



PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development in Asia and the Pacific



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INTRODUCTION



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a comprehensive framework adopted in 2015 by world leaders to eradicate poverty and ensure access to basic services for all. It offers an unprecedented opportunity for the Asia-Pacific region to transform its economies through an integrated development framework, balancing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

The General Assembly has entrusted ESCAP to support member States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, especially in facilitating effective follow-up and review, while supporting national governments in their sustainable development priorities through regional policy consistency and coherence.

As a regional commission, ESCAP is strategically positioned to accelerate this implementation given its interdisciplinary nature, its broad analytical expertise, its technical cooperation capacity and its unique convening power of outreach and engagement with governments, civil society and development partners.

At the 72nd Commission session in May 2016, member States adopted a series of resolutions focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their supportive tracks including mobilization and coordination of finance; trade and investment; science, technology and innovation (STI); data and statistics; and climate and disaster resilience.

Under the guidance of member States, ESCAP has been working to streamline both the conference structure and its work programme to better align with these mandates.

In particular, ESCAP is strengthening its intergovernmental platforms through high quality analytical work to promote policy integration and stability, and advice to member States on options and modalities for financing of development, trade facilitation and ways to leverage STI, along with supportive capacity building.

ESCAP is also supporting national statistical offices to engage governments, the private sector, academia and civil society for the production, dissemination and use of statistical information to support the implementation of the SDGs in their national contexts.

The Asia-Pacific region has never been better equipped to tackle existing and emerging development challenges than it is today. With the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the region has the blueprint for the future in terms of global sustainable development and supportive financing, as well as a new agreement on climate action. It also has the resources needed to implement the SDGs but with more than 2.6 billion people in the region still living on less than \$2 per day, many significant challenges remain.

This report is a reflection of the work ESCAP is undertaking to support its member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. It includes links to our analytical work and e-learning tools that we hope will be useful for these member States, as well as other stakeholders, in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

ABOUT ESCAP



Vision

ESCAP envisions a resilient Asia and the Pacific region based on the balanced integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions, in line with the 2030 Agenda. It contributes to this vision through its comprehensive multilateral platform which promotes cooperation and concerted action among its member States.



Who we are

As the regional arm of the United Nations, ESCAP plays a unique role as the only intergovernmental forum for all countries and territories of the Asia-Pacific region. Established in 1947, ESCAP today has 53 members and 9 associate members, representing more than two-thirds of the world's population.



Our work

ESCAP serves as the hub for sharing regional experiences, forging regional consensus and ensuring policy consistency, coherence and coordination in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, ESCAP's intergovernmental platform provides support for strong participation of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states in the region.



Our outcomes

ESCAP works to overcome some of the region's greatest challenges by providing various forms of assistance to member States:

- ESCAP promotes rigorous analysis and peer-learning through its eight core areas of work: macroeconomic policy and financing for development; trade, investment and innovation; social development; transport; statistics; energy; environment and development; and information communications technology (ICT) and disaster risk reduction.
- These analyses are translated into policy dialogues and recommendations to implement innovative solutions.
- ESCAP also provides good development practices, knowledge-sharing, capacity building and technical cooperation to member States in the implementation of these recommendations.
- The norm-setting and policy work of ESCAP supports member States in shaping and implementing a more balanced and inclusive development agenda for the region.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In view of the transformational challenges and opportunities of the 2030 Agenda, ESCAP's current focus is on:



01 | MACROECONOMIC POLICY AND FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

To help address the \$2.5 trillion per year it could cost to close infrastructure gaps in the region and provide universal access to social protection, health and education, as well as action on climate change, ESCAP has repurposed its intergovernmental Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, to include poverty reduction and financing for development. The new committee will promote financing as an effective means of implementing the 2030 Agenda and provide member States with a platform to address issues such as domestic fiscal resource mobilization, capital market development and financial inclusion.



02 | TRADE, INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION

While the region is at the leading edge of innovation, accounting for almost 43 per cent of global research and development activity, 95 per cent of researchers are concentrated in just five countries. ESCAP's research provides a range of policy recommendations to support countries in harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for sustainable development. At the same time, a regional STI platform has been established to create agreement on a common framework, policies and standards.

With many Asia-Pacific economies still hampered by high trade costs, new work is being undertaken by ESCAP to promote trade in services, environmental goods, and technology, as well as to improve understanding of the role of preferential trade agreements and the landscape of international investment agreements.



03 | TRANSPORT

Improving regional connectivity has been placed high on the development agenda across the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP's analytical work provides a comprehensive account of the current regional transport system, examining progress as well as present challenges still facing development practitioners, regional governments and civil societies. ESCAP has also developed a five-year Regional Action Programme (2017-2021) that supports sustainable transport connectivity and incorporates the SDGs.



04 | STATISTICS

To support member States in identifying and tracking their SDG implementation, ESCAP is bringing experts together to build the capacity of national statistical systems to promote the use of 'Big Data' for sustainable development.



05 | SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

With 2.6 billion people still trapped in poverty in the region and 650 million people with disabilities, inequality, in its multiple forms, is rising. ESCAP's analytical work is helping to address this challenge. The *Time for Equality Report* identifies progress and provides evidence-based policy directions to advance social development. The Social Protection Toolbox, a dynamic database of good practices, and the Gender Portal initiative, are also strengthening national social protection systems.



06 | ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

In addition, ESCAP has developed regional platforms such as the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the International Forum on Urban Policy for the SDGs, to bring diverse perspectives together by sharing best practices.



