

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

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Draft summary of round-table discussions***Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The present document contains a summary of the various views arising from the five round tables held during the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development to review regional progress in and opportunities for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 13 (Climate action), Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The views summarized herein do not represent a negotiated outcome.

I. Round table on Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No poverty)

1. The discussion on Sustainable Development Goal 1 was informed by the relevant Goal profile¹ and focused on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific:

(a) **Promote access to social protection.** Adopting integrated policy planning for inclusive and adaptive social protection is essential to leave no one behind. Formulating a clear definition of social protection, which includes both contributory and non-contributory systems and is grounded in human rights while aligning with International Labour Organization standards, is crucial for fostering an understanding of the concept and parameters of social protection. Concerted efforts are needed to broaden the reach of social protection systems in light of demographic changes and the impacts of climate change. Overcoming gaps in contributory schemes is particularly important, and engaging informal workers in the design of these schemes is instrumental. Tailoring social protection schemes to address the specific needs of groups in vulnerable situations is essential, including accommodating the higher cost of living for persons with disabilities and facilitating portability arrangements for migrant workers. Furthermore, improving domestic resource mobilization and leveraging emerging sources of external financing are crucial. Synergies with

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

¹ Available from www.unescap.org/kp/2024/sdg-1-no-poverty.

climate change measures can open new opportunities for investments aligned with the Paris Agreement. These investments, coupled with efforts to domestic resource mobilization, have the potential to build comprehensive social protection systems that provide adequate benefits and respond to current lifecycle contingencies as well as new and exacerbated risks in the wake of a changing climate;

(b) **Minimize exposure and impact from disasters.** Digital and data-driven approaches can play a vital role in minimizing exposure and impact from disasters, particularly those related to weather. Digitalisation in early warning systems can be highly effective. Addressing the digital divide is essential to leverage these approaches and ensure inclusivity. The safety and security of vulnerable persons are important in inclusive and adaptive planning and response to disasters. Localized and community-driven approaches, including the prioritization and monitoring of participatory community empowerment approaches, is vital. Amplifying the voice of the population in decision making processes is key to building resilience within the system;

(c) **Enhance access to decent jobs.** Facilitating access to decent jobs for young people and other marginalized groups requires increased efforts in skills upgrading, including vocational training. Integrating skilling into the education system through a lifecycle approach to learning can ensure comprehensive skill development. Increased efforts are needed to better regulate decent work provision, including emerging digital platforms, professionalizing the care sector and incentivizing good practices in the private sector. Building capacity for data collection and analysis is crucial, with an emphasis on investing in inclusive and disaggregated data collection. This should cover variables such as income, gender, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location to ensure that no one is left behind in achieving the Goal 1.

II. Round table on Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero hunger)

2. The discussion on Sustainable Development Goal 2 was informed by the relevant Goal profile² and focused on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific:

(a) **Prioritize multi-pronged action, investments and targeted support to promote accessible and affordable diets.** This includes implementing food fortification programmes, enforcing supportive regulations and laws, and promoting homegrown and school feeding initiatives. Social safety net policies, such as cash transfers to support vulnerable women, children, and other groups, are crucial to safeguard against nutritional deficiencies;

(b) **Invest in sustainably produced and diversified food production, leveraging digital innovations.** Key actions include increasing food production and productivity, investing in crop and food diversification, focusing on climate adaptation and resilience, improving agrifood value chains, and promoting sustainable use of digital technologies among producer groups;

(c) **Focus on both supply and demand-side food policies.** The transformation of food systems in the face of overlapping crises and financial constraints necessitates a careful consideration of trade-offs and synergies. Building a more resilient and low-emission food system capable of withstanding future crises is critical;

² Available from www.unescap.org/kp/2024/sdg-2-zero-hunger

(d) **Strengthen urban agriculture, local value chains, and rural-urban linkages to improve nutrition and food access for the urban poor and the most vulnerable.** This includes creating shock-proof supply chains, improving food market linkages (including rural-urban linkages), enacting measures that reinforce resilient supply chains, and facilitating connections between producers and consumers through digital technologies and platforms;

