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**Linking national, regional and global dimensions of
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development****Stakeholder engagement in the regional road map for
implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development in Asia and the Pacific*****Summary*

The present document provides an input for dialogue at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in preparation for the global discussions at the upcoming high-level political forum on sustainable development to be convened by the Economic and Social Council in 2019.

Multi-stakeholder engagement is an important implementation strategy identified in the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. In keeping with the mandate of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and taking into account the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and inequality”, the present document contains a review of the role of multi-stakeholder participation in each of the priority areas for cooperation under the road map. It also contains a description of some of the key issues and areas of strategic cooperation at the regional level in this regard.

**I. Follow-up and review of the regional road map for
implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development in Asia and the Pacific**

1. The regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific identifies priority areas for regional cooperation for accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda. It was endorsed by member States at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in 2017 and by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in resolution 73/9.

* ESCAP/RFSD/2019/L.1/Rev.1.

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2. The road map calls for reviews of progress to take place annually at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The first assessment of progress was prepared by the secretariat in 2018.¹ The present document contains an assessment of the current status of the work of the Commission with respect to each priority area of cooperation under the road map and with reference to specific targets of the Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework.

3. The assessment contained in the present document builds on the previous assessment, with an emphasis on reviewing the implementation of the road map from the perspective of the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. It therefore focuses on multi-stakeholder engagement as one of the actions of the secretariat to facilitate cooperation on implementing the road map.

4. Member States are invited to comment on the progress achieved so far and provide recommendations for regional action to strengthen progress on the road map. Member States are also invited to comment on any steps needed to ensure that the road map continues to respond to the realities in the Asia-Pacific region.

II. Overview

5. The Commission produces an annual review of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, the *Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report*,² based on the most recently updated indicators. The report series and the ESCAP Statistical Database, from which the data are drawn, provide important information to support annual assessments of progress on the road map (see document ESCAP/RFSD/2019/2).

6. Stakeholder engagement can play an important role in accelerating progress, which is lagging behind in priority areas. Involving a diverse range of stakeholders in decision-making processes leads to decisions and outcomes for activities that are more sustainable from an economic, social and environmental perspective. Constructive engagement of stakeholders can be the basis for innovation and transformation and for strengthening social accountability. Furthermore, the right to participate in public affairs is a critical element of the global human rights frameworks.

7. The road map states that the quality of governance and the effectiveness of public institutions are crucial for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and links effective governance with the participation of people in decision-making. The 2030 Agenda itself emphasizes the importance of engaging stakeholders in all stages of implementation, including follow-up and review, and recognizes the importance of the whole-of-society approach. Within the 2030 Agenda, participation is emphasized in Goal 16 on peace justice and effective institutions. Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development seeks to ensure that every person has access to information and can participate in the decision-making process and has access to justice in environmental matters.

¹ ESCAP/RFSD/2018/3.

² The 2017 report is available at www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Asia-Pacific-SDG-Progress-Report-2017.pdf.

8. Member States have recognized the link between public participation, effective governance and social accountability. In Indonesia, for example, as a result of the process of decentralization over several years, the Government enacted a law about villages in 2014 that mandates participatory decision-making and skilled facilitation of participatory processes. Participatory budgeting is a well-recognized practice in communities in Bangladesh. Social audit experiences and partnerships are noted in countries such as the Philippines and Timor-Leste, while in Kazakhstan an annual presentation by each ministry enables stakeholders to hold government officials to account on their service delivery.

9. Governments continue to face substantial challenges. There is increasing demand for stakeholder involvement in a wider range of topics and issues, as well as for greater depth of engagement. Stakeholders have increased access to information and expect to be engaged beyond merely being informed or consulted.³ There are also increasing calls for engagement with stakeholders to be meaningful, however, there is no shared understanding of what meaningful or quality engagement looks like.