07 | ICT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The digital divide in the region continues to be one of the widest in the world, and only one-third of the population has Internet access. In response, ESCAP is promoting connectivity through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative to increase the availability and affordability of broadband by strengthening Internet infrastructure in the region.

Asia and the Pacific is still the most vulnerable region to natural disasters. Over 40 per cent of the disasters that occurred globally between 2005 and 2014 took place in the region, with more than 1.4 billion people affected and over half a trillion dollars in severe economic damage. ESCAP is enhancing disaster risk resilience by extending its Regional Space Application Programme to ensure effective use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) applications for early warning, and by building capacities to deal with disasters through climate adaptation.



08 | ENERGY

The region is also home to the majority of the world's energy poor, with some 455 million people lacking access to energy. In response, ESCAP has established a Committee on Energy to promote regional energy connectivity and integration, and has committed to implementing outcomes of the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum to support effective energy sector decision-making for sustainable development.





HIGHLIGHTS

MACROECONOMIC POLICY AND FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

NEW COMMITTEE: MACROECONOMIC POLICY, POVERTY REDUCTION AND FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could cost the Asia-Pacific region as much as \$2.5 trillion per year to close infrastructure gaps and provide universal access to social protection, health and education, as well as action on climate change. To help meet this challenge and promote financing as an effective means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, ESCAP has repurposed one of its intergovernmental committees as the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development. This will allow for more focused work on issues such as domestic fiscal resource mobilization and capital market development. ESCAP is also organizing annual high-level dialogues on financing for development to identify regional priorities and chart out a related Asia-Pacific strategy to serve member States.

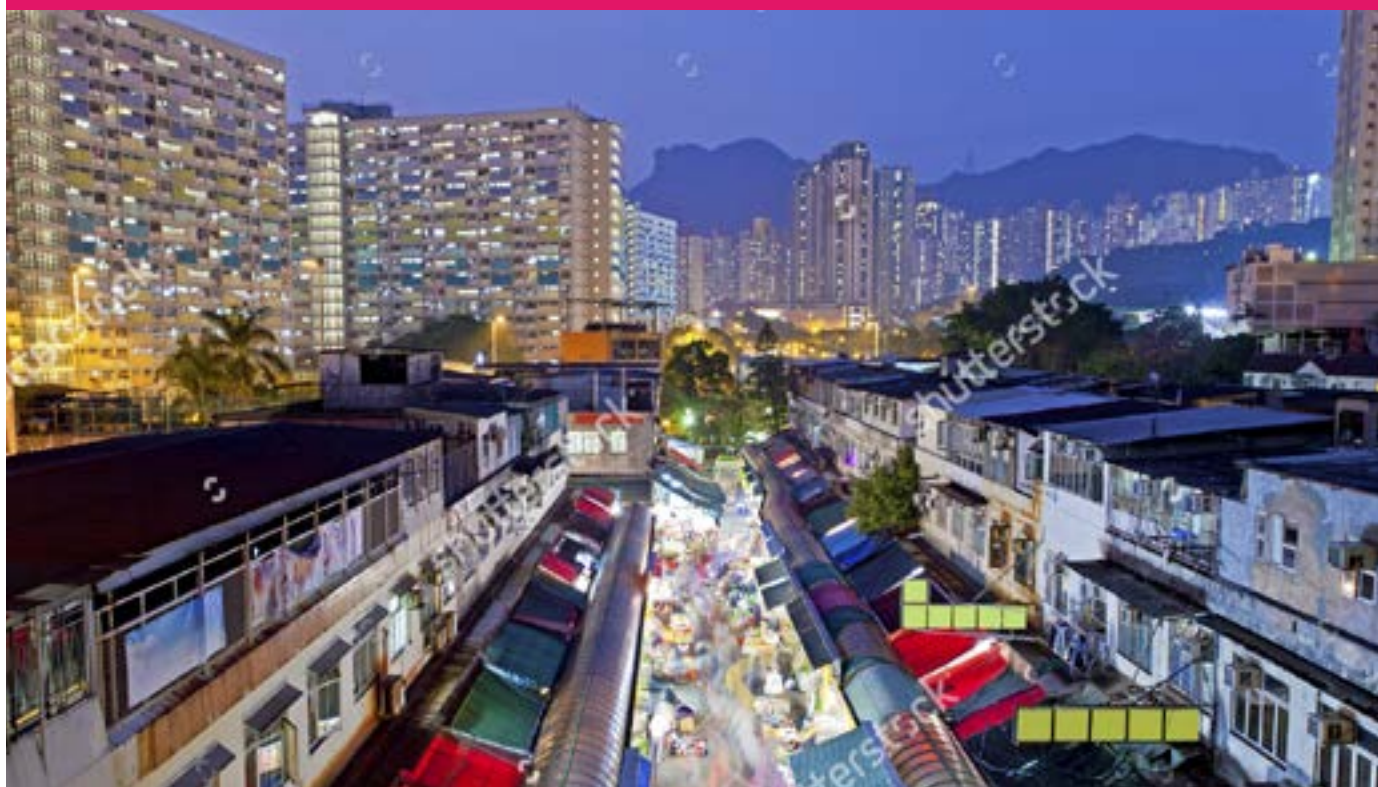


ANALYTICAL RESEARCH ON MACROECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES

The *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, ESCAP's annual flagship publication, provides timely and in-depth analysis of the region's latest economic issues and development prospects. To better serve the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, this flagship publication is increasingly focused on strategic policy issues that serve as a platform for the region's sustainable development. Examples include issues related to productivity enhancement (the theme of the 2016 *Survey*) and challenges of governance in supporting financing for development, which will be explored in the coming issue of the *Survey*.

