



OCTOBER 2019



1. NINTH ASIA-PACIFIC TRADE FACILITATION FORUM HELD IN NEW DELHI



NEW DELHI, INDIA, 17-18 September 2019 - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) held the ninth Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) on 17 and 18 September 2019 in New Delhi, India, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, under the theme of "Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation for Regional Prosperity". It was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Piyush Goyal, Commerce and Industries Minister of India. Dr. Armida Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, also addressed the inaugural session among other distinguished speakers. Attended by more than 200 participants from across the region, including high-level commerce and customs officials, international organizations, and other public and private stakeholders, the Forum discussed opportunities from trade digitalization for sustainable development of the region and challenges in materializing them. such opportunities.

[Read More](#)



2. UNESCAP EXECUTIVE SECRETARY VISITS NEW DELHI



NEW DELHI, INDIA, 17-18 September 2019 - Dr. Armida Alisjahbana, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNESCAP visited New Delhi on 17 September 2019 for the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum she took the opportunity of her visit to hold bilateral discussions with H.E. Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, and H.E. Mr. Piyush Goyal, Commerce, and Industry Minister, and Railways among other stakeholders to discuss ongoing cooperation between UNESCAP and India.



3. UNESCAP INITIATIVES FOR FOSTERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT IN SOUTH ASIA



a. Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship: Nepal national consultation

KATHMANDU, NEPAL, 25 August 2019
UNESCAP organized a national launch and consultation in Nepal of a multi-country project on Building a Gender-Responsive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. The event served as a forum for policy dialogue, capacity building, and networking for key concerned stakeholders across the public and private sector to discuss the needs, constraints, and actions to foster women's entrepreneurship in Nepal. It was attended by Hon'ble Minister of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, senior officials, and other stakeholders of the country.

[Read More](#)

b. National Inception Workshop on E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-Led MSMEs In South Asia

Kathmandu, Nepal – 11-12 September 2019
UNESCAP, jointly with Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF of WTO Secretariat), Geneva, launched another project to build the capacity of women-led MSMEs in harnessing e-Commerce as a tool to expand their businesses and become part of a wider regional and global supply chains in South Asian LDCs. The first National Inception Workshop held in Kathmandu brought together the concerned stakeholders-women entrepreneurs, civil society organizations working on women empowerment, Government Departments/Ministries, Apex Chamber's representatives, experts, etc., to share ESCAP/EIF's initiative on empowering women entrepreneurs of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, and the work plan. The event had the participation of Secretaries of Ministries of Industry, Commerce and Supplies; Women, Children and Senior Citizens; and National Planning Commission in the Government of Nepal, among other stakeholders.



[Read More](#)



c. UNESCAP hosts a high-level discussion on leveraging e-Commerce by women entrepreneurs at “The International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2019”

KATHMANDU, NEPAL, 12-14 September 2019 UNESCAP partnered with the South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF) to host a high-level panel discussion at the International Women Entrepreneurs Summit- 2019, held on 13–14 September 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Moderated by Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Head of UNESCAP-SSWA Office, the panel had a representation of Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), Geneva, International Trade Centre, SAARC Secretariat, Permanent Secretary for Women and Children, Nepal Government, and women entrepreneurs from Nepal and India in the IT sector.

[Read More](#)

d. Sustainable Growth of Women Entrepreneurs and Export Promotion (SWEET-2019)

JABALPUR, MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA – 6-7 September 2019 - UNESCAP partnered with Madhya Pradesh Association of Women Entrepreneurs (MAWE) in organizing the Sustainable Growth of Women Entrepreneurs and Export Promotion (SWEET 2019) on 6 - 7 September at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India. The meeting involved women entrepreneurs and associations of women entrepreneurs from South Asia among other subregions, senior-level policy makers, international agencies involved in the implementation of the SDG 5. Mr. Chrispin Kapianga of UNESCAP-SSWA participated as a panelist on the topic “Creativity and Innovation as a Competitive” and shared information on UNESCAP’s initiatives such as UNESCAP/EIF project on “e-commerce capacity building for women-led MSMEs in South Asia.”