10. Government officials are called on to develop new skills, knowledge and attitudes related to working with stakeholders and to support the institutionalization of stakeholder engagement. With the input of various stakeholders and in partnership with the International Association for Public Participation, ESCAP has taken steps to develop a framework of indicators of quality engagement for the 2030 Agenda. This framework points to the need for engagement processes that are well planned and resourced, based on a sound analysis of stakeholders and ensuring both diversity and inclusion of stakeholders, proactive in terms of outreach and facilitation of participation, and transformative in making a significant change in the status quo.

11. Section III contains a description of some of the efforts of member States and the secretariat in engaging stakeholders in each of the seven thematic areas of cooperation in the road map, namely leaving no one behind, disaster risk reduction and resilience, climate change, management of natural resources, connectivity for the 2030 Agenda and energy. Following this, section IV contains a review of the secretariat's work to engage stakeholders in the practical means of implementation, as outlined in the road map, related to data and statistics, technology, finance, policy coherence and partnerships. Finally, the report describes opportunities and support at the regional level for Governments in extending the engagement of stakeholders for implementing the road map and the 2030 Agenda.

III. Engagement of stakeholders in the thematic areas of the road map

A. Leaving no one behind

12. Although progress has been made on eradicating poverty under Sustainable Development Goal 1, more can be done under Goal 10 to reduce persistent inequality. There are specific communities of people who are in danger of being left behind, particularly workers in vulnerable jobs, women and other groups subject to marginalization and discriminatory norms.

³ The International Association for Public Participation identifies five levels of engagement. Beyond “inform” and “consult”, the levels of engagement include “involve”, “collaborate” and “empower”.

Progress made on the other goals has not yet achieved the intended levels of inclusiveness and equality of outcomes.

13. The ability to ensure equal outcomes from the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region is reduced where there are significant power imbalances, evolving market forces and weakened social contracts.⁴ There are also growing disparities in income and wealth, inequality of opportunity and disproportionate impacts on women and vulnerable groups. Efforts to involve stakeholders in ways that address the barriers to participation are critical.

14. Member States have taken steps to establish partnerships and involve stakeholders in seeking positive outcomes for vulnerable groups. Research in Indonesia has demonstrated the need to work with stakeholders to explore the social context before embarking on an intervention.⁵ The Government of Indonesia is working with the private sector to promote decent work conditions through a national programme of action. The Government of Malaysia has collaborated with the Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia to recognize and operationalize the rights of stateless persons in Malaysia.

15. The secretariat is working closely with civil society through the Asia-Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism and other regional networks to ensure that the issues impacting vulnerable groups are raised at regional forums such as the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, and at the subregional level. The secretariat's work on civil registration and vital statistics brings partners with diverse interests together to achieve universal civil registration.

16. Such actions need to be deepened at the national level to address the entrenched situations of some of the groups which are more difficult to reach, and for whom a transformative approach is needed, including women in vulnerable work, migrant workers and others.

17. The secretariat recognizes the importance of involving representatives of specific population groups as they are often best able to address gaps between their real needs and the implementation of relevant policies and schemes. Representatives of these groups can provide examples of innovative policy solutions, and they lead advocacy work. They also contribute to raising the awareness of government officials and to strengthening their capacity to institute and implement appropriate policies and mechanisms.

18. For example, extensive consultations with stakeholders have taken place in the process of developing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development in 2018. A steering group of civil society representatives worked with the secretariat on the main follow-up points of the Midterm Review, and civil society hearings prior to the review supported the preparations.

⁴ ESCAP, Asian Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme, *Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing Asia-Pacific* (Bangkok, ESCAP, 2017).

⁵ The Centre for Innovation Policy and Governance is implementing the programme entitled "Echoing Evidence: Using Action Research for Inclusive Participation".

19. Higher levels of engagement are found in the secretariat's work on disability leading to the adoption of regional disability decade instruments, the most recent of which is the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific and the Beijing Declaration, including the Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy. The latest work of the secretariat on disability statistics, disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and accessibility has included extensive engagement of representative groups of persons with disabilities and this has contributed to the secretariat's ongoing work on technical materials to increase the awareness of policymakers and support them at the ground level.

