United Nations ESCAP/81/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 January 2025

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Eighty-first session
Bangkok, 21–25 April 2025
Items 4 and 5 of the provisional agenda*

Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Summary of progress made in the implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document contains information on the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on which the secretariat is required to report to the Commission at its eighty-first session.

The Commission may wish to review the progress made and provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance on the effective implementation of the resolutions.

* ESCAP/81/1.

Please recycle

I. Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States

Resolution 79/3
Supporting the sustainable development of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

1. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 79/3, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to assist least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Asia and the Pacific in building their capacity and attracting investment to implement relevant action plans and attain internationally agreed development goals;

(b) To continue to analyse the sustainable development challenges faced by these groups of countries and to submit a report containing the main findings of and key messages arising from the analysis for consideration by the Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States during the ministerial segment of the sessions of the Commission;

(c) To intensify regional assistance programmes, using existing resources, to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States on sustainable connectivity and reforestation initiatives aimed at reducing vulnerability to climate change;

(d) To encourage international development partners to direct their attention and support to assisting least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in collecting and analysing disaster risk data, transferring technology on voluntary basis and on mutually agreed terms, and increasing funding within existing resources for disaster mitigation in order to successfully implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) To submit to the Commission at its eighty-first session a report on the progress made in implementing the present resolution.

2. Progress made

2. In response to subparagraph 4 (a) of Commission resolution 79/3, the secretariat continued to provide capacity-building and technical assistance to countries in special situations. At the regional and subregional levels, the secretariat provided platforms for capacity-building, peer learning and information exchange. Those platforms included the final regional review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. Workshops for the Vienna Programme of Action and the Samoa Pathway were held in Thailand and Tonga, respectively, in August 2023. The secretariat also organized the first Asia-Pacific biennial review of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2022–2031, as well as an associated workshop. Both were held in Cambodia in December 2024.

3. At the country level, the secretariat continued to assist least developed countries, in particular in ensuring a smooth and sustainable graduation. For example, the secretariat, through its subregional office for the Pacific, assisted the Government of Solomon Islands in formulating and validating its smooth transition strategy. The secretariat also continued to support other graduating countries by providing knowledge products, capacity-building and technical assistance.

4. For landlocked developing countries, the secretariat assisted Kazakhstan and Mongolia in formulating plans of action to advance digital trade and value chain integration. In North and Central Asia, capacity-building activities were organized to foster innovation and to help with the adoption of new, emerging technologies aimed at advancing a green transformation for sustainable development.

5. The secretariat continued to support small island developing States in increasing the impact of investments on gender equality. It supported the Government of Fiji with the development of the country's strategic plan for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and with a road map for the Reserve Bank of Fiji, aimed at closing the gender gap in financial inclusion.

6. To further attract investment in countries in special situations, the secretariat has provided in-person and hybrid capacity-building and worked with six countries in special situations to develop strategies to attract investment in relevant sectors. In the area of energy, the secretariat assisted Micronesia (Federated States of), Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan in developing national road maps for Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy).

7. In response to subparagraph 4 (b) of the resolution, the secretariat continued to provide analyses on sustainable development challenges faced by least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in particular through the annual publication of its *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report* series, summaries of which have been submitted to the Commission to inform its deliberations. In its 2024 report, the secretariat examined the transformative role of digitalization and automation in enhancing the productive capacities of these countries. In its 2025 report, it will provide a comprehensive overview of the new programmes of action and the ways in which they are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as lessons learned from previous programmes and available support mechanisms.

8. In response to subparagraph 4 (c) of the resolution, the secretariat continued to provide support to facilitate the participation of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in the regional coordination of land transport infrastructure development, in particular through the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network, Trans-Asian Railway Network and Dry Ports, as well as in the regional dialogue on sustainable maritime connectivity. Technical assistance was provided to help those groups of countries to increase the use of international railway transport, dry ports and inland water transport, especially in the field of low-carbon transport. New knowledge products, policy dialogues and training events were offered to small island developing States to help them to articulate their connectivity priorities and needs at the national, subregional and regional levels.

