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Summary of the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2025: Harnessing a New Generation of Programmes of Action for Sustainable Development Ambitions*

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2025* is focused on new programmes of action designed to promote the sustainable development of countries in special situations, in other words least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. While these countries have made progress in implementing previous programmes of action, critical areas of work, including in terms of building productive capacities and enhancing economic, social and environmental resilience, remain unfinished.

The report, which is summarized in the present document, provides a comprehensive overview of the new international programmes of action, the ways in which they are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, lessons learned from previous programmes of action and available support mechanisms. It highlights implementation challenges and strategies and outlines the role of the international community in assisting countries in special situations in implementing and effectively addressing their unique development challenges. It also highlights how the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific can support these countries.

The Commission may wish to consider the analysis and recommendations contained in the present document and provide guidance on the future work of the secretariat in that regard.

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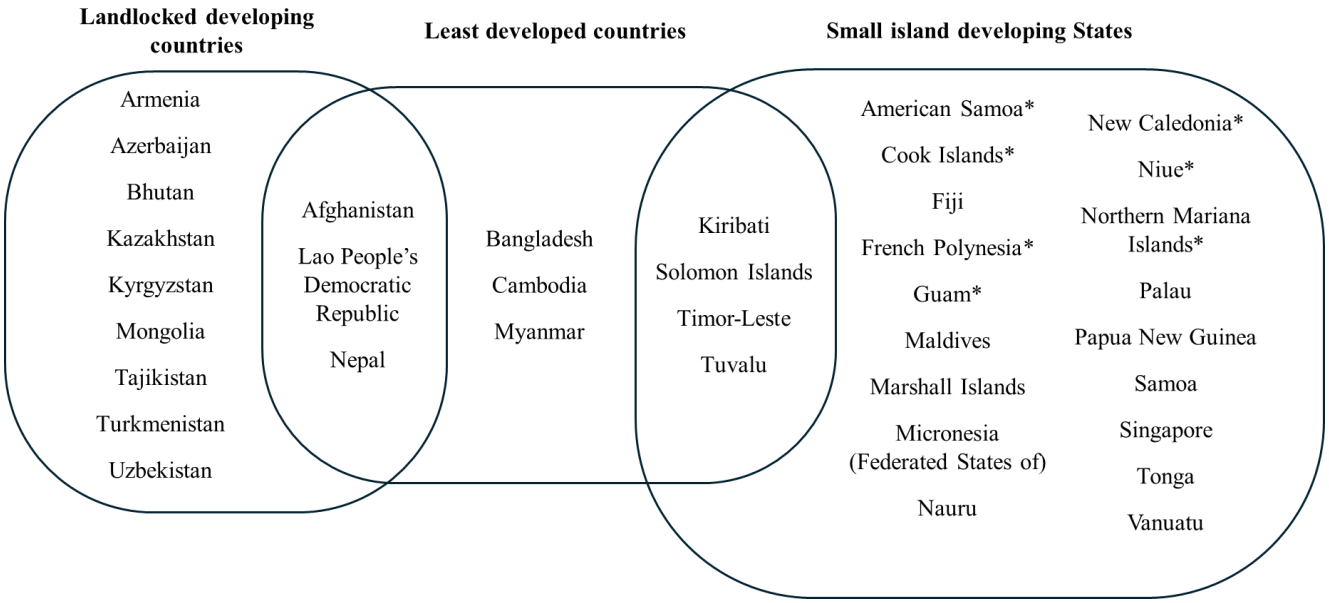
I. Introduction

1. Countries in special situations are a diverse group of countries facing unique vulnerabilities and development challenges. The category, which encompasses least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, applies to 30 of the 53 members and 7 of the 9 associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (see figure). The often small populations and limited domestic markets of these countries hinder the viability of productive sectors and the ability to benefit from economies of scale. For many, geographical remoteness from major economic centres constrains access to regional markets.

Countries in special situations in Asia and the Pacific



Note: An asterisk (*) is used to indicate associate members of the Commission.

2. Given their topography and geographical locations, many countries in special situations are vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters and are acutely affected by environmental degradation. Despite efforts, social indicators in many countries in special situations remain below the regional average. Several of these countries are furthermore in conflict or have emerged from conflict only relatively recently. As a result, these countries, while constituting 60 per cent of the Commission's membership and 9 per cent of the region's population, account for only 3 per cent of both the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and its trade in goods and services.

