Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Seventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Bangkok, 20 May 2020
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Regional perspectives on accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Opportunities and entry points for transformative change in Asia and the Pacific**

**Summary**

Given the current rate of progress, acceleration is critical if Asia and the Pacific is to meet the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This paper focuses on opportunities and entry points for transformative change in Asia and the Pacific, based on entry points for acceleration identified in the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019.

The document, developed in partnership with United Nations agencies and programmes, presents the entry points for acceleration adapted to the Asia-Pacific context, namely: 1. Human well-being and capabilities, 2. Sustainable and just economies, 3. Food systems and nutrition patterns, 4. Enhancing power grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for all, 5. Urban and peri-urban development and 6. Global environmental commons. In addition, it provides an overview of progress at the regional and sub-national level on each entry point, as well as specific examples of acceleration against each entry point.

Finally, it proposes policy recommendations for enabling transformative change and accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific.
I. Introduction

1. The theme of the Seventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development is: “Accelerating action on and delivery of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific”.

2. In support of the theme, this document provides an in-depth review of six transformative entry points as reflected in the Political Declaration,1 and derived from the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: “The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development”.

3. The report identifies six entry points for leveraging interlinkages and accelerating progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals globally: Entry Point 1- Human well-being and capabilities, Entry Point 2 – Sustainable and just economies, Entry point 3 – Food systems and nutrition patterns, Entry point 4 – Enhancing power grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for all, Entry point 5 – Urban and peri-urban development, Entry point 6 – Global Environmental Commons.

4. In this document, some entry points have been modified to better reflect the regional Asia-Pacific context, such as entry point 4 on Enhancing power grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for all. This topic will also be analysed through a sub-regional and regional lens rather than country-by-country approach given its nature.

5. Annex I presents an analysis conducted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on how each Sustainable Development Goal relates to the entry points.

6. Entry point profiles have been developed under the overall coordination of ESCAP in collaboration with partner United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

7. The Entry Point profiles are provided to support common regional understanding of the opportunities and entry points for transformative change in Asia and the Pacific to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. The Entry Point profiles are available on the ESCAP website in the document section at www.unescap.org/apfsd/7/documents.

II. Developing entry point profiles

9. The profile for Entry Point 1: Human well-being and capabilities was developed by ESCAP, in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

10. The profile for entry point 2: Sustainable and just economies was developed by ESCAP, in coordination with ILO, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

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11. The profile for entry point 3: Food Systems and nutrition patterns was developed by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), under the guidance of ESCAP.

12. The profile for entry point 4: Enhancing power grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for all, was developed by ESCAP, in coordination with UNEP.

13. The profile for entry point 5: Urban and peri-urban development was developed by ESCAP in coordination with the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UNDRR.

14. The profile for entry point 6: Global environmental commons was developed by ESCAP, in coordination with UNEP, UNDRR and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

15. Each entry point profile provides:
   (a) A presentation of the entry point in the context of Asia and the Pacific;
   (b) An overview of progress and key challenges for acceleration in Asia and the Pacific;
   (c) A country-level analysis on acceleration, except for entry point 4, Enhancing power grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for all, where a sub-regional and regional analysis is more suited to the topic; and
   (d) Policy recommendations for acceleration.

III. Policy recommendations emanating from the entry point profiles

16. This section presents the key policy recommendations for accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific through the lens of the six entry points for acceleration.

A. Human well-being and capabilities: priority areas for regional action

17. Expand social protection for all. To boost well-being and human capabilities, governments need to boost the amount of public spending on social protection, education and health care. The evidence for increasing the level of investment in social protection in particular is overwhelming: around 233 million people would be lifted out of moderate poverty and 51 million people out of extreme poverty with more countries fully eradicating poverty by 2030. In an ageing region, with high rates of vulnerable employment, investment and innovation in the provision of social protection is essential to ensure adequate income security for all, including in old age. Considering the region’s climate and disaster risks, scalable and adaptable social protection systems could increasingly become a tool for reducing vulnerabilities and minimizing the impacts of disaster events. Additionally, to address the gender-specific risks that women and girls face, national social protection policies, programs and related services need to be reviewed with a gender lens, to ensure that they tackle social vulnerabilities and discriminatory social norms and practices.
18. Focus on quality education for all. Systemic inequality of opportunity amplifies and perpetuates gaps in human well-being and capabilities. Education is perhaps the most critical of these opportunities, given its links to all other human development outcomes. In particular, countries with deeply entrenched cultural and institutional discrimination practices need to break stereotypes and further educational opportunities for girls. South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, India and Nepal, need to make stronger efforts to boost education outcomes for young women. In the rest of the region, while women’s education outcomes often surpass those of men, policy interventions should also facilitate their transition to higher education and the workplace. Support for young mothers, including parental leave, could also serve as an incentive for completing education. The adoption of age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education both in- and out-of-schools therefore becomes a priority.