B. Disaster risk reduction and resilience

20. The development and implementation of holistic and participatory disaster risk management at all levels is provided for by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2016 and the 2030 Agenda.

21. Effective disaster mitigation requires the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including people in vulnerable communities, such as small farmers and people living in coastal settlements and river basins, representatives of the insurance industry and local authorities. The *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2017* emphasizes that disaster risk is outpacing resilience and critical vulnerabilities are on the rise. It notes the relationship among disaster impacts, poverty traps, growing inequality and heightened potential for conflict.⁶

22. One of the ways in which regional stakeholders are involved in the response is through the multi-stakeholder regional El Niño group, made up of representatives of the United Nations, major development and humanitarian agencies and other stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region, with a primary role played by civil society. Efforts are underway to establish a regional slow-onset hazards network and sand and dust storm alert system that benefits from the active involvement of different stakeholders. The secretariat is also taking steps to deepen cooperation with the stakeholders from East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, and South and South-West Asia.

C. Climate change

23. Climate change is impacting the Asia-Pacific region and compounding development challenges in several areas. The drivers of climate change and its impact on people cut across almost every sector and every level, from the household to the regional level. This is a challenge which truly requires a whole-of-society approach.

24. Responding to climate change will require targeted engagement of the private sector, especially key emitters in the transport, agricultural and buildings sectors, and those in the finance sector who influence investments in infrastructure and other kinds of investment.

25. ESCAP has developed a regional network of climate finance practitioners to exchange knowledge, good practices and lessons learned. With this network's involvement, scoping studies were published for Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, identifying opportunities in the financial sector to support low-carbon climate-resilient investments in climate

⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.17.II.F.16.

mitigation and adaptation projects. With support of the network, actions taken in the beneficiary countries include a regulation on sustainable finance issued by the financial services authority in Indonesia, green banking guidelines issued by the State Bank of Pakistan, a concept for the development of a climate finance charter in the Philippines and a multi-stakeholder process for developing a sustainable development financing road map with climate finance elements in Sri Lanka.

D. Management of natural resources

26. Throughout Asia and the Pacific, ecosystems that are vital to sustainable development continue to suffer from unsustainable economic growth, increasing population and associated increases in consumption and pollution, high rates of urbanization, agricultural expansion and the introduction of invasive alien species. Forests, alpine ecosystems, inland freshwater bodies and wetlands, and coastal and marine systems are the most threatened. Understanding and communicating the value of ecosystems can generate incentives for a wider range of stakeholders to invest in sustainable ecosystem management. Engaging local stakeholders in the restoration and protection of ecosystems and developing nature-based solutions in urban areas are essential strategies for sustainable management of natural resources.

27. Fishery and tourism projects in New Zealand and Tonga aim to achieve well-managed estuarine ecosystems that support livelihoods, and income from the projects is empowering fishing communities in their role as custodians of coastal areas. To empower communities, the projects introduced citizen science and “mana enhancing agreements” that commit partners to enhancing the well-being of all those involved.

28. The secretariat’s consultations with waste pickers and their representatives, local government, development partners and businesses have helped to develop policy pathways for sustainable and socially responsible waste systems. The policy pathways recognize and integrate the public service provided by informal waste pickers to recover plastic resources, avoid greenhouse gas emissions from landfills and address the leakage of plastic waste into the environment.

29. The secretariat is leveraging its convening role to build partnerships to enhance awareness and understanding of ocean issues and to accelerate action for a healthy ocean. The secretariat piloted an integrated policy approach for ocean-focused climate-responsive urban development adapted to island systems in partnership with Pacific island States. Stakeholders from local government and civil society, academia, subregional organizations and development partners in the Pacific were consulted on the development of knowledge products in a collaborative approach. A methodology to accelerate implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 on conservation and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources, developed by the secretariat, highlights the benefits of a participatory approach and the robust consultation of national experts and stakeholders to identify accelerators and information gaps and prioritize locally relevant policies and commitments.