3. The international community has been supporting the development of countries in special situations through targeted programmes of action over the past few decades, complementing the broader global development agendas. However, the global landscape is shifting, and the increasing impact of climate change and geopolitical instability has necessitated a renewed focus on resilience and transformation.

4. The Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries,[1] the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity[2] and the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034[3] highlight newly emerging realities, including the importance of digitalization and the need for enhanced resilience and green transformation.

5. The successful implementation of these programmes is critical for countries in special situations to overcome their specific development challenges and accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The present document provides a summary of the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2025: Harnessing a New Generation of Programmes of Action for Sustainable Development Ambitions*, which provides a comprehensive overview of the new international programmes of action and their implications for the region and sets out some suggested policy priorities.

6. In the present document, section II is devoted to the programme of action for the least developed countries; section III to that for the small island developing States; and section IV to that for the landlocked developing countries. Each section contains an evaluation of the performance of the previous programme of action and a review of lessons learned; an assessment of how the current programme of action is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, to identify where and how synergies can be created; and a compilation of key implementation challenges and strategies, outlining the roles of the international community, including the secretariat of the Commission. In section V, cross-cutting recommendations and avenues for international support are set out, with a particular emphasis on the role of the secretariat.

II. Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries

A. Evaluation of and lessons learned from the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

7. Asia-Pacific least developed countries achieved significant poverty reduction, as well as commendable GDP growth, which averaged 5.2 per cent annually, during the period covered by the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action). Notably, Maldives, Samoa and Vanuatu graduated from least developed country status during the period. Bhutan graduated in 2023, and Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal and Solomon Islands are scheduled to graduate in the coming years. Despite these successes, several challenges remain, such as limited productive capacity, low export diversification and vulnerability to climate change and disasters. Moreover, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic reversed many gains, increasing poverty and delaying graduation for some countries.

8. Three key lessons emerged from the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the Asia-Pacific region. First, with respect to graduation, emphasis should be placed on ensuring a smooth transition and

[1] General Assembly resolution 76/258, annex.

[2] General Assembly resolution 78/317, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution 79/233, annex.

building resilience to external shocks instead of merely ensuring the graduation criteria are met. This is especially pertinent now, as 9 of the remaining 10 least developed countries in the region have met the graduation criteria. Second, not all least developed countries were able to harness the international support measures designed for them. For instance, while Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar utilized preferential trade access to bolster labour-intensive manufacturing, others, such as Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal, recorded low utilization rates. This divergence highlights the importance of more tailored international support measures to address the unique needs of each country. Third, the effectiveness of subsequent programmes of action could be enhanced by setting more measurable targets and aligning them closely with the Sustainable Development Goals to generate long-term impacts.

B. Key features of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries

9. The Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, which covers the period 2022–2031, builds on the unfinished agenda of the Istanbul Programme of Action to support least developed countries in achieving sustainable and irreversible graduation. While it retains many of the priorities of the previous programme of action, such as poverty eradication, trade expansion and human capital development, the Doha Programme of Action places a strong emphasis on digitalization, to ensure that least developed countries are equipped to participate in a rapidly changing global economy. Climate resilience and partnerships for building long-term productive capacity also feature prominently, to enable these countries to withstand external shocks.

10. The Doha Programme of Action has a greater number of quantifiable metrics, with 16 measurable targets, compared with the 5 in the previous programme of action, enabling a more effective tracking of progress. It also contains references to several initiatives and facilities, such as the Sustainable Graduation Support Facility and the Investment Support Programme for Least Developed Countries, and the establishment of an online university. On the monitoring front, it emphasizes that biennial reviews should be undertaken by the regional commissions, the findings of which would contribute to the global follow-up and review processes, ensuring that regional perspectives are incorporated into the broader dialogue on the development of least developed countries. For Asia and the Pacific, an inaugural review was held in Phnom Penh in December 2024.