9. To address deforestation-related challenges, the secretariat provided capacity-building and promoted knowledge-sharing under the North-East

Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation. The secretariat conducted a stocktaking study on the interlinkage of desertification and land degradation with climate change, organized a joint meeting with Mongolia in 2023 and prepared an overview paper for North-East Asia in 2024. Through the Programme, the secretariat is facilitating collaborative activities aligned with the issues to be considered at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, which will be held in Mongolia in 2026.

10. In response to subparagraph 4 (d) of the resolution, the secretariat developed high-resolution disaster and climate risk data sets tailored to specific countries and provided training on the practical use of such data sets in analysing the impact of disaster risks for Bhutan, Cambodia, Maldives, Nepal and Tajikistan, in line with the Early Warnings for All initiative and in coordination with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Meteorological Organization. These activities helped to improve knowledge of disaster risks, enhance forecasting capabilities and strengthen early warning systems in the target countries.

II. Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Resolution 79/4
Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for a better future for all in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

11. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 79/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To ensure that the report on the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the addendum thereto are submitted for consideration at the global dialogues on sustainable development, including the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit, to be held in New York on 19 and 20 September;

(b) To continue to support members and associate members in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through regional actions and initiatives;

(c) To report to the Commission at its eighty-first session on the progress made in implementing the present resolution.

2. Progress made

12. In response to subparagraph 6 (a) of Commission resolution 79/4, the secretariat submitted the report on the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the addendum thereto for consideration at the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2023/3/Add.4). In addition, Vice-Chair of the Tenth Forum and Delegate in charge of the Directorate General of Planning of Cambodia, Mr. Pagnathun Theng, reported to the high-level political forum on sustainable development and delivered the key messages from the regional forum. Furthermore, the report on the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the addendum thereto were submitted for consideration at

the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2024/3/Add.4).

13. In response to subparagraph 6 (b) of the resolution, the secretariat continued to support members and associate members of the Commission in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The secretariat organized the following subregional forums on the Goals: South and South-West Asia (Kathmandu, October 2023); North and Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan, November 2023); South-East Asia (Bangkok, November 2023); East and North-East Asia (Beijing, November 2023); and the Pacific (Suva, November 2023). On the margins of the subregional forums, the secretariat organized subregional workshops on voluntary national reviews as a platform for peer learning and information exchange, where participants discussed the preparation of and follow-up to their national reviews. These subregional forums and workshops informed the discussions at the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which were held under the following theme: "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific".

14. Similarly, the following subregional preparatory forums for the Twelfth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development were held: the Pacific (Suva, October 2024); North and Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan, October 2024); East and North-East Asia (Incheon, Republic of Korea, October 2024); South-East Asia (Bangkok, November 2024); and South and South-West Asia (New Delhi, November 2024). Subregional workshops on evidence-based voluntary national reviews were organized on the margins of some of the forums. The subregional forums and workshops will inform the discussions at the Twelfth Forum, which will be held under the theme: "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind in Asia and the Pacific".

III. Environment and development

A. Resolution 79/1
Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

15. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 79/1, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to support members and associate members in enhancing cooperation efforts with a view to taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, including by promoting partnerships involving Governments and major groups and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to facilitate voluntary information-sharing, policy dialogues and technical assistance and cooperation for climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable development;

(b) To facilitate cooperation across various sectors of the economy to combat climate change and its impacts, including by supporting regional cooperation on sustainable, low-emission and energy-efficient modes of transport, and providing regional assessments, capacity-building and technical support on policies for climate-resilient development, as appropriate;

(c) To encourage and collaborate with relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, regional and subregional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, in line with the existing mandates and within the existing resources of the Commission, to build the capacities of members and associate members, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, to develop policies and take actions to combat climate change and its impacts, develop early warning systems for all at the regional level, and support regional and subregional priorities to address climate-related challenges;

(d) To continue to provide information to members and associate members of the Commission on progress made by the secretariat in the implementation of the United Nations Secretariat climate action plan 2020–2030, in the context of existing reporting processes, as appropriate;

(e) To report to the Commission at its eighty-first session on the progress made in implementing the present resolution.

