades in increasing national action on the rights of persons with disabilities, while noting that many challenges remain,

Emphasizing the importance of a participatory, comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach in order to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities effectively, especially with the active and meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities,

Acknowledging that there has been much improvement in the political, social and economic environment that has been conducive to the enhancement of the rights of persons with disabilities, and that technological advances, including information and communications technologies, have become instrumental in promoting, protecting and ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities,

Taking note of the recommendation of the Committee on Social Development at its second session that the Commission proclaim a new decade, from 2013 to 2022, to promote the rights of persons with disabilities,⁹⁴ with a view to addressing both remaining and emerging challenges,

Reaffirming the significance of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in Incheon from 29 October to 2 November 2012, which will conclude the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, and is expected to adopt a strategic action framework for a new decade, 2013-2022,

Noting the significance of mechanisms, including national financing and international cooperation, to support the full and effective implementation of a new decade, 2013-2022,

Expressing appreciation for the proposed establishment by the Republic of Korea of a multi-donor trust fund, to be called the Make the Right Real Fund initiated by and based in the Republic of Korea and which will be founded on a public-private partnership, to support the successful implementation of a new decade, 2013-2022,

1. *Proclaims* the period from 2013 to 2022 the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, with a view to addressing both remaining and emerging challenges, promoting, protecting and ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities, increasing ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,⁹³ achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015;

2. *Urges* all members and associate members to participate actively in the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, and to consider and adopt a strategic framework to guide the implementation of the Decade that is based on the general principles and obligations stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

3. *Invites* all members and associate members of the Commission, international development assistance agencies and the private sector to ensure the successful implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to support members and associate members upon request, including through capacity-building and technical assistance,

⁹⁴ E/ESCAP/67/11, para. 1.

in developing and pursuing national programmes and international cooperation during the forthcoming Decade;

5. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, and triennially thereafter until the end of the Decade, on the progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Resolution 68/8

Enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with regional organizations for promoting regional development⁹⁵

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 62/208 of 19 December 2007, in which the Assembly, among other things, encouraged the United Nations development system to strengthen collaboration with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and regional banks, as appropriate and consistent with their respective mandates, and requested the regional commissions to further develop their analytical capacities to support country-level development initiatives at the request of the programme countries, and to support measures for more intensive inter-agency collaboration at the regional and subregional levels,

Also recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which the Council reaffirmed the role of the regional commissions as regional outposts of the United Nations and called for close cooperation between the commissions and other relevant regional bodies in order to reinforce synergies and complementarities between their respective programmes of work,

Further recalling its resolution 60/1 of 28 April 2004 containing the Shanghai Declaration, in which the members and associate members emphasized the Commission's unique role as the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region and its mandate as the main general economic and social development centre within the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region, and renewed their commitment to enhancing subregional and regional cooperation with a view to promoting sustainable development in the Asian and the Pacific region,

Recognizing that the regional dimension of development is critical for an effective and coordinated response to an ever growing number of regional and global issues, and that regional responses are of increasing importance as a buffer against global shocks and crises,

Emphasizing the importance of the regional and subregional levels as an essential building block of effective global governance, as they provide the critical link between the global and national levels, especially in the context of the ongoing discussions on an integrated approach to sustainable development and the development agenda beyond 2015,

Stressing the significant role played by the regional commissions as part of the institutional landscape in each region through norm setting, dissemination and analytical functions as well as operational activities that are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and as important forums for articulating regional and subregional perspectives on global issues and building consensus within each region,

⁹⁵ See paras. 241 to 245 above.

Recognizing the importance of regional coordination mechanisms in promoting enhanced regional cooperation among agencies of the United Nations system and working together towards enhanced policy coherence, programme effectiveness and efficiency,

Taking note of the independent study entitled *The Regional Dimension of Development and the UN System*,⁹⁶ sponsored by the regional commissions,

1. *Commends* the Executive Secretary and the executive secretaries of the other regional commissions for sponsoring the independent study entitled *The Regional Dimension of Development and the UN System*, and calls on her to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the study to the members and associate members of the Commission;

2. *Invites* agencies of the United Nations, as appropriate, to work together in support of the implementation of the recommendations of the independent study on regionalism as a building block for multilateralism and on the need for a coherent regional strategy for development, as annexed to the present resolution;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To work, through the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and in consultation with member States and other relevant organizations operating in Asia and the Pacific at the regional and subregional levels, towards the implementation of the recommendations so that the United Nations system's engagement with such organizations is coherent and strategically coordinated, and is geared to support regional integration efforts;

(b) To report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session on the progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Annex

Recommendation 1

Regionalism as a building block for multilateralism

There is a need for the United Nations system to recognize the importance of regionalism, and its enormous potential as a building block for multilateralism. An increasingly assertive regional governance is emerging with significant implications on global governance. The rising importance of the regional dimension of development, and its critical role as a vital effective and efficient link between the global and national levels, has to be acknowledged and taken into account in all global development processes.

