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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Bangkok, 21–25 April 2025
Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda*
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: disaster risk reduction

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its ninth session**

Note by the secretariat

Pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolution 71/11, annex, paragraph 34, the secretariat has the honour to transmit to the members and associate members of the Commission the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its ninth session, held in Tehran and online on 22 January 2025, as well as the relevant financial statements and information on cash contributions received in 2023 and 2024.

* ESCAP/81/1.

** The present document was submitted late owing to the need for Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission to consider the report at its 417th session, which was held on 20 February 2025.

Please recycle

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its ninth session

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. The following decisions adopted by the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP):

Decision 1

The Governing Council takes note of the note by the secretariat on the activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management since its eighth session, endorses the programme of work of the Centre for 2025 and invites the Centre to include in its programme of work, as resources permit, a substantive focus on forest fires. The Governing Council also requests that the Centre submit quarterly updates on its work.

Decision 2

The Governing Council takes note of the briefing on the process and the key findings of the evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management and notes that the report on the evaluation will be submitted to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for consideration at its eighty-first session, in April 2025.

Decision 3

The Governing Council takes note of the note by the secretariat on the administrative and financial status of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management. The Governing Council, acknowledging with appreciation the commitment of and the valuable financial and in-kind contributions made to date by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the host country of the Centre, encourages the host Government to disburse the full outstanding contributions to the Centre. The Governing Council also invites members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to mobilize financial and in-kind support for the Centre and take an active role in the implementation of the Centre's programme of work.

II. Proceedings

A. Activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management since the eighth session of the Governing Council, including progress made on the implementation of the Centre's strategic programme of work and its programme of work for 2024 (agenda item 2)

2. The Governing Council had before it the note by the secretariat on the activities of the Centre since the eighth session of the Governing Council (APDIM/GC(9)/2).

3. The secretariat briefed the Governing Council on progress made in the implementation of the Centre's strategic programme of work and its programme of work for 2024, which included programmes and activities in three areas related to the long-term outcomes of the strategic programme of work: improving the availability of information on risks; building the capacity to collect and apply such information; and strengthening regional cooperation.

4. In her presentation, the Director of the Centre provided a summary of the Centre's achievements in 2024, emphasizing key thematic areas. The Centre had provided support, including to Iran (Islamic Republic of), Maldives and Tajikistan, in strengthening disaster risk data governance and policies; integrating disaster risk reduction into development plans; and advancing capacity-building in the area of disaster information management. In order to enhance resilience, the Centre had organized technical workshops on: the integration of disaster risk reduction into development plans; impact-based forecasting; and the continuum of scientific research, policymaking and the community of practice. With regard to sand and dust storms, the Centre had facilitated regional monitoring and promoted the use of its guidelines for the reporting of sand and dust storms through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and addressing the impacts of sand and dust storms on glaciers. The Director reported that the Centre would serve as Co-Chair of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms for the period 2025–2026 with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. She highlighted that the Centre had hosted two side events at the sixteenth 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, to promote interregional cooperation and multisectoral approaches to sand and dust storm mitigation. Considering innovative technologies, the Centre outlined its activities on promoting the use of artificial intelligence and digital tools for disaster risk reduction at key regional events, having highlighted the potential of new technologies in systemic risk analysis and climate-resilient development planning.

5. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran praised the Centre for the progress made in 2024, highlighting the Centre's responsiveness to regional needs and its significant collaboration with his Government over the past year. He commended the Centre on its focus on sand and dust storms and its efforts to lay a strong foundation for addressing their impacts across the Asia-Pacific region. For 2025, the representative proposed a transformative collaboration between the Centre and his Government, aimed at, among others, the creation of an advanced platform for sand and dust storm risk management, technological cooperation, capacity-building and workshops to strengthen regional expertise in sand and dust storm impact-based forecasting.

B. Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (agenda item 3)

6. The Governing Council took note of the briefing on the process and the key findings of the evaluation of the Centre, and it noted that the report on the evaluation would be submitted to ESCAP for consideration at its eighty-first session, in April 2025. The evaluation assessed the Centre's effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability, concluding that the Centre had established itself as a key player in disaster risk reduction by addressing gaps in risk data governance, transboundary management and the integration of disaster information into development planning. The Centre's role as a Co-Chair of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms

highlights the global recognition of the Centre's contribution to sand and dust storm risk reduction. It also provides a foundation for enhancing regional cooperation among members and associate members of ESCAP. While the Centre's contributions have been significant, the evaluation revealed that a gap existed between the expectations of member States and the mandate and capacity of the Centre, meaning that a strategic alignment was necessary. The evaluation also indicated that the Centre's sustainability depended on the continued financial contributions of and other support from the host Government, supplemented by partnerships and in-kind contributions.

C. Programme of work of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management for 2025 (agenda item 4)

7. The Governing Council had before it the proposed programme of work of the Centre for 2025 (APDIM/GC(9)/3). As outlined by the Director of the Centre in her presentation, the programme of work for 2025 would be focused on bridging critical gaps in disaster risk data governance by providing country-level technical support based on regional assessments. The programme of work was aimed at fostering the sharing of knowledge and lessons learned among cities affected by sand and dust storms and at mapping regional capacities to monitor the impacts of sand and dust storms on glaciers. Thematic sessions were being planned for the International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation, to be held in Dushanbe in 2025.

8. In addition, the Centre would facilitate consultations between development planners and risk reduction experts to promote risk-informed planning and organize interregional dialogues on sand and dust storm risk reduction with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Also with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Centre would facilitate discussions on sand and dust storms in preparation for the drafting of a resolution for adoption by the General Assembly; prepare a draft of the Secretary-General's report on the progress made by the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms; and manage communications to enhance collaboration. It would oversee decision-making, accountability and logistical aspects, ensuring that the Coalition's activities aligned with its goals. The Centre would also implement the recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the Centre and revise its strategic programme of work accordingly.

9. The Governing Council approved the Centre's proposed programme of work for 2025.

D. Administrative and financial status of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (agenda item 5)

10. The Governing Council had before it the note by the secretariat on the administrative and financial status of the Centre (APDIM/GC(9)/4). In the period from 1 January to 31 December 2024, the Centre received a total of $975,000 in cash contributions: $965,000 from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as $10,000 from Macao, China. The Centre's approved budget for 2024 was $1,289,330, while total expenditures for 2024 amounted to $909,903. In the light of its financial status, the Centre implemented measures to minimize expenditures on non-essential and discretionary items. Expenditures included costs for staff and personnel,

publications, contractual services, operational expenses and travel for participation in regional and international events.

11. The Governing Council expressed its thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the ninth session of the Governing Council. The Governing Council, acknowledging with appreciation the commitment of and the financial and in-kind contributions made to date by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the host country of the Centre, encouraged the host country to disburse the full outstanding contributions. It also invited the members and associate members of ESCAP to mobilize financial and in-kind support for the Centre and take an active role in the implementation of the Centre's programme of work.

12. The Governing Council took note of the administrative and financial status of the Centre.

E. Date and venue of the tenth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 6)

13. The Governing Council will be notified in due course about the date and venue of the tenth session of the Governing Council, to be held in the fourth quarter of 2025.

F. Other matters (agenda item 7)

14. No other matters were raised.

G. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its ninth session (agenda item 8)

15. The Governing Council reviewed and endorsed the decisions made at its ninth session. The final report of the Governing Council on its ninth session is to be circulated to its members for review and comments, if any, after which the report is to be submitted to ESCAP for endorsement at its eighty-first session.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

16. The ninth session of the Governing Council was held in Tehran and online on 22 January 2025. Opening statements were made by: Head of the Population and Territories, Protection Main Department of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of Tajikistan, Mr. Jamshed Kamolzoda; Deputy Head of Plan and Budget Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Mohammad Ghasemi; and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP (pre-recorded message).

17. Mr. Kamolzoda mentioned that natural disasters, including geological, climatic and meteorological threats, posed serious challenges to countries in the Asia-Pacific region. He emphasized the urgent need for greater action and measures to combat climate change and address its consequences. He highlighted that tackling those issues required a fundamental shift from disaster management to risk management and a transition from response-focused priorities to prevention-focused priorities. Furthermore, he noted that implementing those approaches marked an important development in disaster

information management and regional cooperation, which were essential within the framework of the Centre's work in the Asia-Pacific region.