2. Progress made

16. In response to subparagraph 3 (a) of Commission resolution 79/1, the secretariat supported twenty cities across five member States – China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand – in their transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient urban development, including by promoting technical assistance, partnerships and regional cooperation to address climate change impacts and foster sustainable urbanization. The secretariat partnered with the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance to enhance national framework conditions for urban climate finance in Fiji, India, Indonesia and the Philippines. The effort was aimed at aligning national policies with subnational financing needs with a view to ensuring effective resource mobilization for urban climate projects. In collaboration with the European Investment Bank and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle, the secretariat facilitated pre-feasibility assessments for low-emission waste management infrastructure in six cities across Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, successfully mobilizing financing to strengthen climate-resilient infrastructure.

17. The secretariat, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations issue-based coalition on raising ambitions on climate action, published the report *2024 Review of Climate Ambition in Asia and the Pacific – From Ambitions to Results: Sectoral Solutions and Integrated Action*, which was released at the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the report, emission gaps, sectoral solutions and the benefits of integrated adaptation-mitigation strategies in Asia and the Pacific were highlighted. The secretariat has used the insights gained from the nationally determined contributions to advocate for the development and implementation of pathways to achieve net-zero targets through immediate, substantial and sustained commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving the ambitious third-generation nationally determined contributions, including by promoting a just transition and enhancing investments in ecosystem-based solutions. In addition, regional intergovernmental and stakeholder consultations held at the seventy-ninth session of the Commission, the Asia-Pacific Climate Week in 2023 and the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development also benefited from the insights contained in the report.

18. The secretariat has collaborated with the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development and has engaged with the Intergovernmental Panel

on Climate Change and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to organize annual regional workshops on greenhouse gas emission inventory systems for national climate change experts.

19. As part of the project on enhancing investments for equitable and accelerated climate action in the post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) recovery, the secretariat provided support on financing for nature-based solutions and on developing carbon accounting guidelines focused on mangroves. Moreover, it will develop strategies, capacity and readiness for investing in nature-based solutions and promote regional networking on blue carbon, including in partnership with the Center for International Forestry Research and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Direct beneficiaries of the project include Bangladesh, Indonesia, Maldives and Samoa. The assessment of blue carbon that has been carried out under this project highlighted the significant demand for nature-based solutions in the Asia-Pacific region and proposed notional targets for mangrove restoration as an input to target setting for nationally determined contribution updates.

20. The secretariat engaged national experts to assist countries in identifying integrated adaptation and mitigation approaches that also offer good potential for supporting the development of the new cycle of nationally determined contributions to 2035 by member States. A workshop on integrating strategies for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals with the nationally determined contributions was organized by the secretariat and the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development and held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2024. In addition, a policy guide was issued in collaboration with the International Institute for Sustainable Development, highlighting gaps, opportunities and best practices for strengthening environment-health resilience and policy coherence in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific with regard to: (a) national climate plans, including nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans; (b) national biodiversity strategies and action plans; and (c) national health plans.

21. Resilient development is also supported by early warning systems, better access to risk information and resilience-building opportunities in key sectors. The secretariat and the World Food Programme have developed a multidimensional food systems risk assessment framework and dashboard that provides information on long-term risk trends in order to strengthen risk-responsiveness in climate adaptation and food system transformation strategies. An expert group meeting on strengthening the assessment of multidimensional food system risks was held in Bangkok and online on 18 and 19 September 2023. The secretariat worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Agricultural Research Centre for International Development to develop draft policy guidelines on agroecology transitions for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The guidelines were aimed at further supporting climate-resilient development and included inputs from subregional dialogues and several national consultations held in ASEAN countries between October 2023 and July 2024.

22. Moreover, the secretariat has extended technical assistance for climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable development through the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth. Examples include: capacity-building related to climate change and adaptation for biodiversity in Kyrgyzstan; implementation of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and efforts to improve air quality in Mongolia; greenhouse gas inventory framework

construction in the Philippines; and a pre-feasibility study on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Uzbekistan.

