Enabling resilience through sustainable and seamless connectivity

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
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Building resilience to crises through regional economic cooperation and integration: strengthening resilience through seamless and sustainable connectivity
Enabling resilience through sustainable and seamless connectivity (Document ESCAP/MCREI/2022/3)

- Provides a brief overview of the energy, digital and transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific

- Discusses the recent and ongoing connectivity shocks which amplified the pre-existing connectivity gaps with a notable impact on countries in special situations in particular

- Highlights of recent achievements and underlines the role of regional cooperation
1. TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY: Issues and challenges

- While the region was successful overall in preserving transport connectivity during the pandemic, the crisis disrupted freight transport and led to increased delays and costs.

- Current developments provided another connectivity shocks including along the Europe-Asia transport corridors, strongly affecting landlocked countries in North and Central Asia.

- Resilience and connectivity concerns have heightened awareness of the pressing need to decarbonize the Asia-Pacific development path.
1. TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY: Highlighted developments in regional cooperation and integration

- Ongoing efforts to fill in missing links along the Asian Highways and the Trans-Asian Railways
- Digitalization and smart transport as a priority for the Asian Highways and the Trans-Asian Railways operational development
- Freight transport decarbonization as part of the national and regional recovery policies
- Improving access to comprehensive, reliable data on the status of the regional transport infrastructure network

New Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)
2. ENERGY CONNECTIVITY: Issues and challenges

- Connectivity enables affordable, secure, and sustainable power systems
  - Access to low-cost RE
  - Increase power system diversity

- ESCAP “Regional Road Map on Power System Connectivity”
  - Vision, set of principles, and nine strategies

- Goal: Increase regional collaboration and connectivity to support sustainable development

### Strategies

- Trust and political consensus
- Grid master plan
- Intergovernmental agreements
- Harmonization
- Multilateral power trading
- Coordinate planning
- Mobilize investment
- Capacity building
- Alignment with SDGs
2. ENERGY CONNECTIVITY: Highlighted developments in regional cooperation and integration

- Benefits for LDCs, LLDCs, and small and vulnerable countries
- Overlapping power connectivity initiatives in region
- Challenges moving past study stage to implementation
- Gaps: political will and trust building, institutional frameworks, financing
- ESCAP working with member States to implement Road Map strategies and support connectivity initiatives
The Asia-Pacific is the most divided in terms of digital transformation.

Source: Produced by ESCAP based on data from various sources from UN agencies and global/regional organizations sources.
3. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY: Issues and Challenges

- The adoption of digital technologies has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- But this ‘big bang’ has also left many people and countries behind.
- The map shows the real speed of Internet among countries and between rural and urban areas.
3. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY: Development pathway for regional cooperation and integration

Framework of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Action Plan

3 pillars and 25 actions
Members and associate members may wish to:

- **CONSIDER** the policy directions and activities described, welcoming the new developments in regional energy and digital and transport connectivity

- **ACKNOWLEDGE** the synergy between these initiatives and also **ACKNOWLEDGE** the following ongoing national and regional efforts:
  
  (a) To support digitalization efforts along the trans-Asian railways, Asian highways and dry ports;

  (b) To leverage transport networks and energy corridors to help global, regional and subregional decarbonization efforts;

  (c) To promote regional cooperation to bridge the digital divide through the implementation of the action plan for implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, 2022–2026.

- **SHARE** relevant updates and highlight national, bilateral and multilateral policies and initiatives