4. UNESCAP HOSTS DISCUSSIONS ON SDGs at 12th SOUTH ASIA ECONOMIC SUMMIT (SAES)



COLOMBO, SRI LANKA, 26-27 September 2019 UNESCAP hosted a plenary on SDG Achievement in South Asia at which Dr. Nagesh Kumar was a key speaker, and parallel sessions on inequalities (moderated by Kumar) and on gender equality (moderated by Rajan Ratna) at the South Asia Economic Summit (SAES) XII held on 26-27 September 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka with the theme “Shaping South Asia’s Future in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)”. Organized by the Institute of Policy Studies Sri Lanka (IPS), SAES is the premier think-tanks forum in South Asia. UNESCAP presentations shared the key messages from the SDG

progress report and the inequality theme study, among other UNESCAP publications. In addition, on the sidelines of SAES, UNESCAP organized a roundtable on supporting SDG achievement through building analytical capacity in South Asian LDCs responding to the requests for technical assistance made by Afghanistan and Bhutan in which heads of South Asian think-tanks participated. UNESCAP and EIF also organized a launch of their joint initiative on e-Commerce capacity-building for women entrepreneurs in South Asia.

[Read More](#)



5. CHALLENGE OF JOB CREATION IN SOUTH ASIA DISCUSSED AT UNU-WIDER CONFERENCE



Bangkok, Thailand – 11-13 September 2019
UNESCAP-SSWA organized and chaired a session on jobs challenge in South Asia at the UNU-WIDER /UNESCAP conference on transforming economies in Bangkok, Thailand, on 11 September 2019, covering analytical work and insights from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

[Read More](#)



6. ASIA-PACIFIC DISASTER REPORT DISCUSSED



New Delhi, India - 23 August 2019 - UNESCAP and the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) organized a workshop to discuss the UNESCAP's Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019, which assesses the scale of losses across the Disaster 'Riskscape' and estimates the amounts that countries would need to invest in outpacing growing disaster risks. The event had the participation of experts and policymakers from the National Disaster Management Authority, the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Indian Meteorological Department, among other agencies.

[Read More](#)



7. UNCTAD's DIGITAL ECONOMY REPORT PRESENTED

New Delhi, India - 6 September 2019 - The rapid spread of digital technologies is transforming economic and social activities, creating new opportunities but also increased risks of widening divides and income inequalities. The Digital Economy Report (DER) 2019 by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reviews recent trends and discusses policies for value creation and capture in the digital economy, notably with regard to ICT, digital entrepreneurship, data, skills, trade, competition, taxation, intellectual property, and employment. It provides valuable insights aimed at supporting policymakers at national and international levels to ensure that no one is left behind by the fast-evolving digital economy. UNESCAP-SSWA organized a seminar to present the report which was followed by a discussion involving representatives from the Indian Government, the private sector and civil society.



[Read More](#)



8. UNESCAP STEERS A DISCUSSION ON THE ROLE OF DIVERSE ACTORS IN SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION



NEW DELHI, INDIA, 22-23 August 2019 - Dr Nagesh Kumar chaired a plenary session on Post-BAPA+40 Scenario: Role of diverse actors at the Delhi Process V international conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation: Exploring New Opportunities and New Partnerships Post-BAPA+40 organized by Indian think-tank RIS in collaboration with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) held in New Delhi on 22-23 August 2019. The speakers at the session included Mr. Jorge Chediek, Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation and Director, UNOSSC, New York; Dr. Carlos M. Correa, Executive Director, South Centre, Geneva; representatives of the Indian Ocean Rim Association, Mauritius, Oxfam, academics and private sector.