Recommendation 2

The need for a coherent regional strategy for development

A large number of United Nations and non-United Nations organizations, particularly the regional commissions, are working at the regional level. The value and impact of United Nations system engagement with regional organizations is best when efforts are coherent and strategically coordinated and fit into a larger

⁹⁶ Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (New York, November 2011), available from <https://www.un.org/regionalcommissions/PrintRegionalDimensionStudy.pdf>.

comprehensive framework of collaboration with partner organizations. The United Nations system organizations working together in each region need to coordinate their interventions within an overarching collective strategy of engagement with the partner organizations and stakeholders, bearing in mind the specificities and priorities of each region. The regional commissions, the regional arms of the United Nations, with their convening power and their role as United Nations pan-regional intergovernmental platforms, have a central role to play in the development and implementation of such strategies.

Resolution 68/9

Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission⁹⁷

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 67/15 on the midterm review of the functioning of the conference structure of the Commission, in which it decided to explore ways to strengthen the role of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, and entrusted that task to the Advisory Committee, as well as the task of reviewing the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee,

Having considered the report of the Advisory Committee,⁹⁸

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Advisory Committee;⁹⁸
2. *Adopts* the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee as annexed to the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

Annex

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 ESCAP agenda 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 Commission sessions 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;

⁹⁷ See paras. 278 to 286 above.

⁹⁸ E/ESCAP/68/19.

(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 for 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 developmental 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 for Commission sessions;

(i) To be informed of ESCAP collaboration and related arrangements with 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.

Resolution 68/10

Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific⁹⁹

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Reaffirming its unique role as the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region and its comprehensive mandate as the main general economic and social development centre within the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region,

Recalling the First Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation, which was held in Manila in 1963 under the auspices of the Commission and gave rise to the establishment of the Asian Development Bank,

Also recalling other important contributions of the Commission to regional economic integration and cooperation as reflected in the establishment of the Mekong River Commission, the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway, the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee, the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries,

Further recalling its resolutions 63/7 on international migration and development for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, 65/1 on the implementation of the Bali Outcome Document in addressing the food, fuel and financial crises, 66/4 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, 66/5 on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, and 67/2 on promoting regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy in Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling the theme topic for the sixty-eighth session “Enhancing regional economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region”,¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ See paras. 364 to 378 above.

¹⁰⁰ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2011, Supplement No. 19* (E/2011/39-E/ESCAP/67/23), para. 298.

Noting the theme study for the sixty-eighth session, entitled *Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century*,¹⁰¹

Recognizing that the rapid economic growth in Asia and the Pacific is opening up significant opportunities for trade, investment and employment and has the potential to facilitate substantive progress in reducing poverty and closing development gaps across countries in the region,

Emphasizing the need for closer regional cooperation, which could make the region more resilient to future crises and bolster the capacity of countries in the region to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,

Also emphasizing that, in the wake of the global financial crisis, regional economic integration could play a critical role in driving the Asian and Pacific region's march to an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future,

Further emphasizing the need to substantially enhance the degree of connectivity in the region, including through investment in physical transport, energy and information and communications technology infrastructure, and improvements in trade and transport facilitation,

Emphasizing that cooperation among countries in the region is critical in order to tackle common risks and vulnerabilities, such as those related to food and energy insecurity, disasters and pressures on natural resources,

Noting that current institutional frameworks for economic integration differ in their membership and scope,

1. *Calls upon* all members and associate members to strengthen the role of the Commission in enhancing regional economic integration and cooperation, including in all subregions of Asia and the Pacific;
2. *Decides* to convene the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in 2013, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the First Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation, to review the theme study¹⁰¹ for the sixty-eighth session of the Commission;
3. *Calls upon* all members and associate members to further promote regional economic integration and cooperation and to formulate and implement coherent policies to increase the effectiveness of existing cooperation mechanisms;
4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:
 - (a) To strengthen the role and capacity of the secretariat in the area of regional economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region;
 - (b) To support the convening of the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in 2013;
 - (c) To report to the Commission at its seventieth session on the progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

*Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012*

¹⁰¹ ST/ESCAP/2629.