DEDICATED SUPPORT FOR COUNTRIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Effective progress in least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) will be key for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To better support these countries with special needs in addressing their unique development challenges and ultimately achieve sustainable development, ESCAP remains focused on working together with national governments to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs, the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and the SAMOA Pathway for SIDS. ESCAP gives high priority to countries with special needs in its technical assistance and capacity building and is supporting these efforts with the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report*.







HIGHLIGHTS

TRADE, INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION

HARNESSING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (STI) FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Innovation policy must move beyond its traditional focus on economic competitiveness to include social justice and environmental protection if the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda are to be met. Some countries in the region lead the world in innovative business environments, socially inclusive government initiatives, and complex scientific research. A number of countries also rank among the top in terms of research spending as a share of gross domestic product, with the region accounting for almost 43 per cent of global research and development expenditure. In 2013 alone, Asian developing countries spent more than \$650 billion on research and development. To provide a resilient and productivity-driven foundation for successful pursuit of the SDGs, ESCAP has issued a call for action on regional STI collaboration. ESCAP's research also provides an overview for how a range of policy recommendations can support countries in [harnessing STI for sustainable development](#) with a new Advisory Board of experts from government, academia and the private sector formed to guide ESCAP's STI strategy.

SUPPORTING PAPERLESS TRADE TO LOWER TRADE COSTS

With many Asia-Pacific economies still hampered by high trade costs, ESCAP's Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade has adopted an unprecedented regional treaty that puts in place a framework to cut trade time and costs in the region. The agreement, the first of its kind to focus on implementing advanced trade facilitation measures, particularly to achieve paperless trade across borders, will result in long-term benefits by making international trade more efficient and transparent, while improving regulatory compliance. The agreement will also contribute to regional economic cooperation and integration and enhance the economic competitiveness of the region by providing momentum for member States to implement advanced trade facilitation measures, particularly paperless systems such as a Single Window, in connection with the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement.

ENHANCING TRADE POLICY AS A MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

ESCAP is engaged in building the capacity and skills of those involved in trade policymaking, negotiations and implementation with a particular focus on securing benefits for countries with special needs. This work places the principles of inclusivity and sustainable development at the centre of trade policy formulation, to improve the prospects of developing countries using trade to implement the 2030 Agenda.

ESCAP provides policy insights on how to realize the available opportunities for trade and investment through expert advice, technical assistance and capacity building. One area of focus is on improving the ability of countries to gather and interpret trade-related data and statistics in order to effectively monitor and review progress towards the SDGs. ESCAP works in partnership with many international and regional organizations to provide comprehensive assistance, whenever possible, as part of integrated approaches. For instance, ESCAP is currently delivering a Development Account project on how countries can better use regional trade agreements to foster inclusive growth.





E-Learning Series on Business Process Analysis (BPA) for Trade Facilitation

The BPA online training course has been developed by ESCAP based on the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade and Transport in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) BPA Guide to Simplify Trade Procedures. The course consists of seven modules and introduces a step-by-step approach to conducting BPA. It is aimed at government officials and other stakeholders responsible for trade facilitation.

ASIAN AND PACIFIC CENTRE FOR TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY (APCTT)



APCTT is a regional institution of ESCAP, based in New Delhi, India. The main objective of APCTT is to strengthen the technology transfer capabilities in the region and to facilitate import/export of environmentally sound technologies to and from member States. As such, the Centre plays a leading role in assisting member States to implement many SDGs, in particular Goal 9, on supporting industry, innovation and infrastructure, and Goal 10, on responsible consumption and production. APCTT implements development projects funded by international donors aimed at strengthening the environment for technology transfer among small and medium enterprises in Asia-Pacific. The Centre also makes special efforts to encourage more participation of women in the field of technology.





HIGHLIGHTS

TRANSPORT

REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME ON TRANSPORT (RAP)

A new five-year RAP on Sustainable Transport Connectivity Phase I, covering the period 2017-2021, reflects ESCAP's support to member States in enhancing regional connectivity with incorporation of the SDGs. The RAP sets forth future regional direction towards achieving the SDGs, following the completion of the [RAP for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific](#) (2007-2016). ESCAP is also leading on initiatives such as the launch of the Eurasia Transport Cooperation Council, regional targets on road safety, model bilateral and subregional agreements on transport facilitation, a standardized model for logistics information system, and a model on road transport permits.

ROAD SAFETY

Halving road traffic fatalities and injuries by 2020 is one of the ambitious targets of the SDGs. For the Asia-Pacific region, road traffic crashes kill more than 733,000 people each year. Due to the magnitude and consequent negative impacts on the economy, public health and general welfare of the people in the region, there is an urgent need for countries to take more immediate and effective measures to improve road safety. In this regard, ESCAP encourages member States to renew their commitment to the regional road safety goals and targets in line with the UN Decade of Action (UNDA) for Road Safety 2011–2020 and the 2030 Agenda. Initiatives are also tailored towards strengthening the national road safety management capacity of selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition, through the UNDA project implemented jointly with the other regional commissions.



REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN TRANSPORT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Improving regional connectivity has been placed high on the development agenda across the Asia-Pacific region. In response to rapid growth in intra-regional trade, as well as remaining obstacles including inefficient energy consumption, high CO₂ emissions and road safety, an integrated intermodal transport and logistics system is needed within a reasonable timeframe. Such a system will not only allow inclusive access to better economic and social opportunities for local people, but it will also set higher environmental and safety mandates that have long been compromised. ESCAP's *Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific* provides a comprehensive account of the current regional transport system, examining progress as well as present challenges still facing development practitioners, regional governments and civil societies. The *Review* identifies resilient trans-border infrastructure, improved road safety and energy efficiency, and investment to expand public transport, especially in rural areas, as the primary focuses of an ameliorated system. The *Review* presents approaches that echo the economic, social and environmental mandates of sustainable development, and further encourages a reasonable balance between these three pillars.

E-Learning Series on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

PPP in infrastructure is a relatively new experience in most developing countries of the region, and the lack of capacity in the public sector is one of the major problems in implementing PPP projects. ESCAP's PPP online, self-study training materials are tailored to provide a basic minimum knowledge of the key issues regarding these partnerships that policymakers should be aware of. While the courses are general in nature, most examples are from the transport sector.





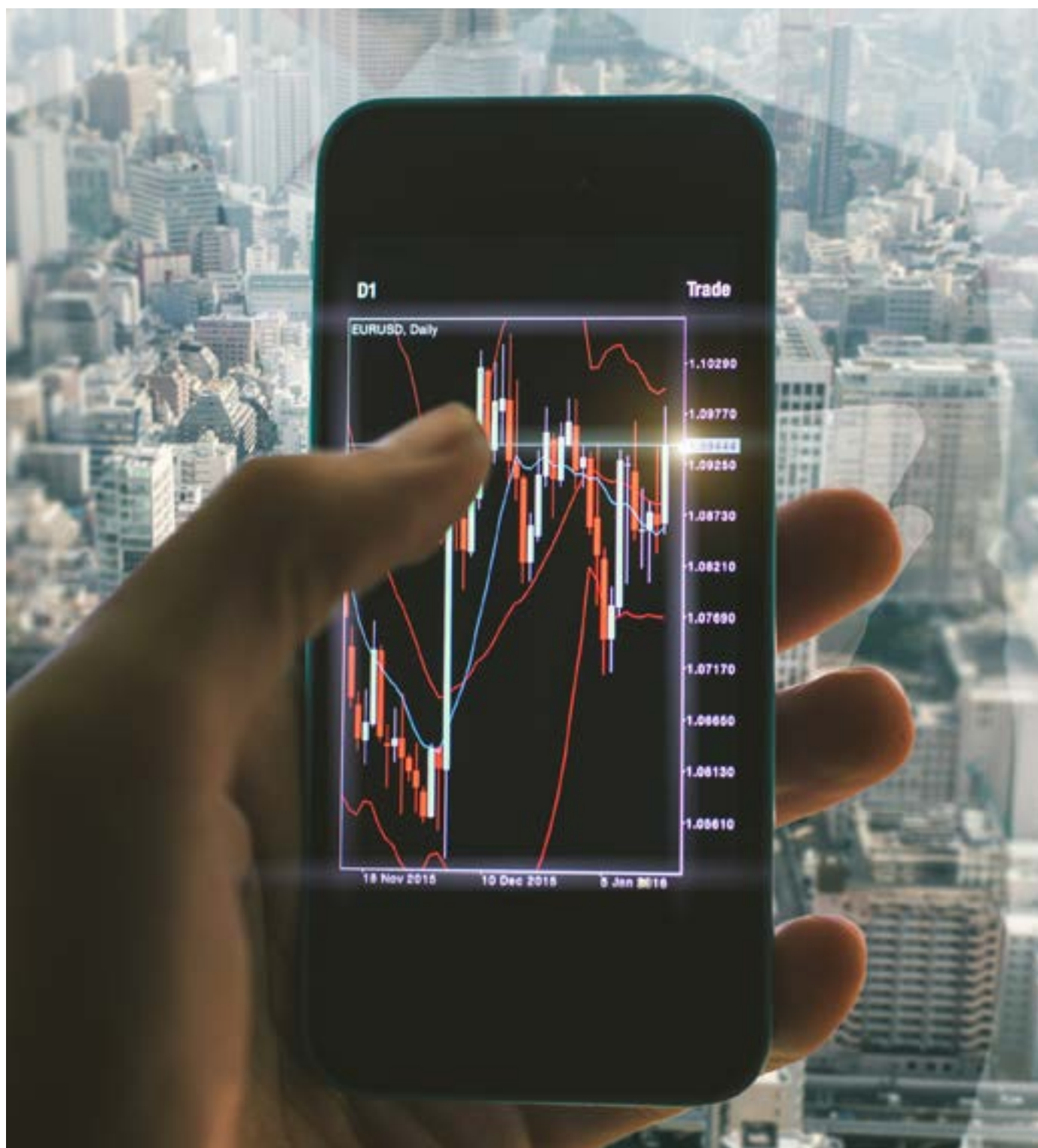


HIGHLIGHTS

STATISTICS

QUALITY ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Quality statistics are indispensable for sound economic decision-making. Ninety-six SDG indicators in the global monitoring framework require basic economic statistics. In the Asia-Pacific region, a core set of economic statistics provides the framework for building enduring national capacity to produce and disseminate a basic set of economic statistics. ESCAP, through the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics (RPES), strongly supports analytical work by national statistical systems to increase quality as well as the availability of economic statistics. ESCAP also produces the annual *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific* - a compendium of key facts on economic, social and environmental development in the region, derived from a comprehensive user-friendly online statistical database. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, these facts have been aligned with the 17 SDGs and 169 targets.