C. Implementation challenges and strategies

11. Despite the priority accorded to structural transformation in the previous programme of action, the region's least developed countries continue to lag behind in building productive capacities and strengthening their science, technology and innovation capacities. Investments in digital infrastructure remain insufficient, limiting the ability of these countries to leverage technology for growth. In addition, export diversification and global trade integration remain inadequate, posing risks to economic resilience. While the adoption of digital technologies did accelerate during the COVID-19 pandemic, large segments of the population continue to be marginalized, limiting opportunities for digital services trade and e-governance. [4]

[4] For instance, while the average Internet usage rate for Asia-Pacific least developed countries stood at 54.4 per cent in 2022, the average broadband penetration rate was only 2.43 subscriptions per 100 people.

Consequently, Asia-Pacific least developed countries contribute only 0.3 per cent of the region's total digital service exports, underscoring their underutilization of digital opportunities.

12. Moreover, least developed countries continue to be disproportionately affected by external shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic, which devastated healthcare systems and strained government resources, delayed progress in quality education and highlighted the importance of social protection schemes. In addition, the growing impact of climate change has underscored the need for significant investment in mitigation and adaptation measures. However, access to climate finance remains limited and uneven, with least developed countries receiving only 12 per cent of total disbursements from the Green Climate Fund, underscoring the need for simplified access procedures and greater technical support.

13. While the Doha Programme of Action is aimed at addressing such priorities, the effectiveness of its implementation at the national level could be enhanced by prioritizing those of its goals that are aligned with national development plans, in areas such as digital transformation, climate resilience and economic diversification in particular. To minimize duplication and unleash synergies, existing mechanisms for capacity-building, peer learning and monitoring and evaluation, such as voluntary national reviews, could be utilized.

14. Such national efforts could be complemented by technical assistance provided by the secretariat in domains including social protection, digitalization and trade negotiations for graduating countries. For instance, to support the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific and share good practices on enhancing social protection systems, the secretariat has developed a microsimulation model to help Governments project the impact of cash transfers on economic outcomes. In addition, the secretariat can use its multidimensional expertise in climate change and social protection to facilitate policy integration, with the aim of strengthening people's resilience against the impacts of climate change. On the financing front, the support provided by the secretariat for a sustainable bond accelerator programme in Cambodia, which included technical assistance to secure financing for private-sector-led green projects, can be replicated. For graduating countries, the secretariat provides hands-on support in formulating smooth transition strategies to address the impacts of graduation. Furthermore, the secretariat has an online tool, the Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Adviser, that can be used by graduating countries to determine the impact of increased tariffs as a result of loss of preferential treatment.

III. The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity

A. Evaluation of and lessons learned from the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway

15. The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, which covered the period 2014–2023, was aimed at addressing the unique vulnerabilities of small island developing States, with a focus on economic diversification, climate adaptation and social development. While the Samoa Pathway did effectively raise awareness of the specific challenges of these countries and achieve increased climate finance flows, it resulted in limited

structural transformation and economic diversification, with many small island developing States continuing to rely on narrow economic bases due to a combination of institutional capacity constraints and geographical barriers. Fragmented policy implementation, underinvestment in human capital and in science, technology and innovation and lack of fiscal space for long-term public investments have impeded productive capacity development. Exacerbating factors, such as geographical isolation and small and scattered populations, limit economies of scale and increase trade costs. Addressing these constraints requires innovative and context-sensitive strategies, including in terms of leveraging the blue economy, enhancing digital connectivity and building climate resilience to support sustainable development.

16. Recently, the modest GDP growth prospects for small island developing States have been further dampened by natural disasters and geopolitical disruptions. According to thematic evaluations, although investments in education and disaster risk management increased during the decade covered by the Samoa Pathway, high rates of unemployment and non-communicable diseases and inadequate social protection persisted. In addition, the lack of quantifiable targets and a robust monitoring framework made implementation and monitoring challenging.

17. These lessons underscore the need to adopt measurable targets, prioritize resilience-building efforts and strengthen partnerships. The following priority areas have been identified for future action: (a) economic revitalization; (b) reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing resilience; (c) biodiversity protection; (d) strengthening data and institutional capacities; and (e) promoting inclusive communities.

B. Key features of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States

18. The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States is focused on building economic resilience, fostering safe and healthy societies, securing a sustainable future and ensuring environmental protection. It comprises 133 actions across two sections. The first section outlines four key priorities: build resilient economies; foster safe, healthy and prosperous societies; a secure future; and environmental protection and planetary sustainability. The second section lists 10 priorities that are focused on economic resilience, productivity, climate change action, finance and the use of technology and data.