23. In response to subparagraph 3 (b) of the resolution, the secretariat facilitated cooperation across various sectors of the economy to combat climate change, including on sustainable, low-emission and energy-efficient modes of transport. Activities in that regard were conducted within the scope of the Asia-Pacific initiative on electric mobility, whose members included 20 member States and four organizations, and the regional cooperation mechanism on low-carbon transport. In addition, a project was carried out on enhancing the energy efficiency of the freight transport sector in Asia and the Pacific. Five member States were supported in their development of comprehensive electric vehicle policy frameworks and a regional road map aimed at sustainable and energy-efficient freight transport was developed to serve as a policy guide to member States. Furthermore, more than 30 member States were consulted in an effort to better understand their low-carbon transport challenges and priorities, which led to: (a) the development and implementation of low-carbon transport targets and timelines; (b) the establishment of green transport corridors; and (c) the identification of climate financing mechanisms for low-carbon transport. In addition, the secretariat supported the development of policies on green and resilient transport infrastructure along the Asian Highway Network and the creation of an inventory of best practices.

24. In response to subparagraph 3 (c) of the resolution, the secretariat provided capacity-building training using high-resolution disaster and climate risk data sets tailored to Bhutan, Cambodia, Maldives, Nepal and Tajikistan to analyse the impact of hazards and climate risks in each target country. The activities provided a foundation for the policies and actions needed to combat climate change and its impacts, as well as for the improvement of early warning systems, in line with the Early Warnings for All initiative and in coordination with partners such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Meteorological Organization. Furthermore, the secretariat, in collaboration with other members of the United Nations issue-based coalition on building resilience, has provided capacity-development support towards the development of the new cycle of nationally determined contributions and the decarbonization of key sectors, including energy, transport and waste, during several regional forums and provided training support on the improvement of the national greenhouse gas emissions inventories at the regional, subregional (North and Central Asia) and national (Papua New Guinea) levels.

25. In response to subparagraph 3 (d) of the resolution, the secretariat presented its annual environmental management progress against the targets of the United Nations Secretariat climate action plan 2020–2030 to the members of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission in October 2024. The detailed information is also publicly accessible in the annual environmental sustainability report of the secretariat, in which it was revealed that there had been a 42 per cent drop in greenhouse gas emissions from 2016, when the environmental management system development was initiated, to 2023.

B. Resolution 79/2
Regional cooperation to accelerate climate action on oceans in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

26. In paragraph 9 of its resolution 79/2, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To convene a dialogue on accelerating ocean-based action to combat climate change to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and to hold the dialogue, as part of the Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean, prior to the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

(b) To report to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its eighty-first session on the progress made in implementing the present resolution.

2. Progress made

27. In response to subparagraph 9 (a) of Commission resolution 79/2, the secretariat organized the regional dialogue on ocean-based climate action, which was held in Bangkok on 19 September 2024. The regional dialogue provided a platform for member States and stakeholders to identify challenges and options for regional efforts on ocean-based climate action focused on areas related to: (a) conserving marine ecosystems that support climate mitigation and adaptation; (b) decarbonizing shipping and maritime connectivity; (c) accelerating the deployment of ocean-based renewables; and (d) enhancing ocean-climate resilience. The outcome of the regional dialogue was the launch of a regional initiative on ocean-based climate action, which was proposed by the Governments of Fiji, Indonesia and Maldives.

28. Organized in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia of the United Nations Environment Programme, as a joint contribution to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the regional dialogue built on the annual discussions held in the context of the Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean organized by the secretariat and other partners since 2018. The event brought together representatives from 26 countries and over 15 organizations and educational institutions.