'BIG DATA' FOR DEVELOPMENT

Critical data for national and subnational development policymaking are still lacking in the region. Many governments do not have access to adequate data on their populations, particularly for the poorest and most marginalized, the very people that leaders will need to focus on if they are to achieve zero extreme poverty and zero emissions and to 'leave no one behind'. Governments need to build capacity for harnessing new sources of data. In response, ESCAP brings together data science and technology experts and innovative statisticians from governments, civil society, the private sector and academia to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems to promote the use of '[Big Data](#)' for sustainable development in the region.

CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS (CRVS)

CRVS – recording births, marriages, divorces, adoptions, deaths – provides people with the official recognition and documentation necessary to establish legal identity, family relationships and civil status. Yet, an estimated 135 million children under five years of age in Asia and the Pacific have not had their birth registered, rendering them formally non-existent. In 2015, member States committed to “Get everyone in the picture,” aiming for universal registration by 2024 with the adoption of the CRVS Decade (2015-2024). ESCAP facilitates the work of the [Regional Steering Group for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#), and is coordinating partnerships for related capacity building activities across the region.

STATISTICAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (SIAP)



SIAP is the training arm of the statistics subprogramme of ESCAP, located in Chiba, Japan. The Institute works to improve the use of statistics for evidence-based decision-making, and to produce and disseminate quality statistics for inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies in the Asia-Pacific region. Focus areas of SIAP training are prioritized in accordance with various United Nations mandates. To enhance data and statistical capacities of member States for the implementation of the Agenda, SIAP's role is being expanded and its training programmes reoriented. Given the universal, integrated and indivisible nature of the SDGs, SIAP aims to ensure the quality and consistency of SDG-related data so that they support integrated analyses, and to consolidate them in the regional statistical database.







HIGHLIGHTS

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE SOCIAL OUTLOOK

The region is home to 2.6 billion people who remain trapped in poverty, 650 million people with disabilities, 60 per cent of the world's youth, and a generally ageing population. To ensure that 'no one is left behind,' requires increased policy attention to social development and better integration of the social dimension with the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development if the 2030 Agenda is to be achieved. For this reason, ESCAP is developing *The Social Outlook* to highlight progress and identify areas that require further action to advance social development in Asia and the Pacific. The publication will also propose evidence-based policy directions for strengthening the implementation of the SDGs in the region.

TIME FOR EQUALITY: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN REDUCING INEQUALITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Inequality, in its multiple forms, is on the rise in Asia-Pacific, and unless confronted, will have an adverse impact on the realization of the 2030 Agenda. Building on a strong evidence base and through the analysis of country experiences, ESCAP's publication *Time for Equality* points out that social protection is instrumental in reducing inequalities, and, thereby, contributes to the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

ADVANCING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN ASIA-PACIFIC

The collection, allocation and expenditure of financial resources are critical to the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment. To achieve the SDGs and increase investment to close gender gaps in all sectors, ESCAP will provide the much-needed technical assistance to member States in adopting a whole-of-government approach through [a technical cooperation project on gender-responsive budgeting](#). This new project will engage government officials from ministries of finance, planning, industry, trade, agriculture, environment and national women's machineries, to enhance their knowledge and skills in implementing gender-responsive budgeting and planning at national and local levels. National capacity building workshops and an Asia-Pacific regional forum will be conducted in partnership with UN Women. The project will contribute to women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.



Social Protection Toolbox



Using multimedia and data visualization techniques, the Toolbox provides users with a point of departure for navigating the complex – and at times fragmented – nature of social protection policymaking. It utilizes a database that provides access to over 130 good practices in social protection from member States, and offers access to a network of social protection experts to facilitate South-South cooperation.







HIGHLIGHTS

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

REGIONAL PROCESSES OF INTEGRATION OF THREE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda means integrating environmental, social and economic perspectives, and meeting the needs of people within environmental limits. ESCAP has been working with member States, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system organizations and other stakeholders to build an inclusive intergovernmental platform. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) brings diverse perspectives together to boost action on the SDGs at national, regional and global levels by sharing best practices and lessons learned, and in the future will play an important role in regional follow-up and progress review.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT THROUGH CROSS-SECTORAL AND INTEGRATED APPROACHES

In the area of natural resource management, ESCAP supports the application of cross-sectoral solutions and policy tools for integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. In the water sector, ESCAP has developed an analytical framework that allows for a holistic review of all water and sanitation related targets of the sustainable development agenda, and identifies drivers and leverage points for high impact actions using systems thinking approach in convergence with integrated water resources management principles. Knowledge products in the form of publications, case studies and e-learning courses for policymakers and practitioners are being developed by ESCAP through partnership agreements with regional knowledge centers, and will be available online at the ESCAP Asia-Pacific Knowledge Platform on Sustainable Development. For example, two of ESCAP's e-modules are supporting policy shifts towards water-resilient sustainable cities and promoting the enabling policies for decentralized wastewater treatment systems in urban and peri-urban areas. Both these e-modules foster the application of impact investment mechanisms for enhancing water services and sustainable sanitation services through pro-poor public private partnerships, engaging multi-stakeholder perspectives.