[Read More](#)



9. SOUTH ASIAN LEADERS HIGHLIGHT INITIATIVES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) AT THE UN-GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Bangladesh:

H.E Ms. SHEIKH HASINA, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, said that despite turbulence in the rule-based international order and apprehensions of gradual economic slowdown, her country has continued to prosper over the last 10 years. “Poverty eradication, sustainable growth, protection of the environment, and human-resources development are some of the key features of our development strategy,” she added. Over the past 10 years, Bangladesh has adopted progressive and timely policies. Its exports grew three times from 2005 to 2018. Bangladesh has achieved one of the fastest poverty reduction rates in the world, with the poverty rate dropping from 41.5 percent in 2006 to 21.4 percent in 2018. Bangladesh is addressing inequality through social security, decent work, and financial inclusion.

“We are investing in human capital to create an inclusive society through equal access to technology,” she continued, noting the countrywide 5,800 digital canteros taking 600 e-public services to people’s doorsteps. Bangladesh has long advocated for addressing the special challenges and vulnerabilities of countries. In that regard, it has adopted transformative and innovative climate-resilient technologies and crops for reducing disaster risks.



Bhutan:

H.E Dr. LOTAY TSHERING, Prime Minister of Bhutan, said that his campaign commitment to “narrowing the gap” was consonant with the 2030 Agenda’s pledge to leave no one behind. Noting that free health care and education are constitutionally mandated for all citizens, he said that, despite being a resource-constrained country, Bhutan prioritizes the social sector. Teachers are now the highest-paid civil servants, and the Government plans to launch many maternal health initiatives, including one intended to provide prenatal and antenatal care, he said, pointing out that this is in addition to the totally free secondary and tertiary health-care system. Bhutan will achieve universal health coverage well ahead of 2030, he added.

Highlighting his country’s carbon-negative status, for which he thanked its “visionary monarchs,” he credited the national philosophy of “development with values” for Bhutan’s extensive forest cover, which stands at 72 percent. He went on to touch on the Government’s environment-friendly construction policies, its use of renewable energy sources and its initiatives to replace fossil fuels with clean energy. “Ironically, these contributions are rendered futile by the choices of others,” he said, noting that those who can are not doing enough. “If we do not intervene, we will have an incurable, diseased planet,” he warned.

Concerning the 2030 Agenda, he said Bhutan is committed to “being an early achiever,” recalling that the Government presented its voluntary national review last July and will present another in 2020. He went on to state that, as part of its planned graduation from least developed country status in 2023, Bhutan has identified critical sectors upon which to focus in this regard, including sustainable water, waste management, and organic agriculture. Challenges that remain to be addressed include ensuring that climate change and natural disasters do not impoverish vulnerable populations, he said, while noting that inadequate resources are a hurdle.



India:

H.E Mr. NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister of India, highlighted some achievements of his Government towards SDGs priorities. ‘When a developing country successfully runs the world’s biggest health assurance scheme, giving 500 million people 500,000 rupees annually for free treatment, the gains from that scheme show the world a new path’.

‘And when a developing country launches for its citizens the world’s largest digital identification program — giving them a biometric identity and saving more than \$20 billion by checking corruption — the modern systems that result from this project give the world new hope. By 2022, when India celebrates its 75th Independence Day, it plans to build 20 million houses for the poor’, he said. It will also work to eradicate tuberculosis by 2025. Such rapid changes are taking place in India because India is a great culture that is thousands of years old, one with its own vibrant traditions and which encompasses universal dreams. The core of India’s approach is public welfare through public participation.

Viewed from a historical and per capita emission perspective, India’s contribution to global warming is very low, he said. Yet, the country is a leader in addressing this issue. Among the effects of global warming is the increasing number and severity of natural disasters. As such, India has initiated a “Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure” to build infrastructure that withstands natural disasters. With technology bringing about sweeping change to social, personal, and economic life, as well as to security and international relations, “a fragmented world is in the interests of no one. We do not have the option to confine ourselves within our boundaries,” he said. “We must give a new direction to multilateralism and the United Nations.”