C. Resolution 79/7
Advancing regional cooperation for sustainable urban development and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

29. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 79/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to support policy and technical cooperation for members and associate members on sustainable urban development and the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, as appropriate, in collaboration with regional and subregional intergovernmental bodies and

international organizations, regional local government associations, civil society networks, the private sector and organizations within the United Nations system, including at regional ministerial conferences on housing and urban development;

(b) To assist members and associate members, upon request, with the provision of policy studies and capacity-building activities, to inform their efforts to promote sustainable urban development, including policy and planning support to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 in the Asia-Pacific region;

(c) To report to the Commission at its eighty-first session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

30. In response to subparagraph 7 (a) of Commission resolution 79/7, the secretariat established the Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals localization platform, which is a multi-stakeholder initiative that serves as a coordination hub for policy dialogue, technical assistance and knowledge exchange. The platform includes the Asia-Pacific Localization Partnership for Sustainable Cities network, which brings together national and local governments, civil society organizations, academia and development partners to collectively address the challenges of urban development and the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The secretariat also developed an e-learning course on the localization of the Goals and climate action synergies, offering practical guidance for local authorities and stakeholders to integrate the Goals with climate action taken in the areas of urban planning, governance and service delivery. The course, hosted on the Commission's online learning platform, has been widely disseminated and is helping to strengthen capacities at both the local and national levels. In collaboration with the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, the secretariat mobilized resources for technical assistance projects to support the localization of the Goals. In Fiji and Micronesia (Federated States of), joint efforts carried out with United Nations country teams, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Office for Project Services have addressed critical capacity gaps and advanced multilevel governance frameworks for the implementation of the Goals.

31. In response to subparagraph 7 (b) of the resolution, the secretariat provided targeted support to member States to accelerate progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities). This includes the piloting of national road maps for Goal 11 in Malaysia. The road maps offer actionable strategies to enhance sustainable urbanization, with a focus on adequate housing, infrastructure and climate resilience. In addition, the secretariat supported local authorities in Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand in preparing voluntary local review reports, enabling them to track progress made in the implementation of the Goals and share innovative practices. In order to equip policymakers and practitioners with the tools to address urban challenges, a range of policy studies and training workshops were conducted, including thematic studies on urban resilience, climate action and nature-based solutions, which have informed national urban policies and planning frameworks. The secretariat also facilitated dialogues at regional conferences on sustainable urban development, reinforcing commitments to sustainable urbanization and the localization of the Goals. These platforms have fostered synergies among member States, regional organizations and entities of the United Nations.

IV. Disaster risk reduction

Resolution 79/8
Consideration of the modalities for the establishment of the United Nations special programme for the Aral Sea basin

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

32. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 79/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To commission the above-mentioned study, as appropriate, in collaboration with relevant specialized entities, in accordance with their respective mandates and subject to the availability of resources, on the feasibility of and the modalities for strengthening regional cooperation with a view to mitigating and minimizing the consequences of disasters in the water basin of the Aral Sea, without duplicating efforts;

(b) To facilitate the organization of a workshop on preventing and mitigating natural disasters in the water basin of the Aral Sea with the relevant organizations that have the necessary technical expertise in the matter, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources;

(c) To report to the Commission at its eighty-first session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

33. In response to subparagraph 4 (a) of Commission resolution 79/8, the secretariat commissioned a study on the feasibility of and the modalities for strengthening regional cooperation with a view to mitigating and minimizing the consequences of disasters in the water basin of the Aral Sea.[1] In the study, several options were put forward for the envisaged United Nations special programme for the Aral Sea basin, based on the consultations with stakeholders.

34. In response to subparagraph 4 (b) of the resolution, the secretariat organized a regional consultative workshop on preventing and mitigating natural disasters in the water basin of the Aral Sea with the attendance of representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. The workshop was held in Ashgabat on 30 November and 1 December 2024. Drawing from the aforementioned commissioned study, various possible options for the envisaged United Nations special programme for the Aral Sea basin were discussed at the workshop, including the following: (a) establishing a multidimensional (umbrella) partnership of Central Asian countries and the United Nations in the Aral Sea basin; (b) aligning the activities of the United Nations special programme for the Aral Sea basin with the updated International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea structure, in particular in terms of attracting funding and incorporating technology; (c) merging the tasks of the United Nations special programme in the Aral Sea basin with those of the regional centre for climate technologies in Central Asia being established in Ashgabat; and (d) establishing a United Nations special programme on climate resilience and disasters in the Aral Sea basin as a new working group of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia or a

[1] See https://repository.unescap.org/handle/20.500.12870/7862.

sub-working group of the thematic working group on water, energy and environment of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. Workshop participants agreed to continue to discuss all options.