SUPPORTING CITIES TO HARNESS THE SDGS AND THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

To support urban SDG implementation, in which cities will play a key role in the 2030 Agenda, ESCAP is assisting member States, subnational governments and key stakeholders through the development of a regional platform to track and share innovative policies and processes at the urban level. This is in line with two stated priority areas for regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda, namely: strengthening data, capacity and knowledge exchange; and the further development of regional networks and platforms. It is hoped such a platform will provide a valuable point of exchange and learning across the region, and contribute to implementation and review of progress at the level of cities. The platform will also provide an important opportunity to synergize and integrate outcomes of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Urban Development (Habitat III), into localized action including strategic long-term planning.

Asia-Pacific Knowledge Platform for Sustainable Development

The platform takes an integrative, multidisciplinary approach towards promoting environmentally-sustainable economic growth. Structured around a series of interactive training modules, the curriculum encourages participants to actively reflect on the ways sustainable development strategies can be adapted to their home countries. The Low Carbon Growth Roadmap aims to educate participants on how to re-orientate their economies toward resource efficiency. The platform will be expanded to include courses focused on water management, food security, climate change, energy and sustainable urbanization.



The Network for Knowledge Transfer on Sustainable Agricultural Technologies and Improved Market Linkages in South and Southeast Asia (SATNET- Asia)

SATNET Asia is a network of institutions and people that share knowledge on sustainable agricultural technologies and improved market linkages in the region. It was designed to address the lack of alternative agricultural technologies and their dissemination to poor farmers. SATNET Asia facilitates knowledge transfer through the development of a portfolio of best practices. The portal provides a platform for researchers and practitioners to share and exchange information on sustainable agriculture technologies and market linkages in the region.



CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION (CSAM)



CSAM is a regional institution of ESCAP based in Beijing, China. The institution's vision is to which aims production gains, improved rural livelihood and poverty alleviation through sustainable agricultural mechanization for a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable Asia and the Pacific. The Centre works to enhance technical cooperation among member States through extensive exchange of information and knowledge, and promotion of research and development and agro-business development in the area of sustainable agricultural mechanization and technology transfer. The work of CSAM is interlinked to numerous SDGs, including Goal 1 (zero poverty), Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production).

CENTRE FOR ALLEVIATION OF POVERTY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE (CAPSA)



CAPSA is one of ESCAP's regional institutions, based in Bogor, Indonesia, which aims to reduce poverty and enhance food security in Asia and the Pacific by promoting sustainable agriculture. The Centre works to improve national capacity for socioeconomic and policy research on sustainable agriculture for Goal 1 on poverty reduction, Goal 2 on food security, and Goal 17 to promote regional coordination and networking, to successfully scale up and scale out research findings that have implications for policy design and implementation related to sustainable agriculture and rural development. This is carried out to increase the capacity of policymakers and senior government officials to design and implement policies to achieve rural development, poverty reduction and food security through sustainable agriculture in Asia and the Pacific.





A satellite with large yellow solar panels is shown in space against a black background with stars.

HIGHLIGHTS

ICT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

ASIA-PACIFIC INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY (AP-IS)

Asia and the Pacific is one of the most digitally divided regions in the world. Only approximately one third of the population has Internet access, with 69 per cent of fixed broadband subscriptions in East and North-East Asia, and more than half of these driven by China alone. At the same time, 21 ESCAP countries have less than two per cent fixed-broadband penetration. The [AP-IS](#) is a member-driven initiative of ESCAP to improve regional broadband connectivity through a dense web of open access cross-border infrastructure. It promotes non-discriminatory access to ICT infrastructure in order to increase coverage, reliability and affordability. The creation of a seamless regional fiber optic cables network will promote cross-border connectivity. Such an enhanced regional fiber network can drive international bandwidth prices down and improve affordability, increase resilience by offering redundancy, decrease latency, and enhance digital inclusion. The initiative is contributing to Goal 9 to “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.”

REGIONAL DROUGHT MECHANISM

STI, in particular the space technology applications, has been clearly identified as an important means for implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the SDGs. Space technology applications can now provide far-reaching solutions to some pressing issues facing humanity, ranging from health, education, agriculture, and natural resource management to disaster risk reduction. ESCAP's long standing [Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development \(RESAP\)](#) has helped many developing countries access space-derived information for building resilience to disasters. As part of RESAP, the Regional Drought Mechanism harnesses the expertise, information, tools and services of spacefaring countries of the region, and those experienced in using space applications to monitor and manage drought. This directly contributes to Goal 2 on food security and zero hunger. The eight participating pilot countries benefit from greater access to space-based data, products and services, strengthened institutional capacity-building and enhanced institutional coordination, through improved regional cooperation. Some pilots are now able to develop and utilize their own monitoring and early warning system as a basis for response and for longer-term planning.

ASIA-PACIFIC DISASTER REPORT

ESCAP's [Asia-Pacific Disaster Report](#) provides an overview of the state of disaster resilience in the region, and places disaster risk reduction at the heart of sustainable development. It identifies emerging risks as well as the sectors that are the most vulnerable. The *Report* focuses on cross-border disasters, such as earthquakes, droughts, tropical cyclones and floods, and highlights that only by coming together in the spirit of cooperation can the region hope to become truly disaster resilient. Several neglected areas of disaster risk reduction that need to be addressed urgently are identified in the *Report*. Drought, a forgotten disaster in Asia-Pacific, pushes vast numbers of people into debt and poverty. The *Report* presents a framework for integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainable development plans, policies, sectoral programs and budgets, noting that every sector can be affected by earthquakes, floods or cyclones, and a targeted sectoral approach is needed for disaster resilience.