Maldives:

H.E Mr. IBRAHIM MOHAMED SOLIH, President of Maldives, said that the climate crisis is looming larger than ever, “heightened by our collective inability to address it,” he noted. Recalling the creation of the United Nations after the Second World War, he emphasized that it is needed to face the current global problems, which can only be solved through collective efforts. He went on to state that climate change remains the most pressing issue for the Maldives, an insular State, emphasizing: “It threatens our very existence as a nation.” The Government has revised and scaled up its nationally determined contributions arising from the Paris Agreement, he said, explaining that his country has presented a plan that seeks to utilize natural solutions, promote innovation and introduce such measures as a complete ban on single-use plastics by 2023 and further protection of marine areas, hopefully with the support of the international community.



Nepal:

H.E Mr. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, stated that the challenges the world faces today — such as increasing inequality, trade tensions, and climate change — create insecurity and disorder that hurts least-developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States the most. Despite the negligible emissions of these States, they will face disproportionate, unjust and undue existential consequences. A report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development reveals that one-third of glaciers in the Hindu Kush and Himalaya ranges will melt by the end of this century, even if the world meets its 1.5°C commitment. To address this, Nepal will convene a global dialogue on climate change in April 2020 to deliberate on issues of contemporary importance.



10. SDGs IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

a. SDGs: priorities, actions and means of implementation

India exemplar in using sanitation, digital tech to improve lives: Bill Gates (Source: The Hindustan Times) 18 September, 2019: India’s “innovative and thoughtful” use of digital technology to make people’s lives better and high health and development indices in Kerala are showcased in Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s annual Goalkeepers Examining Inequality 2019 report released to track the global progress in meeting the UN’s Sustainable Developmental Goals by 2030. Read more [here](#).

Bhutan is on track to achieve SDGs: PM (Source: Kuensel) 14 September 2019: Despite the global sustainable development report 2019 pointing towards an unsustainable model of development and implementation of SDGs 2030 in the world, Bhutan is well on the way to achieving the goals. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh to succeed in achieving SDGs by 2030 (Source: Daily Star) 7 September 2019: Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury has expressed his optimism that Bangladesh will do well in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Read more [here](#).

The private sector has responsible role in achieving SDGs in Nepal: Finance Minister Yubaraj Khatiwada (Source: Himalayan Times) 7 September 2019: Finance Minister Yubaraj Khatiwada said that the private sector should play a responsible role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the private sector is the primary partner of the government for realizing the globally accepted SDGs within the stipulated time, Khatiwada urged the private sector to raise investments in coordination with the government. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka faces major challenges on UN’s 2030 Development Agenda (Source: Times Online) 4 September 2019: On the road to sustainable development, Sri Lanka provides an interesting case study. Having overcome a three-decade domestic conflict, Sri Lanka has begun its transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society. The extreme poverty rate (\$1.90 a day) dropped to 0.8 percent in 2016. The unemployment rate is below 5 percent since 2010. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan to host International Parliamentary Conference on SDGs (Source: The Nation) 3 September 2019: Pakistan is planning to host International Parliamentary Conference on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in March 2020. “Pakistan will be hosting the Regional Conference on SDGs on 2nd & 3rd March 2020,” said MNA Riaz Fatyana, Convener – Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs, according to a press release issued by national assembly secretariat. Read more [here](#).

New Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to UNESCAP reaffirms country's commitment to achieving SDGs (Source: Daily FT) 3 September 2019: Welcoming the new Permanent Representative, Executive Secretary Alisjahbana outlined the mandate of the ESCAP and the upcoming regular and main sessions and invited the continued active participation of Sri Lanka. Elaborating further on the three main areas in focus during the 2020 Commission Session in May, under the overarching theme of 'Promoting economic, social and environmental cooperation on ocean for sustainable development', namely on sustainable maritime connectivity, fisheries, and pollution-free oceans, the Executive Secretary welcomed the interest of Sri Lanka to play a constructive role and to contribute to the deliberations. Read more: [Here](#)

India unlikely to meet sustainable development goals on health by 2030: CAG (Source: Business Standard) 29 August, 2019: India has a "long way to go" to achieve its target of public health spending, its primary health infrastructure is inadequate, and the country faces a dearth of data to track its progress to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for health by 2030, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the government's auditor, has said. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh's poverty rate falls by 50 percent in 10 years: foreign minister (Source: Xinhua) 27 August 2019: Bangladeshi Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the government has successfully reduced the poverty rate by 50 percent in the last 10 years. Read more [here](#).

