



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the form and function of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and its follow-up and review process**Regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific**

Note by the secretariat**

Summary

The present document proposes a road map for regional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, structured along eight priority action areas and a phased approach. The proposed road map outlines a tentative timeline and focuses mainly on the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda to promote an integrated and holistic approach. It also proposes periodic updates and assessments as a basis for further revision.

I. Introduction

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledged the importance of the regional and subregional dimensions, as well as regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development.¹ It also acknowledged that regional and subregional frameworks could facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level¹ and recognized the role of the regional commissions, including for regional follow-up and review, and encouraged them to continue supporting member States in that regard.²

2. In the course of the first and second sessions of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, member States and other development stakeholders called for a regional road map to support the implementation of

* E/ESCAP/FSD(3)/L.1.

** The present document was submitted late owing to the need to incorporate additional inputs from various contributors.

¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 21.

² Ibid., paras. 80-81.

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The Forum, at its second session in 2015, agreed to initiate the development of a regional road map at its session in 2016.³

3. The present document proposes a road map for regional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The draft road map proposes a framework for regional cooperation structured along eight priority action areas and a phased approach. The specific actions and mechanisms for implementation, as well as other aspects of the road map, will be defined subsequently by member States based on the tentative timeline identified in this road map. The road map focuses mainly on the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account the call for an integrated and holistic approach and warnings against “cherry-picking” across the Sustainable Development Goals.⁴ Assessments and updates will take place periodically to allow member States to evaluate progress in the implementation of the road map and to propose and agree on any revisions required.

4. The draft road map takes into account the need to take a balanced and integrated approach to sustainable development, including fully addressing the social dimension. The Asia-Pacific region faces several key social and demographic trends, which are well addressed through the 2030 Agenda. The region faces rising inequalities between and within countries in spite of income poverty reduction, and gender inequality persists throughout the region. Demographic trends such as population ageing, urbanization and international migration also need to be addressed in order to build a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient Asia-Pacific region.

5. The draft road map considers the outcomes of the fourth session of the Committee on Environment and Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held in November 2015, which expressed support for the current format of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The Committee also recognized the Forum as an appropriate and effective forum, including for follow-up and review regarding the 2030 Agenda, and noted the need to strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms.⁵ A proposal for the form and function of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development is contained in document E/ESCAP/FSD(3)/3.

6. The draft road map also takes into account the proposals and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level, which highlights the importance of dialogue and review at the regional level and the role of the regional commissions.⁶ The road map does not elaborate on the framework for regional follow-up and review in the Asia-Pacific region, which will be considered by member States separately based on the recommendations of the high-level political forum on

³ E/ESCAP/FSD(2)/3.

⁴ Report of the Expert Consultation on Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific; available from www.unescap.org/resources/report-expert-consultation-implementing-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-asia-and.

⁵ E/ESCAP/CED(4)/2.

⁶ A/70/684.

sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council. The follow-up and review is discussed in document E/ESCAP/FSD(3)/3.

7. The draft road map draws on consultations with both member States and stakeholders. These included an Expert Consultation on Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, an informal session of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives to ESCAP, bilateral consultations with a number of member States, as well as sessions of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism. Moreover, subregional perspectives on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were collected through subregional papers with the engagement of the ESCAP subregional offices.

8. The proposal reflects the priority action areas identified jointly by the secretariats of the regional commissions in support of member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely: (a) integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning and fiscal frameworks; (b) promoting policy coherence, consistency and coordination; (c) enhancement of data and statistical capacities of member States for implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (d) identifying and promoting alternative and innovative sources of financing for development; (e) leveraging science, technology and innovation in support of the Agenda 2030; (f) tapping South-South and regional partnerships; and (g) translating regional models into global public goods.⁷

9. The road map is also informed by the analytical work of the secretariat in defining regional priorities and the status of integration and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as contained in document E/ESCAP/FSD(3)/1.

10. At its session in 2016, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development is invited to review and deliberate on the draft road map with a view to its finalization.

II. Proposed draft of the regional road map

A. The basis for action

11. Much progress has been made in Asia and the Pacific in the 15 years of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular in terms of eradicating extreme poverty. Of the 1.2 billion people lifted out of poverty globally since 1990, 1.1 billion were from Asia and the Pacific. The share of people living in extreme poverty dropped from 70 per cent in 1990 to 53 per cent in 2012.