E. Connectivity for the 2030 Agenda

30. The challenges in the transport sector include its carbon intensity and the need for greater efficiency and multimodal integration. Stakeholders in this sector include private citizens, municipalities and businesses, and their roles and voices need to be strengthened.

31. Well-developed social accountability and audit tools such as citizen report cards and community scorecards have been employed in different contexts, particularly for mobilizing community participation to monitor service delivery in health and sanitation and road infrastructure development in places such as Tamil Nadu, India, and Timor-Leste. In one project aimed at strengthening road transport infrastructure, the impacts observed have included improved road conditions and a marked and sustained increase in connectivity to markets, health care, education and government centres. The project also increased the capacity of citizens to manage technical data and communicate the technical requirements to support rural road maintenance.

32. In line with target 11.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities, local authorities in six cities (Bandung, Indonesia; Dhaka; greater Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam; Surabaya, Indonesia; Surat, India; and Suva, Fiji) participated in the pilots of the application of the sustainable urban transport index. The index was developed by the secretariat, with technical contributions from the Centre for Excellence in Urban Transport of the Centre for Planning and Environmental Technology University in India, to help city governments in member States to measure their progress in providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, including public transport.

33. ESCAP continues to promote the regional network of trade researchers and institutions through the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), and it established an expert network on trade and the Sustainable Development Goals. To proactively engage with women researchers in the network and to improve their participation, the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) organized a targeted survey on the barriers to the participation of women professionals in opportunities to influence policymaking.

34. Recognizing the barriers women professionals are facing, ESCAP and the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) recently launched a campaign to provide women with capacity-building, networking and leadership training opportunities and enhance the contribution of women to trade research and policymaking. ESCAP also used surveys to gather the views of different stakeholders on themes such as trade facilitation and paperless trade implementation and compiled these results to inform policy recommendations. A variety of capacity-building programmes involving different stakeholder groups were organized to create deeper understanding on ways to reduce non-tariff barriers.

F. Energy

35. Nearly half a billion people in Asia and the Pacific still lack access to electricity. More than 80 per cent of the countries in the region have targets to improve energy efficiency and increase their use of renewable energy. Renewable sources of energy increasingly contribute to meeting energy supply needs and receive further impetus from the climate agenda. While the region has emerged as the producer and provider of most of the world's renewable energy technology, the overall trend within the region is diversification of the domestic energy mix, depending on the national and subregional context. Given the uneven distribution of energy resources in the Asia-Pacific region and the need for transition in the energy sector to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 on access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. There is good scope for coordinated regional action to achieve

optimal deployment and use of energy resources through enhanced connectivity, economic cooperation and integration.

36. The Global SDG 7 Conference, convened by ESCAP, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Ministry of Energy of Thailand, and the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum focused on the role of civil society, including youth and the private sector, in driving and sustaining change, including through advocacy, public mobilization and monitoring of public policy and business action. Participants at the Global SDG 7 Conference called for game-changing multi-stakeholder partnerships and global plans of action in key areas, including clean cooking, decentralized renewable energy access and clean energy for vulnerable populations, such as refugees and other displaced populations. All stakeholders were encouraged to share information about relevant innovative solutions and partnerships. At the Second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, ministers committed to further encourage and promote women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership in the design and implementation of energy policies and to mainstream a gender perspective into such policies.

37. There are capacity gaps in the energy sector in Asia and the Pacific in evidence-based planning and policymaking. Data gaps combined with a lack of technical skills in developing future energy scenarios and forecasts leave member States with an imperfect picture when embarking on the path to sustainable energy. In order to increase the capacity of member States, ESCAP collaborates with their Governments, local institutions and academia to produce publications, deliver training workshops on developing scenarios as well as toolkits tailored to national circumstances.

38. In Fiji, Kazakhstan and Tonga, different government and private sector entities were consulted to develop a complete picture of the challenges and the opportunities. In Pakistan and Thailand, the effort is led by academic institutions, notably the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in Pakistan and the Asia Institute of Technology in Thailand, under the guidance of their Governments and the secretariat. Bangladesh and Indonesia have been selected to pilot the development of a toolkit that enables local stakeholders to assess the gap between the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 7 and national policy scenarios, and compare different policy options and associated investment costs. This is intended to enable Governments, the private sector and local think tanks to identify pathways to align current energy policies in meeting the targets of Goal 7.

