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## 2021 Asia Pacific Sustainable Development Forum (APSDF8)

Economic and Social Council of the Asia Pacific (ESCAP)

### Regional Perspectives on Accelerating Progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Sustainable and Resilient recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic in Asia and the Pacific

Statement by Mr Paul Stephens, Permanent Representative, and Deputy Head of the Australian Mission

*Check against delivery*

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*[Acknowledgment of country]*

I start by paying my respects to the traditional owners of this land, to acknowledge their Elders past and present, as well as recognising any First Nations people present joining this meeting.

*Madame/Mr President*

The past year has been one of the most challenging the world has ever known.

Global poverty increased for the first time since 1990.

People needing life-saving assistance increased by 40 per cent.

And 70 per cent of global job losses will be felt in our region alone.

Collective efforts and partnerships are the only way we will recover.

# AUSTRALIA



From the beginning of this crisis Australia took immediate action, shifting our approach to international development under three pillars: health security, economic recovery, and stability.

**In health**, Australia has contributed over \$700 million to safe and effective vaccines, including:

- \$523 million for the supply and delivery of vaccines across the Pacific and South East Asia
- \$100 million through a historic Quad partnership to fund vaccine supply and provide ‘last-mile’ delivery support in the Indo-Pacific region, and
- \$80 million to the COVAX Facility to provide vaccines to developing countries, and frontline doses for workers arriving in our region.

**In economic recovery**, Australia has increased our engagement with partner governments, including:

- \$304.7 million over two years for an economic-focused COVID-19 response package for the Pacific and Timor-Leste
- \$500 million for new economic, development and security measures to support our partners in Southeast Asia, and
- Using our \$2 billion Australian Infrastructure Facility for the Pacific to focus on projects that promote climate resilience and recovery.

Finally, we are supporting the most vulnerable through our **stability pillar**:

- By focusing over \$1.3 billion on gender equality initiatives
- Supporting a range of disability inclusive programs, including sign language and access information for COVID-19 response, and
- Investing over \$580 million to work with partners in education, including helping more children learn remotely.

# AUSTRALIA



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We are pleased to be able to attend this Forum in person this year.

We look forward to participating and listening to our friends and neighbours as we identify key problems and share solutions.

It is only by working together that we can get on the road to recovery and stay on it.

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