Resolution 68/11
Connectivity for energy security¹⁰²

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 67/2 on promoting regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy in Asia and the Pacific,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's initiative "Sustainable Energy for All",

Recalling General Assembly resolution 65/151, in which the Assembly decided to declare 2012 the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All,

Recognizing the need to optimize the use of energy resources by analysing the potential to address that need with a view to establishing and developing a more stable and efficient energy production and consumption system that contributes towards sustainable development and enhanced energy security,

Taking note of the theme study for the sixty-eighth session of the Commission,^{103, 104}

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of Governments to promote subregional and regional cooperation on the interconnection of energy transmission systems,

1. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to identify options, in consultation with member States, that member States may choose on regional energy connectivity, including an intergovernmental framework that could be developed for an integrated regional power grid, which could be termed as the "Asian Energy Highway", to analyse the socioeconomic and environmental benefits of each option as well as the challenges and opportunities towards the realization of each option, and to report on each option to the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, which will be held in the Russian Federation in May 2013;

2. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventieth session on the progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

Fifth plenary meeting
23 May 2012

¹⁰² See paras. 364 to 379 above.

¹⁰³ *Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century* (ST/ESCAP/2629).

¹⁰⁴ See also E/ESCAP/68/22.

Annex I

Statement of programme budget implications of actions and proposals of the Commission

1. The requests contained in the resolutions listed below will have no additional programme budget implications for the approved programme budget for 2012-2013.^a

Resolution No.	Title
68/1	Reaffirming the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States with a focus on the Pacific
68/2	Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region
68/3	Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation
68/4	Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport
68/5	Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017
68/6	Asia-Pacific regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014
68/7	Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022
68/8	Enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with regional organizations for promoting regional development
68/9	Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission
68/10	Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific
68/11	Connectivity for energy security

2. Extrabudgetary resources, where appropriate, will be sought for the implementation of the activities required under the above-mentioned resolutions.

3. With respect to resolution 68/5, one additional output would be added in the approved programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013, namely to facilitate the preparatory process and organization of the intergovernmental meeting associated with the Asia-Pacific Years of Action. The implementation of this resolution will have no programme budget implications for the regular budget of the United Nations. Extrabudgetary resources will be sought for the implementation of the required activities.

^a See General Assembly resolution 66/248 A-C of 24 December 2011.

4. With respect to resolution 68/10, one additional output would be added in the approved programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013, namely supporting the convening of the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in 2013, which will be held back-to-back with the third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development. The implementation of this resolution will have no programme budget implications for the regular budget of the United Nations. Extrabudgetary resources will be sought for the implementation of the required activities.

Annex II

Meetings of subsidiary bodies and other intergovernmental meetings held since the sixty-seventh session of the Commission

Subsidiary body and officers		Session	Document symbol
<i>Committees</i>			
I. Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction		Second session	E/ESCAP/68/11
Chair	Mr. Sangman Jeong (Republic of Korea)	Bangkok	
First Vice-Chair	H.E. Mr. Hassan Ghadami (Islamic Republic of Iran)	29 June-1 July	
Vice-Chairs	Mr. Mohamed Thajudeen (Malaysia)	2011	
	Mr. Loti Yates (Solomon Islands)		
Rapporteur	Mr. Masni Eriza (Indonesia)		
II. Committee on Trade and Investment		Second session	E/ESCAP/68/6
Chair	Mr. Mozibur Rahman (Bangladesh)	Bangkok	
Vice-Chair	Ms. Lucita Piamontes Reyes (Philippines)	27-29 July	
Rapporteur	Mr. Alex Kerangpuna (Papua New Guinea)	2011	
III. Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development		Second session	E/ESCAP/68/4
Chair	Mr. Urgamal Byambasuren (Mongolia)	Bangkok	
Vice-Chairs	Mr. Sanjay Kumar Rakesh (India)	7-9 December	
	Mr. Bobby Hamzar Rafinus (Indonesia)	2011	
Rapporteur	Mr. Oscar Malielegaoi (Samoa)		
IV. Committee on Environment and Development		Second session	E/ESCAP/68/10
Chair	Mr. Naoya Tsukamoto (Japan)	Bangkok	
Vice-Chairs	Mr. Abbas Golriz (Islamic Republic of Iran)	22-24	
	Ms. Altynay Dyussekov (Kazakhstan)	February 2012	
Rapporteur	Mr. Ahmad Kamal Wasis (Malaysia)		
<i>Governing Councils</i>			
I. Governing Council of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (UNAPCAEM)		Seventh session,	E/ESCAP/68/8
Chair	Ms. Sirilak Suwanrangsri (Thailand)	Bali,	
Vice-Chair	Mr. Astu Unadi (Indonesia)	Indonesia,	
		27-28 October	
		2011	
II. Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT)		Sixth session,	E/ESCAP/68/12
Chair	Mr. Shankar Aggarwal (India)	Cheonan,	
Vice-Chair	Ms. Rungthip Sripetchdee (Thailand)	Republic of	
		Korea, 29	
		October 2011	