12. Despite these improvements, as many as 743 million people in the region continue to live in extreme poverty. Also, the gap between the rich and the poor has increased. Even in countries where inequality is showing a downward trend, it remains high. In addition, many vulnerable groups face inequalities in access to health, education and basic services including water and sanitation. Moreover, environmental factors exacerbate vulnerabilities. The Asia-Pacific region is exposed to numerous natural disasters that in many

⁷ "Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: the role of the regional commissions"; available from <http://regionalcommissions.org/2030RCpaper.pdf>.

instances have wiped out long-term development gains, especially in least developed countries and Pacific small island developing States. The sustainability of inputs provided by the environment to livelihoods, economies and quality of life is also of concern, considering growing pressures arising from land-use change, overexploitation of resources and ecosystems as well as pollution.

13. The Asia and Pacific region, therefore, continues to face significant development challenges and needs to address issues of quality of growth, social exclusion and inequality, balance the benefits and costs of integration associated with economic, social and environmental considerations, and mitigate the impact of climate change. Low income countries in particular face important challenges in making the kinds of investments in health care, social protection, education and research and development that will lift their status.

14. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides the opportunity to build on the Millennium Development Goals, closing gaps in their achievement, while addressing many other concerns that have risen to the top of the political agenda. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region requires a wide, concerted and effective response that specifically addresses the cross-cutting issues of poverty alleviation, inequality and inclusiveness; resource use and environmental impacts and economic transformation; and deployment of the means of implementation across all areas.

15. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the importance of the regional and subregional dimensions and regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development and notes that regional and subregional frameworks can facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level.¹ It also emphasizes the importance of follow-up and review at the regional and subregional levels, as well as at the subnational, national and global levels. It noted that follow-up and review at the regional and subregional levels can, as appropriate, provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion of shared targets, welcoming in this respect the cooperation of regional and subregional commissions and organizations.⁸ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the role of the regional commissions and encourages them to continue supporting member States in that regard.⁹

16. Reaffirming the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the commitment to a transformative agenda for sustainable development, recognizing the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region and underlining the region's heterogeneity and the integrated nature of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals require a coherent and effective response from a wide range of stakeholders, including from the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector and others. Reaffirming the importance of regional cooperation for sustainable development, as recognized in "The future we want"¹⁰ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, members and associate members of ESCAP agree to cooperate in the implementation of the

⁸ Ibid., para. 80.

⁹ Ibid., para. 81.

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

2030 Agenda through this regional road map, on a voluntary basis, and in partnership with other development stakeholders.

17. This road map is primarily guided by General Assembly resolution 70/1. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development also provides important guidance for the implementation of the road map.¹¹

B. Objectives and scope of the road map

18. This road map is for members and associate members of ESCAP to cooperate at the regional level in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The overarching objective of the road map is to support a development pathway in Asia and the Pacific that integrates the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development and results in shared prosperity, improved human well-being, social and digital inclusion, a better management of natural resources, and increased resilience to disasters, through regional cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

19. The road map seeks to achieve this objective by providing a framework for strengthening the delivery of the means of implementation across the entire range of the Sustainable Development Goals based on global agreements and in particular in a number of key areas identified in Goal 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revive the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development).

20. The specific goals are:

(a) To foster forward-looking policymaking and increase opportunities for financing sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) To strengthen the capacity of countries to collect and use quality data and statistics in support of sustainable development, including reaching the furthest behind;

(c) To provide sustainable development opportunities arising from regional and international trade and using science, technology and innovation for sustainable development in the region;

(d) To stimulate concerted and effective action on the ground by fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships.

21. The road map shall support member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and guide the development of operational mechanisms.

22. The road map does not create new commitments for Governments. Resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,¹² represents the commitment needed to act.

23. The road map proposes a framework for regional cooperation structured along eight priority action areas and a phased approach. The specific actions and mechanisms for implementation, as well as other aspects

¹¹ General Assembly resolution 69/313.

¹² General Assembly resolution 70/1.

of the road map, shall be defined subsequently by member States based on the tentative timeline identified in this road map.

24. The road map does not elaborate on the framework for regional follow-up and review in the Asia-Pacific region, which will be considered by member States separately based on the recommendations of the high-level political forum and the Economic and Social Council.

25. The road map will give particular emphasis on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the least developed countries and other countries with special needs, while maintaining the universality of the Agenda.

26. The road map shall be assessed and updated periodically to allow member States to evaluate progress in the implementation and to propose and agree on any revisions required.

C. Priority action areas for regional cooperation

Priority action area 1: Integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning.

Priority action area 2: Promote policy coherence, consistency and coordination.

Priority action area 3: Enhance data and statistical capacities of member States for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Priority action area 4: Identify and promote sources of financing for development.