Centre mulls policy for sustainable development (Source: New Indian Express) 26 August 2019: The Centre is planning to come up with a policy document on the effective implementation of sustainable development goals across the country. The research will be conducted by Dr. Ambedkar International Centre under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment within the next two years and submitted to the NITI Aayog. Read more [here](#).

Cabinet gives the approval to set Sustainable Development Goals (Source: United News of India) 24 July 2019: The Punjab Cabinet on Wednesday gave in-principle approval for a Four-Year Strategic Action Plan 2019 to 2023, to set Sustainable Development Goals for the departments of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Water Supply and Sanitation, PWD and School Education. Read more [here](#).

UN officials express awe over India's progress in achieving SDGs (Source: NDTV) 17 July, 2019: India has said it is committed to accelerating economic growth beyond seven percent over the next five years while ensuring there is no trade-off between sustainability and development, as top UN officials expressed "awe" over the country's remarkable progress in moving towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Read more [here](#).

Unemployment fuels food insecurity in India: UN (Source: Hindustan Times) 17 July, 2019: While the prevalence of undernourishment in India declined from 22.2% in 2004-06 to 14.5% between 2016 and 2018, an increase in the unemployment rate in India and decreasing economic growth in Pakistan between 2017 and 2018 led to a marked increase in food insecurity in southern Asia, according to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report of the United Nations. Read more [here](#).

Prime Minister Imran Khan's govt committed to fighting poverty: Maleeha (Source: Associated Press of Pakistan) 15 July, 2019: A senior Pakistani diplomat has told a U.N. forum that despite economic challenges, Pakistan would continue to work towards achieving the globally agreed sustainable development goals through "innovative, targeted and focused" implementation strategies in all fields. Read more [here](#).

Non-state actors helping reach SDGs (Source: Daily Star) 14 July 2019: Non-state actors, including NGOs, think-tanks, media, and private sectors, in developing countries like Bangladesh, are playing a critical role in implementing the SDGs, experts said in dialogue. Read more [here](#).

Improve char livelihoods to help attain SDGs: analysts (Source: Daily Star) 2 July 2019: Lawmakers and development activists stressed the need for setting up an institution to improve the livelihood of char dwellers in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Read more [here](#).

b. Regional cooperation and other means of implementation

Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide around \$5b to Bangladesh for sustainable growth (Source: Daily Star) 13 September 2019: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide around \$5b to Bangladesh for 2020-2022, aiming to strengthen its partnership further to promote rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth in the country. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka to obtain US\$ 150 million financial assistance from ADB to rehabilitate rural roads (Source: Colombo Page) 13 September 2019: The cabinet of ministers has given approval for Minister of Finance Mangala Samaraweera to obtain a US\$ 150 million financial assistance from ADB to complete the second stage of the program to rehabilitate rural road network. Read more [here](#).

ADB helps Afghanistan to improve water resources, enhance agricultural productivity (Source: Times of Central Asia) 12 September 2019: ADB has approved a \$348.78 million grant to help in the development of water resources in Afghanistan's Kandahar province through the expansion of Dahla Dam, the country's second-largest dam, the Bank said. Read more [here](#).

India to sign Asia-Pacific trade deal only if local industry is protected: Goyal (Source: Business Today) 12 September 2019: India will only sign a 16-member Asia-Pacific trade pact if its local industry is protected and if the deal would not lead to indiscriminate imports, trade minister Piyush Goyal said. Read more [here](#).

India and Nepal open South Asia's first cross-border oil pipeline (Source: Reuters) 10 September 2019: India and Nepal officially opened South Asia's first cross-border oil pipeline on Tuesday, a project seen as part of New Delhi's efforts to increase its influence in the Himalayan nation where China is also making deep inroads. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka to launch eight projects with ADB assistance to modernize railways (Source: Colombo Page) 19 August 2019: For the first time in its history, the Asian Development Bank will provide the US \$ 161 million for the development of Sri Lanka's railways. Read more [here](#).