Subsidiary body and officers		Session	Document symbol
III. Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)		Seventh session, Chiba, Japan, 8-9 December 2011	E/ESCAP/68/14
Chair	Mr. Trevor Sutton (Australia)		
Vice-Chair	Mr. Takao Itou (Japan)		
IV. Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT)		Seventh session, Bangkok, 9 December 2011	E/ESCAP/68/7
Chair	Mr. Somchai Tiamboonprasert (Thailand)		
Vice-Chair	Mr. Ashwani Gupta (India)		
V. Governing Council of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA)		Eighth session Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 21- 22 March 2012	E/ESCAP/68/5
Chair	Mr. Hasil Sembiring, (Indonesia)		
Vice-Chair/ Rapporteur	Mr. Rangsit Poosiripinyo (Thailand)		
<i>Other Intergovernmental meetings</i>			
I. Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals		Bangkok, 6-8 February 2012	E/ESCAP/68/13
Chair	H.E. Mr. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau (Fiji)		
Vice-Chair	Dr. Nafsiah Mboi (Indonesia)		
Rapporteur	Mr. Sunil Samaraweera (Sri Lanka)		
II. Ministerial Conference on Transport		Second session Bangkok 12-16 March 2012	E/ESCAP/68/9
Chair	H.E. Lyonpo Nandalal Rai (Bhutan)		
Vice-Chairs	H.E. Mr. Tauch Chankosal (Cambodia) H.E. Mr. Weng Mengyong (China) H.E. Mr. Pak Jong-Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) H.E. Mr. Timoci L. Natuva (Fiji) H.E. Mr. Bambang Susantono (Indonesia) H.E. Mr. Ali Nikzad (Islamic Republic of Iran) H.E. Mr. Kazuo Inaba (Japan) H.E. Mr. Sommad Pholsena (Lao People's Democratic Republic) H.E. Datuk Abdul Rahim Bakri (Malaysia) H.E. Mr. Ahmed Shamheed (Maldives) H.E. Mr. Tugs Purevdorj (Mongolia) H.E. Mr. Thant Shin (Myanmar) H.E. Mr. Francis Awesa (Papua New Guinea) H.E. Mr. Joo Sung-Ho (Republic of Korea) H.E. Mr. Santha Kumara Ananda Welgama (Sri Lanka) H.E. Mr. Chadchart Sittipunt (Thailand) H.E. Mr. Nguyen Hong Truong (Viet Nam)		
Rapporteur	Mr. Hong Sinara (Cambodia)		

Annex III

Publications and documents issued by the Commission

A. Publications issued since the sixty-seventh session^{*}

Executive direction and management

Annual Report 2010–2011: Working towards Shared Prosperity, Equity and Sustainable Development. ST/ESCAP/2603.

Asia-Pacific Publications Catalogue 2011. ST/ESCAP/2635.^{**}

Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2011/12: Accelerating Equitable Achievement of the MDGs, Closing Gaps in Health and Nutrition Outcomes. ESCAP, ADB, and UNDP, February 2012.

ESCAP Profile 2012: Balancing Development.

The Regional Dimension of Development and the UN System. ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, and ESCWA, November 2011.

What's Ahead @ ESCAP^{**}

Subprogramme 1

Macroeconomic policy and inclusive development

Asia-Pacific Development Journal

Vol. 18, № 1, June 2011. ST/ESCAP/2599. (E.11.II.F.7)

Vol. 18, № 2, December 2011. ST/ESCAP/2611. (E.11.II.F.11)

CAPSA Strategic Plan 2011-2020. CAPSA-ESCAP, 2011.

Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2011: Year-end Update, Steering Asia-Pacific Development through Global Turbulence. ST/ESCAP/2612.

Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012: Pursuing Shared Prosperity in an Era of Turbulence and High Commodity Prices, May 2012. ST/ESCAP/2628. (E.12.II.F.9).

Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century. Theme study 2012. ST/ESCAP/2629.

MPDD Policy Briefs^{**}

№ 8, May 2011. Asia-Pacific least developed countries in the next decade: strategy and policy agenda for building productive capacities.

№ 9, May 2011. South-South cooperation in Asia-Pacific: emerging trends and potential.

№ 10, June 2011. Towards a global currency for a global economy: proposals for the G20 summits.

MPDD Working Papers^{**}

WP/11/16, April 2011. Financial crisis and regional economic cooperation in Asia-Pacific: towards an Asian economic community?

WP/11/17, August 2011. Productive capacities in Asia and the Pacific.

^{*} Where applicable, the ESCAP document symbol and (in parentheses) United Nations publication sales number are noted. A double asterisk (**) denotes publications that are available online only.

WP/11/18, June 2011. High food and oil prices and their impact on the achievement of MDG 1 in Asia and the Pacific.

WP/11/19, August 2011. Impact of health expenditure on achieving the health-related MDGs.

WP/12/01, January 2012. High food prices in Asia-Pacific: policy initiatives in view of supply uncertainty and price volatility.

Palawija News (CAPSA):

Vol. 28, № 1, April 2011.

Vol. 28, № 2, August 2011.

Vol. 28, № 3, December 2011.

Subprogramme 2

Trade and investment

APTIAD Briefing Note:**

№ 2, June 2011. How much trade is covered by the RTAs and why does it matter?

№ 3, March 2012. An update on the trade agreements of Asia-Pacific economies.

*ARTNeT Newsletter:***

Vol. 7, № 1, November 2010 – June 2011

Vol. 7, № 2, August – November 2011

ARTNeT Policy Brief Series:**

№ 31, October 2011. Recent “green” policies — limited environmental benefits and distorted imports: What should trade policymakers do?

№ 32, November 2011. What role for industrial policy in the Asia-Pacific after the crisis?

№ 33, February 2012. It’s not all about trade: preferential trading agreements induce economic reforms in developing countries.

№ 34, May 2012. Thailand’s 2011 flooding: its impacts on direct exports and global supply chain disruptions.

ARTNeT Working Paper Series:**

№ 96, March 2011. Utilization of trade agreements in Sri Lanka: perceptions of exporters vs. statistical measurements.

№ 97, March 2011. Features of post-crisis protectionism in Asia and the Pacific.

№ 98, April 2011. Rules of origin in GSP schemes and their impact on Nepal’s exports: a case study of tea, carpets, pashmina and handicrafts products.

№ 99, April 2011. Utility of regional trade agreements: experience from India’s regionalism.

№ 100, May 2011. Coping with food price hikes: strategies of the poor in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

№ 101, May 2011. Rules of origin and development of regional production network in Asia: case studies of selected industries.

№ 102, May 2011. Impacts of the global economic crisis on foreign trade in lower-income economies in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and policy responses: the case of Vietnam and its implications for Lao PDR and Cambodia.

№ 103, June 2011. Analysis of export and import processes of selected products in Thailand.

№ 104, June 2011. Implications of agri-food standards for Sri Lanka: case studies of tea and fisheries export industries.

№ 105, September 2011. The rich keep getting richer in India! Says who?

№ 106, October 2011. Does the data support the neo-mercantilist preoccupation with protecting manufacturing?

№ 107, November 2011. Impact of India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement: a cross-country analysis using applied general equilibrium modelling.

№ 108, December 2011. Achieving a sustainable automotive sector in Asia and the Pacific: challenges and opportunities for the reduction of vehicle CO₂ emissions.

№ 109, December 2011. Regional cooperation for improvement of trade procedures: the case of Japan.

№ 110, January 2012. Ethical distance and difference in bilateral trade.

№ 111, February 2012. Can India become an export platform for global operations of Japanese and American multinational corporations affiliates?

№ 112, March 2012. Trade concentration and crisis spillover: case study of transmission of the subprime crisis to Thailand.