IV. Strengthening the means of implementation through stakeholder engagement

39. The road map identifies priority actions under the means of implementation related to data and statistics, technology, finance, policy coherence and partnerships.

A. Data and statistics

40. The 2030 Agenda firmly positions data and statistics as a development priority. In 2016, countries in the Asia-Pacific region agreed on a shared vision to advance statistical capacity for the 2030 Agenda and resolved to act collectively in five areas: engaging users and investing in statistics; assuring quality and instilling trust in statistics; integrated statistics for integrated analysis; modernizing statistical business processes; and having requisite skills

set. The five action areas of the collective vision correspond to the five opportunities for regional cooperation of the regional road map.

41. In support of the collective vision, in October 2018, the statistical community of Asia and the Pacific were joined by higher-level policymakers at the sixth session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics. The Committee recommended a draft declaration on navigating policy with data to leave no one behind, and affirmed in the declaration that whole-of-government support is required to enable national statistical systems to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. The Committee noted in the declaration that many national statistical systems in the Asia-Pacific region continue to struggle with producing and disseminating basic ranges of economic, environmental and social statistics.

42. Under the first action area, engaging users and investing in statistics, the secretariat conducted successful trials of the tool entitled “Every policy is connected” (EPIC) in the Philippines and Samoa during 2018. With support from the secretariat, Samoa applied the tool in two phases, through workshops and experience-sharing activities involving staff from the national planning and statistics office as well as from various ministries. The tool helps various stakeholders to link issues for action reflected in national policy documents with target groups. Following these successful trials, the Committee on Statistics endorsed the policy-data integration tool (EPIC) as a generic tool to enhance data user-producer engagement. Future plans are to invest in streamlining the tool, creating an app and extending its use to other policy areas.

43. In disaster-related statistics, ESCAP is pioneering and actively contributing to the global statistical standards for both the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. A disaster-related statistics framework has been designed collaboratively by statistics users and producers including various government and non-government agencies, academia, regional institutes, United Nations entities and international organizations. The framework is an example of the implementation of the first action area, engaging users and investing in statistics.

44. The secretariat is pioneering a partnership-building initiative for the development of ocean accounts based on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in support of Sustainable Development Goal 14 on conservation and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. In 2018, the United Nations Statistical Commission accepted the offer of ESCAP and the United Nations Environment Programme to jointly lead the development of statistical guidance on ocean accounts as part of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting.

B. Technology

45. Member countries are seeking stronger and alternative means of using science, technology and innovation to build productive capacities and address pressing social and environmental challenges, also through public-private partnerships. They are increasingly realizing that frontier technologies and e-commerce offer new opportunities to address national problems while also posing new challenges. Policymakers, leaders of research institutions and entrepreneurs are seeking means to promote technology transfers from research institutions to firms domestically and internationally.

46. An increasing number of private sector partners joined the second session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee in August 2018 and demonstrated innovative solutions and initiatives currently implemented with artificial intelligence and blockchain, which stimulated the regional policy dialogues and supported discussions on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway implementation.

47. ESCAP and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, a specialized regional institute of ESCAP, have pursued several activities in collaboration with other organizations in China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. The activities enhanced the capability of various non-governmental actors such as small and medium-sized enterprises, industry associations, venture capital entities, technology transfer intermediaries and private consulting firms who are actively supporting the enterprises in technology transfer and commercialization. Capacity-building focused on critical aspects of innovation management, technology transfer and commercialization, innovation financing, technology-based start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises, and new and emerging technologies.