Priority action area 5: Leverage science, technology and innovation in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Priority action area 6: Accelerate regional connectivity and integration for sustainable solutions at the regional, national and local levels.

Priority action area 7: Foster South-South and regional partnerships.

Priority action area 8: Translate regional models into global actions.

Priority action area 1: Integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning

27. Implementing the global commitments related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets into national development planning. In this regard, there is a need to identify best practices and share methodologies and knowledge.

28. Potential actions may include, but are not limited to: integrating sustainable development into regional policy agendas and national policy plans; exchange of national experiences and knowledge; analytical work to identify and analyse best practices; and developing knowledge products to support member States on mainstreaming sustainability into national development planning.

Priority action area 2: Promote policy coherence, consistency and coordination

29. With 17 goals and 169 targets ranging from reducing greenhouse gas emissions to promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, existing policy approaches are not comprehensive enough to have real impact. Bringing about the change envisioned in the Sustainable Development Goals will only happen with relevant and coherent policies designed by ministries, coming together and engaging with the private sector, local communities, vulnerable groups and civil society. These policies will further need empowered institutions and institutional mechanisms for implementation. To this end, there is a need to strengthen institutional and technical capacity to manage the interrelated and indivisible social, economic and environmental dimensions of the new global agenda. Institutional strengthening is applicable to all government entities, given that a “whole-of-government” approach, characterized by effective and high-level coordination across ministries, is a critical means of promoting coherence across policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development.

30. Potential actions may include, but are not limited to: sharing of experiences and assistance to countries in developing institutional structures to support and underpin coordination for integrated sustainable development policies across line ministries; providing analysis, developing online knowledge products and training; and supporting Governments to design and implement policies that integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Priority action area 3: Enhance data and statistical capacities of member States for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

31. Strategic implementation of the 2030 Agenda, such that the needs and interests of all persons are met, is contingent upon availability of timely and reliable data, disaggregated by sex, age and location, as well as income, ethnicity disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. Of equal importance is the consistent and transparent use of these data for policy planning, monitoring and review at all levels so that the insights they bring more directly benefit development and accountability for development results.

32. Potential actions may include, but are not limited to: supporting countries on following up and reviewing progress of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; development of an “ESCAP Agenda 2030 policy review” mechanism agreed upon by member States; and networking of national statistical systems, private sector and civil society stakeholders.

Priority action area 4: Identify and promote sources of financing for development

33. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires more effective alignment of incentives, a better allocation of existing resources and additional funds from domestic, external and innovative sources. Mobilizing domestic resources to increase financing for development through enhancing tax revenues, rationalizing subsidy programmes to complement the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals, developing deeper capital markets and preventing illicit capital flows are examples of improving the prospects of adequate availability of financing for development. International public finance, including official development assistance, plays an important role in complementing the efforts of countries to mobilize public resources domestically, especially in the poorest and most vulnerable countries with

limited domestic resources. Tapping into new partnerships and innovative sources of financing can also play a role in complementing public sources of financing for sustainable development.

34. Potential actions may include, but will not be limited to: establishment of an Asia-Pacific tax forum for sustainable development; and supporting countries to develop or strengthen socially responsible fiscal policies.

Priority action area 5: Leverage science, technology and innovation in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

35. Science, technology and innovation are among the means of implementation of sustainable development that are directly connected to the creation of economic growth, jobs and improved resource management. Access to information and communications technology (ICT) is also a critical cross-cutting enabler to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Harnessing opportunities from these areas requires the development of enabling frameworks to share information, learn from each other and translate the science and technology findings into practical solutions.

36. Potential actions may include, but will not be limited to: establishing a regional platform where countries can learn from each other in creating open environments for technological development (including transfer) and innovative societies; supporting the adoption of sustainable business practices in various sectors and promoting technological, process and market innovation; and promoting scientific cooperation supporting the development of innovative solutions for sustainable development.

Priority action area 6: Accelerate regional connectivity and integration for sustainable solutions at the regional, national and local levels

37. Cooperation at all levels will be essential for sustainable development. There is significant need to support sustainable urban development, increase the sustainability of energy systems, improve connectivity through sustainable transport and ICT and increase resilience to natural disasters. With energy demand in Asia and the Pacific forecast to nearly double from 2010 to 2035 according to the Asian Development Bank, access to reliable and sufficient energy services together with economic development will remain a focus for decades to come. Increasing urbanization will also require better management of resources in order to provide affordable, good quality and sustainable services to urban citizens. Better connectivity will require, inter alia, achieving sustainable transport connectivity through realizing seamless integrated intermodal mobility of freight and people to increase economic growth, trade competitiveness and labour mobility. As ICT is a critical means of implementation, ICT connectivity and inclusive access must be improved. Building the resilience to disasters will require accelerating regional cooperation for more effective early warning systems, particularly those having transboundary origins such as river-basin floods, glacial lake outburst floods and drought.