19. As the concepts of resilience and vulnerability have evolved since the development of the Samoa Pathway, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda introduces the idea of utilizing a multidimensional vulnerability index for debt sustainability and development support. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, it includes a call for annual reviews of progress at the high-level political forum on sustainable development and biennial regional reviews of progress led by the regional commissions. In addition, greater emphasis is placed on economic resilience through digital economy services, digital transformation and climate finance. With a focus on partnerships, technology adoption and capacity-building, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda is aimed at addressing the structural challenges faced by small island developing States and building their long-term adaptive capacities.

C. Implementation challenges and strategies

20. Achieving the commitments in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda will require overcoming significant implementation challenges in the areas of finance, human capital, climate resilience and digitalization. A key concern is attracting more aid and investment, as global resources are increasingly being directed towards other crises. Furthermore, private investment remains difficult to attract due to high business costs, and infrastructure financing is hindered by climate risks.

21. The climate crisis is a significant challenge for Asia-Pacific small island developing States, which every year incur significant disaster losses that are aggravated by low insurance coverage. The small population sizes and geographical isolation of these States also limit their capacity to provide public services. While the outward migration of skilled workers through seasonal worker schemes generates significant remittance inflows to several countries, these schemes also risk leading to a brain drain, creating labour shortages that undermine local economies.

22. Trade diversification remains a challenge, as traditional goods exports are concentrated in just a few products, limiting economic resilience. Furthermore, inadequate digital infrastructure and skills limit the opportunity for diversification through e-commerce and digitally deliverable services. To ensure that capacity constraints do not hinder progress, it is essential for individual States to prioritize the actions in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda based on their specific needs and for progress to be monitored effectively.

23. A number of national initiatives are required to address the development challenges of Asia-Pacific small island developing States. On the institutional front, given the interconnections between policies on aid, finance, infrastructure, tourism, trade and fisheries required for sustainable development, it would be instrumental to strengthen the role of coordinating entities for overlapping priorities, thereby reducing policy compartmentalization and allowing synergies to be harnessed. In addition, reforms to attract private investment in sectors such as telecommunications and digital services are vital. Legislative updates to improve the business climate, enhance debt sustainability and explore innovative solutions like green bonds are also essential. The multidimensional vulnerability index is a valuable tool for demonstrating the unique vulnerabilities of small island developing States and helping them to more effectively attract donor support. Moreover, building climate resilience through expanded renewable energy transition initiatives and upgraded disaster risk reduction systems is paramount. The digital economy offers significant potential for economic diversification, but realizing it requires investments in digital infrastructure, training and regulatory frameworks to enable secure digital transactions and lower-cost payment options. Furthermore, small island developing States should focus on promoting sustainable tourism and improving fisheries management through regional coordination, while aligning their actions under the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda with efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, among others, to attract international support and reduce reporting burdens.

24. To strengthen the capacity of small island developing States, the secretariat has developed initiatives in domains such as finance, disaster risk reduction and digitalization solutions. For instance, the technical assistance provided to Maldives in establishing regulatory sandboxes to test financial technology (fintech) solutions could be replicated in other small island

developing States. The secretariat also supports the Early Warnings for All initiative by offering technical expertise in developing climate and hazard projection analyses, with a focus on critical sectors in target countries. Furthermore, the secretariat promotes the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative as a means of fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration aimed at enhancing regional digital connectivity and resilience.

IV. Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034

A. Evaluation of and lessons learned from the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024

25. The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 yielded mixed results across the 12 Asian landlocked developing countries. While progress was made with regard to transit policy frameworks and regional integration, it was hindered by implementation and infrastructure gaps. Improvements in rail networks, dry ports and information and communications technology (ICT) accessibility were somewhat offset by persistent transport infrastructure gaps in road quality, railway gauge harmonization and high ICT costs. While near-universal electricity access was achieved in most countries, renewable energy adoption remained low, except in Bhutan and Nepal.

26. In 2023, the share of Asian landlocked developing countries in global merchandise trade remained below 1 per cent, with limited export diversification and high trade and transit costs. Trade facilitation progress was mixed; some countries showed improvements in customs modernization, while others continued to lag. Economic transformation was limited by the small size of manufacturing sectors and reliance on primary commodities. Overall, implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 was constrained by low domestic revenue mobilization, uneven aid flows and limited foreign direct investment. The COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions further hindered progress in trade, transit and economic transformation.