Five Nepali dry ports to be internationalized (Source: Himalayan Times) 30 July 2019: The government has registered the Inter-governmental Agreement on Dry Ports in the Parliament for its ratification. Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, secretary of commerce and supplies at MoCS, said that after the agreement is ratified by the Parliament, it will receive international recognition with its registration in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka should compete with the Asia Pacific region through FTAs: minister (Source: Economy Next) 27 July 2019: Sri Lanka has to compete with the rest of the Asia Pacific Region in trade through free trade agreements, a minister said. "As the government, we are doing our best than previous governments to ensure the development in Sri Lankan economy," Development Strategies and International Trade Minister Malik Samarawickrama said. Read more [here](#).

Nepal commits for global partnership to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (Source: Nepal24Hours) 14 July 2019: Nepal emphasized on the necessity of renewed commitment for the global partnership to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and coordinated aid ahead of the Senior Level Meeting of Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in New York. Read more [here](#).

Multilateral partnership will accelerate SDGs attainment: minister (Source: New Age) 8 July, 2019: Local government, rural development and cooperatives minister (Bangladesh) Md Tazul Islam on Sunday focused on ensuring multilateral partnership through exchanging mutual knowledge and experiences and technological and financial assistance to accelerate attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Read more [here](#).

c. Gender equality and empowerment

Bridging the gaps in the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (Source: The Diplomat) 13 September 2019: In remote rural villages in Bangladesh, women in pink and blue uniforms, known as the Info Ladies, arrive on bicycles bringing a connection to villagers who want to see the faces of their loved ones working overseas. Among 163 million people in the country, only 24 million are connected to the web. As the world becomes ever more interconnected online, there are still many who cannot access the information they need for daily life. Read more [here](#).

EU, UNDP to help Afghan women attend university in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan (Source: Times of Central Asia) 23 July, 2019: The European Union provides a €2 million grant towards a UNDP program that will enable Afghan women to graduate from universities in neighboring Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan said. Read more [here](#).

A lot of success, a lot to do (Source: Daily Star) 16 July 2019: Bangladesh needs to sustain higher economic growth and diversify the economy in order to create jobs for a young population, said Kristalina Georgieva, chief executive officer of the World Bank. Read more [here](#).

d. Environmental sustainability and disaster resilience

India will grow 'sustainably,' says Prakash Javadekar (Source: Times of India) 22 September 2019: India will grow sustainably and at the same time, ensure its citizens get the benefits of development, minister of environment, forest and climate change Prakash Javadekar told a United Nations forum. Read more [here](#).

Government eyes 300MW rooftop solar power (Source: Daily Star) 17 September 2019: The government is looking to use the rooftops of factories and public agencies to generate about 300MW of clean electricity through solar photovoltaics - a move that can slash emissions and dependency on fossil fuel. Read more [here](#).

Prime Minister calls for urgent action to advance climate adaptation solutions (Source: The Daily Star) 11 September 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Tuesday joined the leaders from the Global Commission on Adaptation urging the governments and businesses to take urgent action to innovate and advance climate adaptation solutions in light of new research findings. Read more [here](#).

Promoting Resilient Infrastructure in Nepal (Source: Modern Diplomacy) 9 September 2019: "Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries to disasters and the impact of global climate change. The workshop is a valuable opportunity

to support both the public and private sectors to provide resilient and sustainable energy services in Nepal, especially successful off-grid electricity supply,” said Faris H. Hadad-Zervos, the World Bank Country Manager for Nepal. Read more [here](#).

Help protect marine ecology: PM to IORA members (Source: Daily Star) 5 September 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today urged the IORA member states to respond quickly to save the marine ecological system as the protection of the ocean, and sea resources are essential to get long-term benefits from the Indian Ocean belt. Read more [here](#).

Government making all-out efforts to achieve targets of 'Clean and Green Pakistan': Zartaj Gul (Source: Business Recorder) 26 August, 2019: Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul has said that the government as per vision of the Prime Minister Imran Khan for Clean and Green Pakistan, was making all-out efforts to achieve the targets and funds amounting to Rs. 7.8 billion were allocated for 10 billion Tree Tsunami program for this year. Read more [here](#).