48. ESCAP is supporting the Governments of the Philippines and Thailand in developing social enterprise acts in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including the Global Steering Group on Impact Investing, the Social Enterprise World Forum, the British Council and the Asia Venture Philanthropy Network. ESCAP has also conducted research and analysis on the state of social enterprises in Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka to inform policymakers, provide an evidence base for forward-looking strategies, and develop a regional evidence base on the state of social enterprise in Asia and the Pacific.

C. Partnerships

49. Comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires partnerships and the deployment of new solutions between countries and across subregions. Countries in the Asia-Pacific region could benefit from North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, and from the sharing of good practices and home-grown approaches.

50. There is increasing awareness of the key role that multi-stakeholder partnerships will play in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships, while dependent on many factors, will be tied to their ability to manage and share knowledge and expertise on the issues, processes and solutions they are promoting.

51. Guidelines on the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships were developed in coordination with the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, in consultation with stakeholders. The guidelines provide practical guidance for ESCAP member States, policymakers and practitioners on building and sustaining successful multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at supporting the progress of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government of Indonesia has translated them to guide internal policymaking.

52. In a new partnership, the secretariat and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme convened a regional partners forum in Bangkok, with the participation of more than 70 stakeholders from 17 Asia-Pacific countries. The participants discussed stakeholder partnerships in the implementation of the outcomes of the New Urban Agenda and the localization of the Sustainable

Development Goals. Consensus developed over the need for a review and study paper on issues of municipal finance to support stakeholder implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda at the local level. The event was planned as part of a continuous dialogue with partners leading to the World Urban Forum in February 2018. The first global report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda was issued in 2018.

53. The secretariat has worked to support multi-stakeholder partnerships to upgrade regional transport infrastructure and facilities and increase the number of member States that are signatories or parties to global, regional and subregional transport-related agreements.

D. Finance

54. For effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, developing countries in Asia and the Pacific need to not only effectively allocate available financial resources but also mobilize additional financial resources. In 2015, ESCAP estimated the financing requirements of \$2.1 trillion to \$2.5 trillion per year to close the region's development gaps, including infrastructure, universal access to social protection, health and education, and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. The situation is particularly challenging for the region's countries with special needs, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Some progress has been made towards mobilizing resources and enhancing access to finance, but much more is needed, especially in channelling private investments in support of the 2030 Agenda and harnessing the potential of financial innovations and new technologies.

55. Partnerships and engagement with stakeholders will be critical for this effort. The South Asia Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure: New Approaches to Public-Private Partnerships and Municipal Finance Innovations, organized by ESCAP, the National Institution for Transforming India, the Government of India, and the Asian Development Bank in New Delhi, focused on multi-stakeholder partnerships for infrastructure development and measures to efficiently involve the private sector in meeting massive investment requirements in South Asia.

56. ESCAP has launched a network for infrastructure financing and public-private partnerships to bring together development partners and stakeholders with Asia-Pacific public authorities who are implementing or planning to implement infrastructure projects using the public-private partnership modality and developing capital markets for infrastructure financing. Thus, the network will support infrastructure development and financing in the region by building the capacity of countries through peer-learning and attracting private sector participation in public infrastructure projects. A number of stakeholders, including the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Asian Development Bank Institute, the World Bank and the Global Infrastructure Hub have expressed their interest in collaborating with the network.

E. Policy coherence

57. The 2030 Agenda has set a new standard for synergies across economic development, social policies and services, trade, and natural resources and environmental sustainability, and marks a global commitment to address inequality and overcome global poverty. Although the global agendas complement each other, linkages, intersections and systemic interdependencies are often not made explicit.

58. There is increasing awareness of the need to continue to foster synergies across economic, social and environmental policy systems in countries, to develop a shared understanding of problems and solutions and align the incentives for stakeholders support. There is a need to reconcile the perspectives of diverse actors, including Governments, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, with the requirements and potentials of different sources of finance, such as public, private, international and domestic. There is increasing awareness of the need and potential for policies to reflect the social context and stakeholder perspectives.