27. Several key lessons emerged from the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024: (a) resource mobilization remains a critical constraint across all priority areas, underscoring the need for increased and more effective development finance; (b) the implementation of international agreements, in particular those related to transit policy, continue to pose a significant challenge. In addition, further progress is impeded by a failure to achieve the full and effective implementation of regional and subregional cooperation arrangements, highlighting the importance of efficient logistics systems and effective policy implementation; (c) transport infrastructure development is hampered by inadequate funding; (d) adequate digital infrastructure and support for adopting new technologies, such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and the Internet of things, are crucial for energy and ICT development; (e) improvements in customs procedures are important to reduce high trade costs; and (f) limited structural economic transformation necessitates a greater focus on export sophistication and diversification.

28. In terms of monitoring, while landlocked developing countries actively conducted timely reviews of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, consistent follow-up and

review by all stakeholders, including transit and development partners, will be beneficial for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034.

B. Key features of the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034

29. The Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034 has five priority areas, based on a consolidation of elements from the six priorities of the previous programme of action. The first priority area (Structural transformation and science, technology and innovation) is focused on productive capacity development, private sector growth, technological advancement and industrialization. The second priority area (Trade, trade facilitation and regional integration) is aimed at addressing international trade challenges, streamlining trade procedures and enhancing regional cooperation. The third priority area (Transit, transport and connectivity) is focused on transit transport infrastructure, digital connectivity and energy access and the interconnected role they play in promoting regional integration and trade. The fourth priority area (Enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change and disasters) is new compared with the previous programme of action. It addresses challenges related to climate change and disasters, covering crucial aspects such as adaptation, disaster risk reduction, climate finance, resilient infrastructure, loss and damage, and biodiversity loss. Under the fifth priority area (Means of implementation), stakeholder roles are clearly outlined and emphasis is placed on the need for reviews at the national, regional and global levels.

30. New elements in the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034 include: clearly defined subpriorities with corresponding targets; the inclusion of debt relief and concessional financing as critical funding sources; an emphasis on the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and the rights of children and persons with disabilities; and the encouragement for the regional commissions to undertake biennial regional reviews and submit analytical reports on its implementation.

C. Implementation challenges and strategies

31. There are significant disparities in outcomes in key areas across the 12 Asian landlocked developing countries. For instance, while these countries collectively account for only 1.2 per cent of global merchandise trade, reflecting limited progress in trade facilitation and regional integration, economic structures vary widely across them. Although access to electricity is high in most of these countries, disparities in renewable energy consumption persist. Significant variations also exist in the distribution of climate finance flows, official development assistance, aid for trade and foreign direct investment. These disparities highlight the need for tailored interventions and resource allocation to ensure that the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034 effectively addresses the specific needs and challenges of each country.

32. The challenges in implementing the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034 include the lingering effects of COVID-19, regional geopolitical tensions and persistent financing constraints. Capacity constraints in both the public and private sectors further hinder progress. Limitations in monitoring and evaluation, stemming from unmeasurable targets and insufficient data, pose additional

challenges. Debt distress, weak banking systems and difficulties in domestic resource mobilization also remain significant concerns. Furthermore, the effective integration of the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034 into national plans and policies remains a challenge.

33. Addressing these challenges at the national level requires a structured implementation strategy, including a road map with specific interventions, resources and timelines tailored to each country. Annual national reviews will enhance monitoring and national ownership. Targeted support should be provided to countries lagging in priority areas, coupled with tailored strategies and resource mobilization efforts. Aligning the indicators of the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034 with the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and adopting phased targets will enhance measurability, facilitate systematic reviews and enable timely adjustments. Financial resource mobilization and private sector engagement, complemented by technical assistance from development partners, are critical. Addressing data gaps by building the capacity of statistical authorities and strengthening data ecosystems is essential to ensure effective monitoring and implementation.