Imported rubbish can't be moved within SL (Source: Sunday Observer) 4 August 2019: The Court of Appeal yesterday ordered the Government Analyst to obtain samples of garbage brought here from other countries, analyze them and submit a report to the court indicating whether they are toxic and harmful to humans and the environment. Read more [here](#)

Islamabad seeks compensation for low carbon footprint (Source: Dawn) 15 July, 2019: Pakistan is seeking compensation for its low carbon footprint to meet the estimated \$10.7 billion per year needed for climate adaptation, and \$8bn-17bn for mitigation, reveals a new report submitted to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Read more [here](#).

Convene all-party meet under PM's chairmanship to tackle water crisis: Amarinder Singh (Source: Times of India) 15 July, 2019: Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh on Monday suggested that all-party meetings under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister be convened to evolve a consensus and formulate a national strategy to tackle water crisis in the country. Read more [here](#).

Adviser favors financial review of donor-funded hydel projects (Source: Business Recorder) 13 July, 2019: Adviser to KP CM on Energy and Power, Himayatullah Khan, has said that financial review of the hydropower projects constructed with the financial assistance of World Bank and ADB should be made in any circumstances to maximize the possibilities of the wastage of resources. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh is our best teacher in climate change adaptation: UN ex-chief Ban Ki-moon (Source: Daily Star) 10 July 2019: Former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon today said Bangladesh is the best teacher in climate change adaptation. Ban Ki-moon said this while addressing the inaugural ceremony of a two-day international conference on climate change adaptation in Dhaka. Read more [here](#).

Budget 2019: Driving India's \$5 trillion economy vision with electric vehicles (Source: Financial Express) 9 July, 2019: Electric vehicles look to mitigate the effects of automobile emissions in Indian cities, especially given the fact that seven out of the ten most polluted cities are in India, thereby enhancing environmental sustainability. Read more [here](#).

ADB approves \$235m for Karachi's Red Line project (Source: The Dawn) 6 July 2019: ADB approved a \$235 million loan for Karachi's bus rapid transit project, Red Line. The bank announced that the loan would support a “transport system with innovative energy and climate resilience features that will enhance access to quality public transport for people in Karachi.” Read more [here](#).

If you have missed them, here are the links to previous updates!

JULY 2019

1. SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES PARTICIPATE IN THE 75TH COMMISSION SESSION OF UNESCAP

JULY 2019

APRIL 2019

1. SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES PARTICIPATE IN THE 6TH ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

APRIL 2019

JANUARY 2019

Content

1. UNESCAP SUBREGIONAL INITIATIVES
2. HIGHLIGHTS OF SOUTH ASIAN VNRS 2018
3. SDG PRIORITIES OF SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
4. SDGs IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Editorial Introduction

We are pleased to share the January 2019 issue of the South Asia SDG Update. The issue begins with a briefing on UNESCAP's activities in South Asia subregion for September-December 2018. It goes on to provide with briefings on Voluntary National Reviews of South Asian countries and their statements at the United Nations General Assembly pertaining to SDGs, to get an idea of key priorities of the subregion. Finally, it has a news round up from across the subregion regarding SDGs, regional cooperation and other means of implementation.

The update will appear in January, April, July and October of each year reporting on the highlights and initiatives taken during the previous quarter. Comments and feedback are welcome.

Nagesh Kumar
Director
UNESCAP South and South-West Asia Office

JULY 2019

Contact us:

UNESCAP
South and South-West Asia Office,
C-2, Qutub Institutional Area,
Pin 110016 New Delhi, India

Tel: +91 11 3097 3700
Fax: +91 11 2685 6274
Website: sswa.unescap.org
E-mail: sswa.unescap@un.org

Disclaimer: The information contained in this update is purely for non-commercial dissemination purposes. Any views expressed are those of sources quoted and should not be attributed to the United Nations or its member States.