59. The Government of Indonesia has a well-established multi-stakeholder process for programme and budget planning at local and national levels, called Musrenbang. This decentralized and bottom-up approach complements public hearings and scales up participatory planning that had previously been in place. The process begins by identifying and selecting community development priorities, based on negotiating and reconciling, and it includes citizens and a range of local and community-level stakeholders in the discussions. Meetings with public officials are organized throughout the country each year to discuss the next year's proposal of development programmes and budgets to be included in the government workplan. The process begins in each village and continues to subdistricts, districts and cities, then provinces and finally it concludes in the capital city. The process provides a crucial opportunity for the government to acquire valuable inputs to local and subnational government budget formulation processes.

60. Using a systems thinking approach, ESCAP has developed tools to engage diverse stakeholders in the analysis of the interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and the goals of national development plans. These tools have been applied in member countries on a pilot basis, and they contribute to strengthening policy coherence at the national level and contribute to integrated and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This methodology was the basis for the development of the *Sustainability Outlook of Mongolia*.⁷ The methodology is also being used to support various voluntary national review processes in the region.

61. ESCAP has engaged different stakeholders in the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda at the regional and subregional level through active participation in the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and its subregional preparatory process. At the national level, ESCAP has involved stakeholders in the preparation of the voluntary national reviews. Despite important progress in terms of participation, member countries noticed that the role of the stakeholders needs proper institutionalization at the national level.

⁷ ESCAP and the Government of Mongolia (ST/ESCAP/2838).

V. Areas of intervention and opportunities for strengthening regional cooperation under the road map

62. The review of stakeholder engagement shows that there have been substantial steps at the regional level to involve stakeholders in implementing the priority areas of the road map. It also highlights examples where stakeholder engagement can directly impact progress at the national level. These examples need to be scaled up and institutionalized and the successful experiences shared at the regional level.

63. While the secretariat seeks to extend and deepen its work with various stakeholders in an effort to accelerate implementation of the road map, it is also supporting action at the regional level to deepen and extend the capacity of member States to work with stakeholders in the framework of the road map. The issues and actions required on three important fronts are described below.

A. Building the capacity of government officials and increasing understanding and awareness

64. Effective engagement of stakeholders brings important benefits to development outcomes, and it helps to build trust within society. However, systematic and constructive engagement of stakeholders requires that the capacity of government officials is strengthened and public institutions have access to professional support in areas such as stakeholder mapping and the design and management of engagement processes.

65. ESCAP has worked with the International Association for Public Participation to develop training material based on the best available material from professional practice, including within Governments. This complements existing efforts of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and others to provide online training courses. Materials used to train government officials and those in the private sector who are responsible for stakeholder engagement are adapted to the 2030 Agenda. ESCAP provided national and multi-country training workshop on stakeholder engagement in Kazakhstan and Indonesia during 2018, and other countries have expressed interest in the workshop.

66. These efforts are complemented by the ongoing activity of ESCAP to identify, analyse and present case studies to strengthen the evidence base regarding the impacts of stakeholder engagement. In addition, advocacy continues through partners of ESCAP and steps ESCAP has taken to bring the policy community together with practitioners.

B. Institutionalizing engagement

67. Engagement of stakeholders is part of the normal business of most organizations, albeit to differing degrees. In some countries, the obligation to engage the public is mandated via legislation or constitutional provisions, and it is supported through policies and operational guidance. Such guidance identifies the responsible entities, the kinds of decisions and processes on which the views of stakeholders are needed and the specific tools and channels that should be established.

68. Institutionalization of engagement is relevant to all kinds of organizations. Within the United Nations system, operational guidance on engaging the public is being developed through the efforts of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to guide United Nations country

teams. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has a long-standing mechanism for engaging its stakeholders, and many other international organizations provide similar guidance to their staff.

69. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has developed draft guidelines to operationalize the right to public participation. The guidelines provide comprehensive guidance to Governments on practical measures, based on extensive consultations and inputs from across the globe.⁸

C. Developing and applying tools for improving the quality of engagement

70. The foregoing discussion shows that the secretariat has successfully developed tools to enable Governments to engage with stakeholders. Examples include the “Every policy is connected” (EPIC) tool in the area of statistics and other tools in the area of energy.