34. Regional cooperation addressing integration barriers through dialogue, harmonized procedures and the channelling of international support will be instrumental to overcome the challenges of landlockedness. In this regard, the secretariat leads efforts to promote regional cooperation on transport issues by setting norms and coordinating regional transport infrastructure development through ministerial conferences and the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Dry Ports. The secretariat also facilitates cross-border trade digitalization through the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific and provides capacity-building programmes on digital trade policy and negotiation. Furthermore, sustainable energy connectivity and power system development are supported by the secretariat through its green power corridor framework for aligning energy systems with sustainable development objectives.

V. The role of the international community

35. Beyond addressing the specific challenges outlined above, the international community plays a critical role in tackling cross-cutting issues – such as limited financial resources and the need for digital transformation and urgent climate action – and in fostering partnerships and coordination both among landlocked developing countries and with development partners. It requires a multifaceted approach involving financial support, capacity-building, policy advocacy, technology transfer, knowledge-sharing and norm-setting.

36. Mobilizing financial resources remains a priority for all three groups of countries in special situations, with calls for enhanced and timely assistance from international and regional financial institutions, bilateral donors and multilateral mechanisms. However, persistent challenges, such as fund disbursement delays, unmet commitments and cumbersome application processes, hinder progress. Developed countries have been urged to fulfil their commitment to provide 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income as official development assistance to least developed countries. In addition, the international community’s commitment to collectively mobilize $300 billion a year in climate finance for developing countries, agreed at the twenty-ninth

session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is critical to supporting adaptation and mitigation measures and early warning systems. Debt relief and restructuring are also crucial for heavily indebted countries. Simplifying aid procedures and ensuring access to concessional financing are important for the debt sustainability and long-term development of least developed countries and small island developing States. Building capacity to develop bankable projects and to issue green, social and sustainability bonds can expand the diversity of financing instruments. The secretariat can support Governments in setting up policy frameworks for such bond issuance and provide research and technical assistance for the development of national sustainable finance road maps.

37. Enhanced access to modern technologies and innovative tools, and increased capacity to leverage them, will enable these countries to accelerate digital transformation. Promoting rural digital connectivity is vital in bridging the digital divide, especially in least developed countries. By fostering collaboration and investing in digital infrastructure and skills with support from the international community, these countries can further accelerate this transformation. Initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative and the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026, can be leveraged to advance regional digital connectivity and resilience.

38. Addressing climate change and building resilience are recognized as key priorities in all three programmes of action. In addition to meeting the aforementioned $300 billion climate finance target, the international community's support for the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans, including integrated and strategic adaptation action at the national and local levels, will be important. The secretariat provides technical assistance and capacity-building for updating such plans, for building disaster and climate resilience (through the Risk and Resilience Portal) and for developing gender-responsive and disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction policies.

39. Implementing the programmes of action requires global partnerships, coordination and advocacy to align international efforts with national priorities. In the Doha Programme of Action, it is emphasized that international solidarity and global partnerships are crucial for the sustainable graduation of least developed countries. Stronger policy coherence and collaboration among international agencies, development partners and regional organizations are vital. In this context, countries in special situations can use the intergovernmental processes and expert bodies available to them as members and associate members of the Commission as platforms to call for partnerships and articulate cooperation needs. These platforms can facilitate consensus-building, norm-setting and progress reviews on key development agendas, including the programmes of action. The secretariat can use existing subregional platforms to mobilize support to establish economies of scale, for small island developing States in particular, and it can assist landlocked developing countries in obtaining access to infrastructure and trade-related agreements.

40. The secretariat leverages its multidimensional expertise by making connections between different sectors and applying cross-cutting solutions. For instance, the support it provides for transport corridor development also prioritizes decarbonization and climate resilience. Furthermore, the secretariat facilitates access to new technologies and ICT solutions for climate and disaster monitoring. With the aim of continuously improving the support it

provides, it is strengthening its collaboration with other United Nations agencies, regional and subregional bodies and national stakeholders.

VI. Issues for consideration by the Commission

41. A more detailed examination of the issues discussed in the present document is provided in *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2025: Harnessing a New Generation of Programmes of Action for Sustainable Development Ambitions*, which will be released and made available on the Commission's website prior to the eighty-first session of the Commission.

42. The Commission may wish to discuss the policy priorities and cooperation needs highlighted in the present document and provide the secretariat with guidance on which of these should be explored further. The guidance would shape the future analytical work of the secretariat and inform its planning and formulation of technical cooperation and capacity-building assistance for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.