V. Statistics

A. Resolution 71/14
Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015–2024

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

35. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 71/14, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and Regional Action Framework;

(b) To continue collaborating closely with relevant donors and other development partners to assist country actions by strengthening technical support available at the national, subregional and regional levels, facilitating regional and interregional cooperation, undertaking advocacy campaigns and helping countries to mobilize resources and access financing options;

(c) To actively promote a holistic approach to civil registration and vital statistics as these systems have a critical role in achieving inclusive and people-centred development, particularly in achieving the post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be adopted at the United Nations Summit in September 2015, including by exploring means to strengthen collaboration and coordination among development partners at all levels;

(d) To support the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific in performing its oversight and strategic guidance functions for the Regional Action Framework and custodianship of the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade;

(e) To report to the Commission on progress in the implementation of the present resolution at its seventy-second, seventy-sixth and eighty-first session, in accordance with the reviews timetabled in the Regional Action Framework.

2. Progress made

36. In response to subparagraph 5 (a) of Commission resolution 71/14, the secretariat accorded priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific through the work of a dedicated team on civil registration and vital statistics within the secretariat’s subprogramme 7 on statistics.

37. In response to subparagraph 5 (b) of the resolution, the secretariat continued collaborating with relevant development partners and donors to support members and associate members in improving their civil registration and vital statistics systems. This collaboration was carried out under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Partnership, which comprises multiple United Nations agencies and development partners with mandates to help to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics nationally, regionally and globally. The secretariat also supported work at the global level, such as the development of new manuals and handbooks.

38. Examples of collaborative activities carried out by the secretariat since 2015 include the following:

(a) Implementing multiple projects funded by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative and jointly realized through close collaboration with other development partners;

(b) Supporting the establishment and work of subregional civil registrars' networks, such as the Pacific Civil Registrars Network, the Civil Registration Professionals of South Asia and the South-East Asian Civil Registrars Network, as well as other expert groups, workshops, training programmes and reviews related to civil registration and vital statistics, by contributing human and financial resources and technical advice to assist with the organization of meetings;

(c) Conducting technical assistance in selected countries to support the production of vital statistics based on civil registration, undertaking assessments of inequalities in civil registration and vital statistics, conducting business process mapping to streamline and improve processes in selected member countries and supporting policy development related to civil registration and vital statistics;

(d) Supporting advocacy for civil registration and vital statistics and their importance to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, maintaining a publicly available repository of resources and work on civil registration and vital statistics online[2] and communicating regularly with the national civil registration and vital statistics focal points and other stakeholders;

(e) Facilitating a significant expansion of the knowledge available on civil registration and vital statistics through the organization of the first Asia-Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Research Forum, held in April 2023, supporting research through the civil registration and vital statistics applied research training initiative and conducting research on a large variety of topics.

39. In response to subparagraph 5 (c) of the resolution, the secretariat promoted a holistic approach to civil registration and vital statistics by focusing on that topic at the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held in November 2021, and by carrying out the activities described in paragraphs 36 to 38. In addition, the secretariat participated in the global effort to develop and implement the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda, which is aimed at supporting civil registration as a foundation for legal identity.

40. In response to subparagraph 5 (d) of the resolution, the secretariat has continued providing support to the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific by organizing annual meetings and continuously developing substantive documents in that regard. The Regional Steering Group has provided strategic guidance on the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, the secretariat, under the guidance of the Regional Steering Group and in close collaboration with other development partners, conducted the baseline, midterm and national target-setting process as described in the Regional Action Framework and organized the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. The secretariat is actively supporting the 2025 review of the implementation of the Regional Action Framework and the preparations

[2] See https://getinthepicture.org/.

for the Third Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, to be held in Bangkok from 24 to 26 June 2025.

B. Resolution 75/9
Implementation of the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

41. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 75/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To support members and associate members in their efforts to fulfil the commitments contained in the Declaration;

(b) To engage with relevant development partners and other stakeholders to facilitate continuous, coordinated and effective efforts to fulfil the commitments contained in the Declaration;

(c) To report to the Commission at its eighty-first session, in 2025, on the outcomes of the midpoint review at the ninth session of the Committee on Statistics, in 2024, convened at a higher decision-making level, assessing implementation of the Declaration.