71. In addition, through a partnership with the International Association for Public Participation, ESCAP has involved stakeholders in developing a tool for systematic approaches to engagement, to assess the quality of current practice and identify opportunities to strengthen engagement processes.⁹

72. This tool has been refined through interactions with member States and stakeholders when ESCAP provided technical assistance for voluntary national review preparation and supported the development of training material. The four dimensions of effective stakeholder engagement identified and co-developed through this process are broadly described in the table below, and are supported by a set of indicators. A webinar series was organized to disseminate this tool and deepen the conversation on effective stakeholder engagement in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda.¹⁰

73. A measurement and evaluation tool for citizen engagement and e-participation was developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to meet the need for stronger and deeper citizen engagement. It enables an internal assessment within Governments on ways to strengthen public participation.¹¹

⁸ A/HRC/39/28.

⁹ See https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Stakeholder%20Engagement%20Indicator%20Framework%20Brochure_180518_0.pdf.

¹⁰ ESCAP, “Stakeholder Engagement Webinar Series: Module 1”, video, 23 September 2018, available at <https://youtu.be/19MpK5YGQME>; and ESCAP, “Stakeholder Engagement Webinar Series: Module 2, video, 31 October 2018, available at <https://youtu.be/95Hg8Z6Vdjk>.

¹¹ http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/METEP%20framework_18%20Jul_MOST%20LATEST%20Version.pdf

A framework for planning and assessing quality engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Description</i>
Purposeful	Engagement is PURPOSEFUL when we: • Know why we are engaging – clearly define what we want to get out of the engagement • Develop an engagement plan and allocate resources and responsibilities • Build engagement into every phase – planning, delivery and follow-up and review • Evaluate to improve engagement
Inclusive	Engagement is INCLUSIVE when we: • Map and analyse our stakeholders • Recognize their views – even if we do not agree with them • Have special mechanisms for those normally left behind • Put in place ways to remove/reduce barriers that make participation difficult – language, geographic location or distance, abilities, age, income, connectivity, culture bias, discrimination • Manage power imbalances and find ways to ensure that people feel safe to contribute (e.g. anonymity) • Recognize and utilize traditional channels of engaging
Transformative	Engagement is TRANSFORMATIVE when we: • Choose methods that build understanding and collaboration across different groups in society, sharing information from diverse perspectives • Encourage and recognize contributions – motivate stakeholder action through a whole of society approach • Choose methods that integrate social, economic and environmental perspectives • Choose methods that encourage dialogue and shared action across the Sustainable Development Goal framework • Are willing to take a participatory approach to addressing important societal challenges
Proactive	Engagement is PROACTIVE when we: • Build engagement planning into implementation • Communicate the scope of engagement to stakeholders • Provide the information they need in an accessible and timely way • Consult stakeholders on the way they would like to participate • Respond to questions and concerns promptly

74. Other tools and standards have been issued by the International Association for Public Participation and other organizations. Such standards can support the work of supreme audit institutions in auditing the quality of public engagement where accountability mechanisms are in place, as they are in Indonesia and New Zealand, among other places.

75. Regional cooperation, support and peer learning for professional development, embedding engagement in governance, and the use of specialized tools to support engagement can advance public participation and stakeholder engagement at the national level. However, there are also other important needs, such as for safe and accessible physical spaces, access to technology and a trustworthy, fact-based media. Perhaps one of the most critical needs is for a robust civic education so that people are aware of their

civic responsibilities and are able to exercise their rights, including the right to participate in public affairs.

76. Regional cooperation can also play an important role in establishing norms and standards. The potential for regional action is illustrated by the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

77. Member States may wish to:

(a) Comment on the points raised in the present document, and identify specific support needed to take action on the recommendations presented, reflecting on the perspectives of stakeholders expressed in successive Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development;

(b) Consider how the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the Commission, as regional intergovernmental platforms, can foster regional cooperation to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda through strengthened public participation and stakeholder engagement.