Asia-Pacific Tech Monitor (APCTT):

Vol. 28, № 2, March-April 2011. Biotechnology innovation and commercialization.

Vol. 28, № 3, May-June 2011. South-South cooperation and market mechanisms for technology transfer.

Vol. 28, № 4, July-August 2011. Institutional networking for enhancing innovation.

Vol. 28, № 5, September-October 2011. Enhancing SME competitiveness through technology monitoring, acquisition and adoption.

Vol. 28, № 6, November-December 2011. Environmentally sustainable low-carbon technologies opportunities for SMEs.

*Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database***

Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2011: Post-crisis Trade and Investment Opportunities, July 2011. ST/ESCAP/2596 (E.11.II.F.8).

Data Harmonization and Modelling Guide for Single Window Environment. UNNExT, ESCAP, and UNECE, 2012. ST/ESCAP/2619.

Directory of trade and investment-related organizations of developing countries and areas in Asia and the Pacific. (Database)**

E-TISNET Trade and Investment News and Information Sources, 2011 (monthly)**

*E-TISNET Quarterly News:***

April – June, 2011.

July – September, 2011.

Fighting Irrelevance: The Role of Regional Trade Agreements in International Production Networks in Asia. July 2011. ST/ESCAP/2597 (E.11.II.F.3).

Guidelines on Establishing and Strengthening National Coordination Mechanisms for Trade and Transport Facilitation in the ESCAP Region. TID/TD, December 2011.**

Policy Guidebook for SME Development in Asia and the Pacific. 2011. ST/ESCAP/2621.

Service Sector Reforms: Asia-Pacific Perspectives. ADBI and ARTNeT, 2011.

Studies in Trade and Investment:**

№ 70, 2011. *Enabling Environment for the Successful Integration of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Global Value Chains: Country Studies on Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.* ST/ESCAP/2610.

№ 71, 2011. *Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific: An Analysis of Import and Export Processes.* ST/ESCAP/2615 (E.12.II.F.3).

№ 72, December 2011. *Promoting Sustainable and Responsible Business in Asia and the Pacific: The Role of Government.*

№ 73, December 2011. *Climate-smart Trade and Investment in Asia and the Pacific: Towards a Triple-win Outcome.* ST/ESCAP/2614.

№ 74, December 2011. *Facilitating Agricultural Trade in Asia and the Pacific.* ST/ESCAP/2616.

№ 75, December 2011. *India: A New Player in Asian Production Networks?* ST/ESCAP/2624.

№ 76, 2011. *Trade beyond Doha: Prospects for the Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries.* ST/ESCAP/2625.

Trade and Investment Division, staff working papers:

№ 03/11, 16 May 2011. How do people in Asia and the Pacific migrate legally for work? An overview of legal frameworks: GATS Mode 4, PTAs and Bilateral Labour Agreements.

№ 04/11, 8 September 2011. Trade costs in the India-Mekong Subregion: identifying policy priorities for trade facilitation.

№ 05/11, December 2011 (revised 15 January 2012). Trade costs in Asia and the Pacific: improved and sectoral estimates.

Trade-led Growth: A Sound Strategy for Asia, December 2011. ST/ESCAP/2618 (E.11.II.F.4).

*UNAPCAEM Policy Brief:***

№ 1, January – April 2012. Urban agriculture: improving food security and environmental health of cities.

UNNExT Brief: Towards a single window trading environment (ESCAP/UNECE):**

№ 6, April 2011. Japan's development of a single window – case of NACCS.

№ 7, September 2011. Achieving effective stakeholder coordination.

VATIS Update: Biotechnology. APCTT:

Vol. 1, № 108, Mar-Apr 2011

Vol. 1, № 109, May-Jun 2011

Vol. 1, № 110, Jul-Aug 2011

Vol. 1, № 111, Sep-Oct 2011

Vol. 1, № 112, Nov-Dec 2011

VATIS Update: Food Processing (APCTT):

Vol. 3, № 107, May-Jun 2011

Vol. 3, № 108, Jul-Aug 2011

Vol. 3, № 109, Sep-Oct 2011

Vol. 3, № 110, Nov-Dec 2011

VATIS Update: Non-conventional Energy (APCTT):

Vol. 2, № 107, Mar-Apr 2011

Vol. 2, № 108, May-Jun 2011

Vol. 2, № 109, Jul-Aug 2011

Vol. 2, № 110, Sep-Oct 2011

Vol. 2, № 111, Nov-Dec 2011

VATIS Update: Ozone Layer Protection (APCTT):