(e) **Strengthen capacities for enhanced risk assessment and management in response to pandemics, disasters, and their impacts on food systems.** This involves integrating risk management strategies into policy formulation, investing in data and information systems, and building capacity in data analysis and information management to improve decision-making along the food value chain;

(f) **Continue investments in research, development, and technology to adapt food systems to the climate crisis.** This includes investments to make food systems nutrition-centred and climate-resilient. Local knowledge can be leveraged to promote sustainable, resilient and diversified local food production systems and inform policies;

(g) **Minimize food loss and waste.** There is a need for more investment in technologically feasible and economically viable solutions to tackle food loss and waste, aiming to enhance food security and nutrition, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and alleviate pressures on water and land resources. Identifying critical loss and waste points, as well as implementing prevention and reduction strategies, require increased awareness, collaboration, and coherent governance frameworks;

(h) **Enhance the livelihoods and prosperity of farmers.** This includes boosting employment and scaling up community-level innovations. Investments in farmers' organizations and family farms is crucial, including ensuring access to quality seeds, enabling producers to determine fair prices, addressing declining soil health, improving water management, and fostering capacity building and skills development. These measures are vital for transitioning to sustainable agroecology practices.

III. Round table on Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate action)

3. The discussion on Sustainable Development Goal 13 was informed by the relevant Goal profile³ and focused on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific:

(a) **Leverage the upcoming 2025 update cycle of Nationally Determined Contributions to raise ambition.** The countries in Asia and the Pacific region are encouraged to put in place all-stakeholder-inclusive processes for enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions updates, with more ambitious mitigation and adaptation targets aligned with Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change guidance and supported by a robust greenhouse gas emissions monitoring system to keep the 1.5°C goal alive;

(b) **Scale up and align financing for climate action.** Member States and development partners are encouraged to implement the decisions related to financing climate action made at the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. They are also encouraged to strengthen coherence of climate and financial sector mandates; develop Nationally Determined Contributions mitigation and adaptation financing strategies, boost investments in energy

³ Available from www.unescap.org/kp/2024/sdg-13-climate-action.

efficiency and renewable energy, and promote access to zero-interest finance for youth and rights-holding vulnerable groups;

(c) **Promote the production, accessibility and use of gender and environment data, including data disaggregated by sex, age and disability that are specific to various sectors.** The availability of nationally representative, high-quality data is crucial for designing, implementing and monitoring climate and disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes that are tailored to the diverse needs of different population segments. In line with the Call to Action on Gender and Environment Data designed during the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, actions include using individual-level data; producing models to forecast the impact of climate change on specific groups, leveraging big data; integrating a gender perspective into Artificial Intelligence algorithms; strengthening data dissemination and locally-led data gathering approaches;

(d) **Strengthen synergies between climate change and social protection policies.** This entails integrating measures for those affected by the transition to net-zero economies into Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans. Ensuring fair and just transition is essential, focusing on protecting workers' rights, promoting women's inclusion, and securing equitable benefits in low-carbon economies, as well as for persons with disabilities, youth and Indigenous groups;

(e) **Enhance coordination between environmental ministries and other relevant line ministries.** Increased institutional, technical and financial support is needed to effectively execute national transport decarbonization plans. Public transport, active mobility options, green hydrogen for transport, and more pedestrian-friendly area should be promoted. Capacity building and knowledge sharing at the national, regional and global levels are essential, especially in areas such as promoting electric vehicles and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders;

(f) **Increase access to information and ensure effective participation of all stakeholders in climate-related decision-making and justice processes.** Climate action should use the experiences of front-line communities to promote human rights and climate justice. It is also crucial to make early warning information available to local communities, women, children, youth and persons with disabilities, and to use traditional and Indigenous wisdom to inform early warning systems;

(g) **Engage young people in climate action.** This includes climate education, climate awareness campaigns, environmental data collection, review and monitoring, youth participation in political and decision-making processes related to climate change, and development of innovative climate solutions.