Disaster Risk Management (DRM) E-Learning Platform

The DRM e-learning platform supports countries in the region to build their capacities to withstand, adapt to and recover from natural disasters. The Geo-DRM portal offers state-of-the-art courses on space technology, along with Geographic Information System (GIS) applications, for early warning and multi-hazard risk assessment. The platform also provides courses on Spatial Database Management and flood inundation mapping.

Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders

The Academy is APCICT's flagship initiative to equip government officials and policymakers with the essential knowledge and skills to leverage ICT for national and regional socio-economic development. The Academy's comprehensive curriculum was developed in partnership with ICT experts from countries throughout the world. Currently, 11 Academy modules are available in 12 languages, with new modules and more translations underway to meet the ICT capacity needs of member States. The Academy has been rolled-out in 30 countries in the region.

ASIA AND PACIFIC TRAINING CENTRE FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (APCICT)



APCICT is a regional institution of ESCAP located in Incheon, Republic of Korea, which aims to strengthen the efforts of the member States to use ICT in their socio-economic development through human and institutional capacity building. To meet this objective, APCICT's work is focused on three inter-related pillars: Training, Research and Advisory Services. Together they form an integrated approach to ICT human capacity building. Such initiatives are crucial to achieving the SDGs. The 'Women and ICT Frontier Initiative' (WIFI), a new flagship program of APCICT, is designed to empower women socially and economically through ICT-enabled entrepreneurship, and also assist government officials to foster supportive policy environments for ICT-enabled women entrepreneurship. Promoting women's entrepreneurship is not only an important strategy to achieve SDG Goal 5, gender equality, but also encourages the full participation of women in society and the economy, which multiplies the capacity of all for sustainable economic growth and social development.



A vertical photograph showing a wind turbine in the foreground, its blades reaching towards a sky with orange and blue clouds. In the bottom left corner, the top of solar panels is visible.

HIGHLIGHTS

ENERGY

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLATFORMS ON ENERGY

ESCAP has established a Committee on Energy, providing an intergovernmental platform to assist in the development of strategies towards attaining internationally agreed development goals concerning energy; promote dialogue among member States; identify options to strengthen intergovernmental frameworks and identify strategies, policy dialogues and knowledge platforms to promote access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all; and support the implementation outcomes of the ministerial Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (APEF). The inaugural meeting of the Committee, in 2017, aims to promote regional cooperation for sustainable energy with a focus on energy connectivity through the removal of political, regulatory, financial, and technical barriers to closer integration. The APEF, convened in 2013 as the first energy ministerial forum under the United Nations in the Asia-Pacific region, guides an energy vision for the region encompassing sustainable energy, energy security, and energy access for all. "Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Energy" has been selected as the theme for the 73rd Session of the Commission, to be held in May 2017.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

To support its member States in facilitating the implementation of outcomes of the first APEF, ESCAP has created a three-pillared Implementation Support Mechanism, including the Asia-Pacific Energy Portal, the Annual Policy Dialogue and the *Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development*. The *Asia Pacific Energy Portal* provides data visualization and draws a comprehensive energy picture from a number of sources, while its policy tracking component enables users to follow policy development over time. The combination of data and policy in one application is unique, and will help improve analysis of the energy situation, policies and their development impact. The annual *Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development* further accelerates knowledge-sharing within the region by providing an additional platform for member States to share their experiences through case studies, regarding the energy sector and its future development. The *Report* analyzes emerging trends in the regional energy scene and addresses key challenges and pathways to facilitate integration of higher shares of renewable energy, transboundary power interconnection, and energy access.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

ESCAP, through its newly-launched Energy Division, is poised to play a key role in promoting regional approaches to support sustainable energy development by providing a regional platform for member States, assisting countries in building and sustaining shared economic growth and social equity. Along these lines, the Energy Division has led the drafting of the G20 Energy Access Action Plan, together with Sustainable Energy For All (SE4All), under China's presidency of G20 in 2016. The Action Plan, as a part of the Beijing Communique, was adopted at the G20 Energy Ministerial Meeting and submitted to the G20 Summit. Together with other international and bilateral agencies, ESCAP will work closely with member States to enhance national policies and develop regional strategies to meet the three main targets of Goal 7 on universal energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency.





ESCAP IN THE SUBREGIONS

ESCAP PACIFIC OFFICE

The Pacific subregion is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world, given the severe and mounting pressure from climate change and disasters. The 2030 Agenda provides the best possible framework for ensuring all the three imperatives of social development, ecological sustainability and economic growth work together. It requires that all the regional development processes coalesce around the SDGs as the common platform.

In this context, the ESCAP Pacific Office (EPO), based in Suva, Fiji, has been supporting Pacific member States to integrate the SDGs process with the SAMOA Pathway and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. As a result of such efforts, Pacific leaders have asked for a common set of SDG indicators to benchmark the Pacific's progress in all three processes. A roadmap is being developed to select Pacific indicators from the list of proposed SDGs indicators and to outline a reporting process including a *Pacific SDGs Tracking Report* that feeds into the Asia-Pacific SDGs Roadmap and Report.

The EPO is actively supporting the Pacific process through technical assistance and regional consultations. The office is working to ensure that it is well coordinated with ESCAP's work at the regional level and that a seamless SDG process is supported at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. The Pacific, made up of mainly small and vulnerable economies, cannot afford competing and parallel processes.