Vol. 4, № 105, Mar-Apr 2011

Vol. 4, № 106, May-Jun 2011

Vol. 4, № 107, Jul-Aug 2011

Vol. 4, № 108, Sep-Oct 2011

Vol. 4, № 109, Nov-Dec 2011

VATIS Update: Waste Management (APCTT):

Vol. 5, № 102, Jan-Feb 2011

Vol. 5, № 103, Mar-Apr 2011

Vol. 5, № 104, May-Jun 2011

Vol. 5, № 105, Jul-Aug 2011

Vol. 5, № 106, Sep-Oct 2011

Vol. 5, № 107, Nov-Dec 2011

Subprogramme 3

Transport

A Guidebook on Public-Private Partnership in Infrastructure, January 2011.

Guidelines for Minimum Standards and Codes of Professional Conduct for Freight Forwarders, Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers and Multimodal Transport Operators, 2011.**

Guidelines on Establishing and Strengthening National Coordination Mechanisms for Trade and Transport Facilitation in the ESCAP Region, TID/TD, December 2011.**

Monograph Series on Facilitation of International Road Transport in Asia and the Pacific. ST/ESCAP/2607.

Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific 2011. ST/ESCAP/2623.

Secure Cross Border Transport Model. May 2012.

Statistical Abstract of Transport in Asia and the Pacific, 2011.**

Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific:**

№ 80, 2011. Sustainable urban freight transport. ST/ESCAP/SER.E/80.

№ 81, 2011. Planning for accessibility and rural roads. ST/ESCAP/SER.E/81.

Subprogramme 4

Environment and development

Cities of Opportunity: Partnerships for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future.

Report of the Fifth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, Bangkok, 20-25 June 2011.

ST/ESCAP/2608 (E.11.II.F.12).

*Environment and Development News:***

Vol. 11, № 1, Jan-May 2011

Vol. 11, № 2 and 3, Summer/Autumn 2011

Green Growth, Resources and Resilience: Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP, ADB, and UNEP, 2012. ST/ESCAP/2600.

Guidelines for Strengthening Energy Efficiency Planning and Management in Asia and the Pacific. ST/ESCAP/2598.

Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific: Turning Resource Constraints and the Climate Crisis into Economic Growth Opportunities. ESCAP and Korea International Cooperation Agency, April 2012. ST/ESCAP/2631.

Subprogramme 5

Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction

Directory of Information and Communication Technology for Development Training Institutions in the Asia-Pacific, APCICT, 2011.

Everyday ICT terms for Policymakers and Government Officers, APCICT, 2011.

ICTD Briefing Note Series, October 2011. (APCICT):

№ 1, The Linkage between ICT Applications and Meaningful Development.

№ 2, ICT for Development Policy, Process and Governance.

№ 3, e-Government Applications.

№ 4, ICT Trends for Government Leaders.

№ 5, Internet Governance.

№ 6, Information Security and Privacy.

№ 7, ICT Project Management in Theory and Practice.

№ 8, Options for Funding ICT for Development.

№ 9, ICT for Disaster Risk Management.

The Primer Series on ICTD for Youth:

Primer 1: An introduction to ICT for development: a learning resource on ICT for development for institutions of higher education, APCICT, 2011.

Report on analysis of needs assessment survey for ICTD How-To-Do-Series, APCICT, 2011.

Staff working papers:**

2011, Who is vulnerable during tsunamis? Experiences from the Great East Japan Earthquake 2011 and the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004.

2012, The digital economy as an accelerator of regional integration in Asia-Pacific.

2012, Visualizing ICT indicators.

Subprogramme 6 **Social development**

2011 ESCAP Population Datasheet, 1 December 2011.

Asia-Pacific Population Journal

Vol. 26, № 1, March, 2011. ST/ESCAP/2602.

Vol. 26, № 2, May, 2011. ST/ESCAP/2620.

Vol. 26, № 3, September, 2011. ST/ESCAP/2626.

Vol. 26, № 4, December, 2011. ST/ESCAP/2627.