2. Progress made

42. In response to subparagraph 3 (a) of Commission resolution 75/9, the Committee on Statistics, at its seventh session, endorsed the draft monitoring and evaluation framework for the collective vision and framework for action and the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind to advance official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [3] The collective vision includes five action areas and the Declaration contains 12 commitments. A baseline report was presented at the seventh session of the Committee and is updated at each session.

43. Nine national-level commitments were outlined. To support these commitments, the Asia-Pacific Stats Cafés, launched in 2020, enabled knowledge exchange through 100 sessions, enhancing regional collaboration. Additional activities to support eight of the nine commitments included the following:

(a) With regard to integrating statistics development with national development policies, the secretariat launched the Asia-Pacific Data Integration Community of Practice in 2020, published the *Asia-Pacific Guidelines to Data Integration for Official Statistics* and facilitated knowledge-sharing through 70 meetings. It also developed a self-assessment tool on readiness to use administrative data for censuses;

(b) With regard to strengthening national monitoring frameworks, the annual *Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report* and the Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway assist countries in tracking development targets and progress made towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The National SDG Tracker, launched in 2021, is a free tool for evaluating progress on the Goals. The “Every policy is connected” tool has been developed to enhance the monitoring of inclusive policies and their impacts;

[3] ESCAP/CST/2020/6, decision 1.

(c) With regard to three of the commitments – on establishing high-level advisory bodies, specifying the roles and responsibilities of the national statistical system to transform statistical business processes and empowering heads of national statistical offices – the secretariat has supported the empowerment of heads of national statistical offices as the coordinator of the national statistical system, the establishment of appropriate advisory and coordination mechanisms and the clarification of roles and responsibilities through reviews of national statistical systems, which generate recommendations for the attention and action of higher levels of government;

(d) With regard to strengthening legislative provisions and adopting new technologies, training in big data and data science was provided by the Regional Hub on Big Data and Data Science for Asia and the Pacific, a collaboration between the secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and Statistics Indonesia;

(e) With regard to improving communication and strengthening statistical literacy, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific offered an e-learning course on compiling national metadata for the Sustainable Development Goals;

(f) With regard to revisiting national policies and strategies, the secretariat supported countries in reviewing their strategies for the development of statistics.

44. In response to subparagraph 3 (b) of the resolution, development partners were called upon to provide coordinated assistance. This was achieved at the global level through the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System and the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities; at the regional level, it was achieved through the working group on data and statistics of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific and in collaboration with specialized agencies in capacity development.

45. The secretariat ensured that relevant consultations were held before conducting statistical studies or surveys with national statistical offices through the resident coordinator’s offices. Most of the offices were supported by staff tasked with results monitoring and data management.

46. The secretariat continued to develop and strengthen international statistical standards and provided implementation support on existing standards such as the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting. It also provided support in the development of new standards such as the framework for disaster-related statistics and in the establishment of implementation support hubs such as the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership for ecosystem accounting.

47. In response to subparagraph 3 (c) of the resolution, the Committee on Statistics, at its ninth session, held in December 2024, considered the note by the secretariat entitled “Harnessing the power of data to leave no one behind: reflections on the status of implementation of the Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind”. At the same session, the Committee decided: (a) to promote a whole-of-society approach to advance implementation of the Declaration; (b) to advance the development of national data partnerships and the establishment of data user advisory groups to advise chief statisticians and to support the development of strategic visions for data;

and (c) that building agile statistical systems should be among the priorities of its work.[4]

48. Also at its ninth session, the Committee recommended that the Commission call upon its members and associate members to increase political and financial support for inclusive statistical systems. It also recommended that the Commission acknowledge that the successful implementation of the Declaration required a whole-of-society approach and encourage Governments to develop strategic visions for data.[5]

---

[4] ESCAP/CST(9)/6, decisions 1, 2 and 3.

[5] ESCAP/CST(9)/6, recommendations 1, 2 and 3.