ESCAP SUBREGIONAL OFFICE FOR EAST AND NORTH-EAST ASIA

The East and North East Asian (ENEA) subregion as a whole is economically advanced, with most of the member States in the high-income or upper-middle income category. In contrast to the MDGs which had major focus on poverty issues, the 2030 Agenda has a much wider scope of challenges including those that are pertinent to higher income and developed economies, such as social inequality, environmental sustainability, and resource intensive economic growth.

The ENEA subregion emits a disproportionate amount of greenhouse gases and requires more resources to produce one dollar of GDP compared to the global average. ESCAP's subregional office in Incheon, Republic of Korea, has worked to overcome the contrast between economic growth and environmental protection through improvements to eco-efficiency and environmental sustainability for the economic development. This includes the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) which provides a subregional platform to review areas such as transboundary air pollution, natural conservation, land degradation, low carbon cities and marine protected areas.

At the same time, the countries in the ENEA subregion have become, and will continue to be, key players in supporting developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda including through development cooperation and technology transfer. Thus the approach of the ENEA Subregional Office towards the 2030 Agenda are twofold: facilitating cooperation on the SDG challenges for ENEA countries, and supporting ENEA countries in their growing role for assisting other developing countries.

ESCAP SUBREGIONAL OFFICE FOR NORTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

For the North and Central Asian (NCA) subregion, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda coincides with an economic outlook of low growth and uncertainty, implying a difficult start to the process of implementing the SDGs. A key question for implementation is whether the economies can move towards a more diversified economic structure. A valuable window of opportunity now exists for NCA countries to revisit their development trajectory and to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda. The ESCAP Subregional Office in Almaty, Kazakhstan, supports NCA countries in priority policy areas, actions and activities, including through the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The Dushanbe Declaration on 'Paving the way for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region,' adopted by the Tenth Session of the SPECA Governing Council, emphasized the importance of subregional cooperation for the achievement of the SDGs and targets. Specifically, SPECA will serve as a platform for cooperation in priority areas such as the development of resilient infrastructure, trade, industry, sustainable management of natural resources and climate change, as well as cross-sectoral linkages.





ESCAP SUBREGIONAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST ASIA

The 2030 Agenda is particularly relevant for South-West Asian countries which, despite their economic dynamism and remarkable MDG achievements, account for 37 per cent of the world's poor, and face several development and infrastructure gaps. South-West Asia has a unique opportunity to close these gaps and provide a life of dignity to all by achieving the SDGs. Home to one fifth of the world's population and two fifths of the world's poor, the subregion has a critical role to play in the global achievement of the SDGs.

In this context, the [ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office \(SSWA\)](#), based in New Delhi, has been supporting its membership through robust analysis and policy advocacy to identify the subregion's development priorities and devise a roadmap to operationalize the 2030 Agenda and fast-track development in the subregion.

The analysis, included in the report *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in South Asia: Key Policy Priorities and Implementation Challenges*, outlines seven strategic policy priorities for the subregion to achieve the SDGs and address intertwined development challenges in an integrated way. It describes institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs at national, subregional and regional levels, while examining ways to also address critical capacity gaps and means of implementation.

Echoing the key messages contained in the *Report*, the ESCAP SSWA Office has also conducted a range of high-level policy advocacy to support the transition to the 2030 Agenda and national ownership and traction for the SDGs in the subregion.

SDGs in the Region



No Poverty

1.1 billion people have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty since 1990.



Zero Hunger

Agricultural production has nearly doubled since 1990.



Good Health and Well-being

The mortality rate for non-communicable diseases is 1.3 to 22.1 times higher than that of communicable diseases.



Quality Education

1 out of every 20 primary school aged children does not go to school.



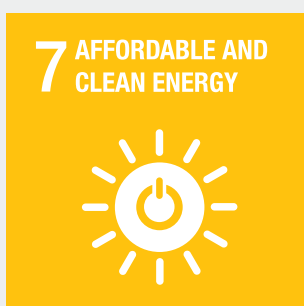
Gender Equality

Women continue to be underrepresented in national parliaments in a majority of countries.



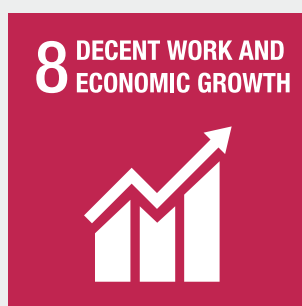
Clean Water and Sanitation

1 in every 10 rural residents still lives without access to safe drinking water.



Affordable and Clean Energy

More than 2 billion people still depend on solid fuels to meet their residential energy needs.



Decent Work and Economic Growth

In the region's developing countries, annual average growth of total factor productivity declined to just below 1 per cent in 2008-2014.



Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

95 per cent of researchers are located in just 5 countries.



Reduced Inequalities

The income of the richest 20 per cent of people is 4 to 11 times higher than the income of the poorest 20 per cent.



Sustainable Cities and Communities

Half the population will live in towns or cities by 2018.



Responsible Consumption and Production

More than 2 billion people depend on solid fuels to meet their residential energy needs.



Climate Action

The region is responsible for more than half of global greenhouse gas emissions.



Life Below Water

The vast majority of countries with a coastline protect less than 5 per cent of their territorial waters for biodiversity conservation.



Life On Land

During the past 5 years, the region permanently lost approximately 27,000 square meters of primary forest per day.



Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

More than 135 million people have not had their births registered.



Partnerships for the Goals

Tremendous gaps exist in the availability and quality of data and statistics for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals.