Investing in Youth Policy: The Case for Youth Policy Development in Asia-Pacific,
Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth, 2011.**

Subprogramme 7 **Statistics**

Annual core indicators online database**

Results of the Testing of the ESCAP/WG Extended Question Set on Disability,
December 2011**

Statistical Newsletter:**

Second Quarter, 5 July 2011

Third Quarter, 7 October 2011

Fourth Quarter, December 2011

Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2011. October 2011. ST/ESCAP/2601.
(E.11.II.F.1)

Subprogramme 8 **Subregional activities for development**

*South and South-West Asian Development Monitor (SRO-SSWA)***

№ 1, 16 February 2012.

№ 2, 15 March 2012.

№ 3, 15 April 2012.

Development challenges in South and South-West Asia: views from the subregion.
SRO-SSWA, Development Papers No. 1201, April 2012.**

SRO-ENEA Newsletter:

№ 2011/1, April 2011.

№ 2011/2, August 2011.

№ 2011/3, December 2011.

B. Documents submitted to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session

Document symbol	Document title	Agenda item
<i>Limited documents</i>		
E/ESCAP/68/L.1	Provisional agenda	1
E/ESCAP/68/L.2	Annotated provisional agenda	1
E/ESCAP/68/L.3 and Add.1-22 and Corrigendum	Draft report	-
E/ESCAP/68/L.4	Draft resolution: Reaffirming the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States with a focus on the Pacific	2
E/ESCAP/68/L.5	Draft resolution: Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region	3(a)
E/ESCAP/68/L.6	Draft resolution: Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation	3(b)
E/ESCAP/68/L.7	Draft resolution: Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport	3(c)
E/ESCAP/68/L.9	Draft resolution: Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017	3(d), (f)
E/ESCAP/68/L.10	Draft resolution: Asia-Pacific regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014	3(g)
E/ESCAP/68/L.11	Draft resolution: Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022	3(g)
E/ESCAP/68/L.12	Draft resolution: Enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with regional organizations for promoting regional development	4
E/ESCAP/68/L.13	Draft resolution: Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission	5
E/ESCAP/68/L.14	Draft resolution: Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific	8
E/ESCAP/68/L.15	Draft resolution: Connectivity for energy security	8
<i>Regular documents</i>		
E/ESCAP/68/1	Summary of Pacific preparations for Rio+20: The evolving “special case” of small island developing States	2
E/ESCAP/68/2	Subprogramme overview: Issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	3
E/ESCAP/68/3	Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions	3

Document symbol	Document title	Agenda item
E/ESCAP/68/4	Report of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development on its second session	3(a)
E/ESCAP/68/5	Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture on its eighth session	3(a)
E/ESCAP/68/6	Report of the Committee on Trade and Investment on its second session	3(b)
E/ESCAP/68/7	Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its seventh session	3(b)
E/ESCAP/68/8	Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery on its seventh session	3(b)
E/ESCAP/68/9	Report of the Ministerial Conference on Transport on its second session	3(c)
E/ESCAP/68/10	Report of the Committee on Environment and Development on its second session	3(d)
E/ESCAP/68/11	Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its second session	3(f)
E/ESCAP/68/12	Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its sixth session	3(f)
E/ESCAP/68/13	Report of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals	3(g)
E/ESCAP/68/14	Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventh session	3(h)
E/ESCAP/68/15	Report on evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2010-2011	4(a)
E/ESCAP/68/16	Programme changes for the biennium 2012-2013	4(b)
E/ESCAP/68/17 and Corr.1	Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015	4(c)
E/ESCAP/68/18	Overview of technical cooperation activities and extrabudgetary contributions	4(d)
E/ESCAP/68/19	Report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission	5
E/ESCAP/68/20	Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission (2013)	6
E/ESCAP/68/21	Summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012	7(a), (b)
E/ESCAP/68/22	Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific	8
E/ESCAP/68/23	Letter dated 14 May 2012 from the Chairman of the National Committee for ESCAP of Cambodia addressed to the Secretary of the Commission	3(a)

Document symbol	Document title	Agenda item
<i>Information documents</i>		
E/ESCAP/68/INF/1	Information for participants	-
E/ESCAP/68/INF/2	List of participants	-
E/ESCAP/68/INF/3 and Add.1	Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011	3
E/ESCAP/68/INF/4	Report of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia	3(d)
E/ESCAP/68/INF/5	Report of the Mekong River Commission	3(d)
E/ESCAP/68/INF/6	Report of the Typhoon Committee	3(f)
E/ESCAP/68/INF/7	Report of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones	3(f)

Printed at the United Nations, Bangkok
June 2012 – 600

USD 25
ISBN 978-92-1-880235-4