IV. Round table on Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)

4. The discussion on Sustainable Development Goal 16 was informed by the relevant Goal profile⁴ and focused on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific:

(a) **Strengthen the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of public institutions and render them fit for the future.** Public institutions at both national and subnational levels can enhance their

⁴ Available from www.unescap.org/kp/2024/sdg-16-peace-justice-and-strong-institutions-promote-peaceful-and-inclusive-societies.

capacities, policymaking and budgetary processes, digitalisation, cross-sectoral collaboration, and access to evidence and data. Results-oriented planning and budgeting, and establishing dedicated monitoring and evaluation units are encouraged to ensure future orientation and policy coherence;

(b) **Promote inclusion and representation in governance decision-making.** Political institutions can aim for greater transparency and accountability, inclusivity and representation of diverse interests and population groups. Efforts to address the underrepresentation of women and youth in political and legislative offices by raising awareness and creating an enabling environment are encouraged;

(c) **Promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.** Protecting civic and democratic spaces is crucial. Upholding the environmental rule of law, protecting human rights defenders, removing barriers to justice, and ensuring meaningful participation of marginalized groups in all policies and processes are essential. Guiding all economic and social policies with a commitment to human rights is imperative;

(d) **Increase the pace of establishing National Human Rights Institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles.** Independent, effective and well-resourced National Human Rights Institutions, in line with the Paris Principles, can monitor and follow up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(e) **Strengthen rule of law and address corruption.** Digitalisation of public services, where appropriate, is encouraged to decrease opportunities for bribery. Simplifying governance services and increasing transparency and access to information are also key to enabling meaningful public participation;

(f) **Promote survivor-centred and evidence-based approaches for victims of trafficking and persons with disabilities.** A more intersectional approach, especially for marginalized groups, is encouraged to ensure access to justice. Integration of technology, with adequate safeguards, can further facilitate access to justice;

(g) **Advance strategies to reduce prison overcrowding through drug policies.** Adopting a rights-based, gender-sensitive and rehabilitative approach in sentencing can enable rehabilitation for drug users and small-scale offenders beyond a binary system. Countries are encouraged to make budgetary allocations for meaningful rehabilitation programmes to help reduce recidivism and facilitate social reintegration, and take measures to prevent young people from engaging with illicit drugs;

(h) **Encourage multilateral collaboration and partnerships on data.** It is necessary to strengthen data collection capacity of member States and align national data with Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Improvements in data availability, accuracy, disaggregation and application for Goal 16 are critical in view of the persistent lack of data. The Goal 16 survey developed jointly by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Development Programme can be used to collect data on Goal 16 indicators.

V. Round table on Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

5. The discussion on Sustainable Development Goal 17 was informed by the relevant Goal profile⁵ and focused on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific:

(a) **Strengthen transparency for successful partnerships in achieving the Goals.** Targeted measures are needed to enhance transparency in public procurement and tax systems. Transparent public procurement systems have the potential to be gender-responsive, improve accountability and incentivise private sector engagement;

(b) **Promote accountability in the implementation of financing instruments and mechanisms.** Effective accountability mechanisms, including safeguarding policies, is essential for the implementation and scale up of climate financing instruments. The implementation of United Nations tax conventions is also key to strengthening the international financial architecture. These efforts to ensure responsible resource allocation and management necessitates robust systems and frameworks;

(c) **Accelerate efforts to ensure responsible partnerships and efficient resource allocation.** Conducting comprehensive assessments, including the use of data-driven approaches, is critical for managing risks associated with public-private partnerships. Tackling illicit financial flows through enhanced data sharing and cooperation is vital for improving resource allocation and transparency. Prioritizing the use of existing data and raising awareness about these investments are crucial. Capacity building, research, and international collaboration are key factors to address inefficiencies;

(d) **Facilitate an enabling environment for effective partnerships.** Transparent and gender-responsive public procurement systems with wider participation are instrumental in creating a conducive environment for partnerships with the private sector. Tailoring tax systems to specific national contexts and strengthening the rule of law are necessary. Engaging the private sector in tracking Goal 17 targets and indicators is key to further foster collaboration and accountability.

⁵ Available from www.unescap.org/kp/2024/sdg-17-partnership-goals.