38. Potential actions may include, but will not be limited to: use of intergovernmental agreements, regional frameworks, models and standards to foster cooperation and sustainable solutions at the regional, national and local levels; strengthening multi-stakeholder networks at each level, and improving the quality of local platforms for learning and cooperation through better integration with the national and regional level initiatives; building capacity for resilient nations particularly least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as resilient

communities and cities; enhancing cooperation within the region and the provision of improved opportunities for countries to diversify their energy supplies for power production purposes through cross-border trading of surplus energy resources and to improve regional ICT connectivity.

Priority action area 7: Foster South-South and regional partnerships

39. South-South cooperation can play a pivotal role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, given that countries share similar factor endowments and development challenges, and geo-climatic conditions, and models and solutions may be more cost-effective, transferable and upscalable. South-South cooperation should be promoted and should build on established relationships and evolving partnerships for further research, identification of policy tools and incentive frameworks, best practices and knowledge-sharing.

40. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will also require concerted efforts from a wide range of stakeholders, including subnational governments, civil society, the private sector and academia. Multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, can be an effective means of catalysing action and of leveraging assets, resources, technologies and knowledge of various partners in a complementary manner.

41. Potential actions may include, but are not limited to: identification and analysis of best practices; sharing of experiences, technical assistance and capacity-building; and multi-stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

Priority action area 8: Translate regional models into global actions

42. The region has produced many models relevant for the Sustainable Development Goals, in areas such as transport, trade facilitation, environment, energy, disaster risk reduction, social development, including intergovernmental agreements, norms and standards, and good practice guidelines. The region is also at the forefront of innovation. While national circumstances and priorities differ from country to country, regional models and standards can serve as models for similar approaches in other regions.

43. Potential actions may include, but are not limited to: identification and analysis of best practices and sharing of regional experiences at the global level.

D. Timeline and milestones

44. This road map identifies eight priority action areas for regional cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specific actions and mechanisms for implementation, as well as other aspects of the road map, shall be defined by member States based on the following tentative timeline:

(a) **2016-2017: stocktaking.** In order to define specific actions and mechanisms for implementation, a needs assessment and gap analysis will be conducted;

(b) **2017: defining actions and mechanisms.** The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2017 will agree, as appropriate, on specific actions and mechanisms for implementation of the road map, including the need for new mechanisms. During its session in 2017, the Forum will also advise on the format of the regional follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, based on the recommendations on the form and function of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable

Development and the recommendations of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council;

(c) **2017-2018: establishment of mechanisms.** Based on the recommendations of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2017, mechanisms for implementation could be established;

(d) **2018-2030: implementation.** Agreed upon actions will be implemented through the mechanisms previously identified and established.

45. Member States may revise the above timeline and set of milestones as appropriate at any given time as part of the process of assessment and update of the road map.

E. Modalities of implementation

46. The implementation of the road map shall leverage the conference structure of ESCAP, including its committees, as well as existing initiatives of ESCAP and development partners within and outside the United Nations system. As part of the road map, member States shall deliberate and decide on the need for the establishment of new initiatives and mechanisms in support of the implementation of the road map.

47. The ESCAP secretariat shall backstop the development and review of the road map and support member States, as appropriate, in its implementation in partnership with development partners within and outside the United Nations system. In particular, the ESCAP secretariat shall leverage the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism to mobilize support from the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations.

48. As a first task, the ESCAP secretariat shall undertake a needs assessment and gap analysis and prepare a proposal for actions and implementation mechanisms of the road map, including the need for new mechanisms, for review and deliberation by member States at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2017.

49. The implementation of the road map will also require strengthening existing and developing new partnerships, to mobilize action from a wide range of stakeholders, including subnational governments, civil society, the private sector and academia as well as subregional, regional and international organizations.

F. Assessment and update of the road map

50. Assessment and update of the road map shall take place yearly, at the annual session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on the basis of a report to be drafted by the secretariat, to allow member States to evaluate progress in the implementation of the road map and for proposing and agreeing on any revisions required.

51. The assessment and update of the road map will take into account the regional follow-up and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and will not create any reporting obligations for member States.

III. Matters calling for the attention of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

52. Member States are invited to review the draft of the regional road map and its action framework with a view to providing their comments towards the eventual agreement on the road map at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2016 and further endorsement at the seventy-second session of the Commission.