18. Mr. Ghasemi expressed appreciation for the efforts and achievements of the Centre. He emphasized that enhancing collective preparedness and mobilization required: measurable outcomes for the Centre's activities; the greater involvement of all members; a cohesive regional strategy; shared data platforms; broader implementation of joint initiatives; and private sector engagement. He reaffirmed the commitment of his Government to providing financial and non-financial support to the Centre and encouraged other countries to contribute to and collaborate with the Centre to achieve its objectives.

19. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP expressed her warm thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the ninth session of the Governing Council, and she expressed her appreciation to the Centre's members and observers for their continued support. She highlighted the Centre's programme of work for 2025, which was aligned with the theme of the eighty-first session of ESCAP, on resilient and sustainable urban development, and emphasized disaster risk data governance, policy integration and early warnings amid rising disasters in the Asia-Pacific region. She noted the Centre's achievements in combating sand and dust storms, including its contribution to implementing the Regional Plan of Action on Sand and Dust Storms in Asia and the Pacific, reducing impacts on glaciers and co-chairing the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms for the period 2025–2026, with a focus on the implementation plan of the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034). She noted the importance of the evaluation of the Centre and called for the continued cooperation of the Governing Council members to implement the resulting recommendations.

B. Attendance

20. Representatives of the following members of the Governing Council attended: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mongolia, Tajikistan and Türkiye, as well as Macao, China.

21. Representatives of the following members of ESCAP attended as observers: Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan.

22. Representatives of the following organizations attended as observers: Economic Cooperation Organization and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

C. Election of officers

23. The Governing Council elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Mohammad Ghasemi (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Vice-Chair:	Mr. Kuldeep Srivastava (India)

D. Agenda

24. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:

(a) Opening addresses;

(b) Election of officers;

(c) Adoption of the agenda.

2. Activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management since the eighth session of the Governing Council, including progress made on the implementation of the Centre's strategic programme of work and its programme of work for 2024.

3. Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management.

4. Programme of work of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management for 2025.

5. Administrative and financial status of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management.

6. Date and venue of the tenth session of the Governing Council.

7. Other matters.

8. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its ninth session.

Annex I

List of documents

Symbol	*Title*	*Agenda item*
General series		
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	Evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management	

Annex II

Financial statement of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management for the year ended 31 December 2024
(United States dollars)

Income	
Contributions	975 000
Interest income	103 320
Total income	**1 078 320**
Less: Expenditure	(913 418)
Net income over expenditure	**164 902**
Fund balance as at 1 January 2024	2 637 934
Adjustment to 2023 contributions: Losses related to currency conversion of contributions received in Iranian rials in 2023	(200 486)
Refunds to donors	–
Fund balance as at 31 December 2024	**2 602 350**

Annex III

Financial statement of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management for the year ended 31 December 2024, by project component
(United States dollars)

	Strengthening disaster information management in the Asia-Pacific region in the evolving post-2015 development agenda	*Institutional support for the Centre (multiple donors)*	*Total*
Income			
Contributions	965 000	10 000	975 000
Interest income	98 839	4 481	103 320
Total income	**1 063 839**	**14 481**	**1 078 320**
Less: Expenditure	(913 418)	–	(913 418)
Net income over expenditure	**(150 421)**	**14 481**	**164 902**
Fund balance as at 1 January 2024	2 550 621	87 313	2 637 934
Adjustments to 2023 contributions: Losses related to currency conversion of contributions received in Iranian rials in 2023[a]	(200 486)	–	(200 486)
Refunds to donors	–	–	–
Fund balance as at 31 December 2024	**2 500 556**	**101 794**	**2 602 350**

[a] In 2023, contributions were remitted in Iranian rials instead of United States dollars, in accordance with the contractual terms of the agreement. As a result, the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management is required to bear the losses related to currency conversion by the United Nations Headquarters treasury. In the period from 1 January to 20 December 2024, a total loss of $200,486 was incurred on currency conversion. Any additional losses from remaining holdings will be deducted from contributions as they occur.

Annex IV

Cash contributions to the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management received for the years ended 31 December 2023 and 31 December 2024
(United States dollars)

Country/area	*For the year ended 31 December 2023*	*For the year ended 31 December 2024*
Cambodia	2 000	–
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2 494 116	965 000
Macao, China	10 000	10 000
Total	**2 506 116**	**975 000**