19. Invest in universal health care. Access to affordable and quality health care is a prerequisite for improvements in human well-being and capabilities. There are visible gaps in health outcomes between countries that have established Universal Health Care systems and those that have not. While a significant investment, equitable access to health care is not only a development priority, but also a human right. Lessons from low and middle-income countries that completed this investment, such as Bhutan and Thailand, need to be shared widely in the region.

20. Sustain political focus and commitment. The region needs additional investments of USD 281 billion per year to match the global spending levels as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) on these three sectors, more than two thirds of which would need to be directed to social protection programmes. Leaders need to prioritize these sectors and focus on monitoring efficiency metrics, rather than overnight achievements. Investment in people, in education, health and social protection, takes time to yield measurable outcomes. The countries that stand out today as champions are those that started investing decades ago – such as the East Asian “tigers”, but also as recently as during the past twenty years, as is the case of China, Thailand and Viet Nam. Countries highly vulnerable to disaster and climate risks should ensure their investments in social infrastructure are risk-informed to minimize damage and disruptions to services that jeopardize quality of outcomes. For example, the 2015 earthquake in Nepal left more than one million children without safe permanent places to learn. The School Sector Development Plan (2016–2023) that followed identified school safety and resilience in education as one of five dimensions for strengthening school education in the country.

21. Build strong institutions. Empowering people and ensuring their inclusion embodies the transformative changes we require of the 2030 Agenda, as it addresses the root causes of deprivations and marginalization. A country’s income level does not determine its potential to raise everyone’s well-being. Rather, if responsive institutions are in place, and if legislative frameworks are guided by strong political commitment and enforced, then human capabilities can improve in a more equitable manner. The capacity of countries to respond more effectively to major health, disaster and climate change as well as other development challenges needs to be strengthened by working on governance structures to improve legal, policy and regulatory environments, increase access to justice, build human and institutional capacity and develop rights-based investment and financing approaches. The entwined goals of achieving pro-poor economic growth, strong and stable societies, and healthy environments require that institutions formulate strong and transparent policies that take all three into consideration.
22. Increase effectiveness of fiscal policies. An effective tax system enhances public revenues and facilitates increasing investments in essential services, such as health care, education and social protection. To this end, better and effective governance is needed to boost overall tax compliance and improve composition and efficiency of public expenditure. Similarly, reforming tax structures to reduce their adverse effects on the poor through progressive taxes on personal income, property and wealth can help prevent excessive concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few, ensuring greater equality of opportunity within and across generations.

B. Sustainable and just economies: priority areas for regional action

23. Enhance cooperation between governments, businesses and citizens on sustainable consumption and production, including by implementing recommendations of the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific 2019 and the 10th Asian Business Summit 2019:\(^2\)

(a) Set green production standards to tackle climate change, make the best use of river water resources and foster green growth;

(b) Facilitate and develop innovative business models including (i) circular supply chains, (ii) sharing platforms to optimize the use of goods between users, resource efficiency and recovery, and (iii) product life extension and right to repair;

(c) Take advantage of innovative technologies, including Industry 4.0, big data, blockchain and artificial intelligence, to enhance the sustainability of consumption and production;

(d) Promote innovative behavioural change, including through rethinking environmental education, using social media and emerging social platforms, nudging and nationwide campaigns;

(e) Promote responsible and inclusive trade;

(f) Improve urban waste management and address land and marine pollution, which are interrelated through regulatory and legal frameworks that control plastic movements in the region.

24. Adopt ecological budgeting and implement tax reforms to steer the economies in Asia and the Pacific towards greater resource efficiency, lower emissions and sustainable consumption and production. The purpose of such reform is to shift production costs away from labour and towards natural resources and emissions, thus creating incentives to guide consumers and producers towards lower resource and emissions intensity in their daily consumption and production decisions. Elements of ecological and budget reforms include special charges based on the ‘polluter pays’ principle and removing subsidies for large consumers of, for example, energy and electricity, as well as on fossil fuels. Such reforms can be complemented with cap and trade systems for resources and emissions. All these policies can help to:

(a) Increase prices of environmentally damaging goods and services, while increasing the returns for more sustainable approaches – leading to more sustainable consumption and production patterns;

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(b) Reduce compliance costs by providing flexibility to polluters or users of natural resources to choose the most cost-efficient and environmentally effective measures;

(c) Minimise the overall cost of achieving a given pollution control target;

(d) Create dynamic incentives for investments to innovate and continually improve environmental technology, generating both environmental and financial benefits (“win-win”);

(e) Allocate property rights and responsibilities of firms, groups, or individuals so that they have both the incentive and the power to act in a more environmentally responsible manner;

(f) Raise revenues that can be used for environmental purposes and to fund government expenses in health, education and social protection.

25. Promote compliance with minimum wages and strengthen collective bargaining to reduce income inequality. The coverage of minimum wages is not universal in most countries, with segments of the working population such as domestic workers, rural workers or the self-employed excluded, and compliance with minimum wage legislation is not always properly enforced. In addition, collective bargaining coverage, defined as the proportion of employees whose pay and conditions are determined by collective agreements, remains low in the region, which can also explain the declining wage share.

26. Accelerate the transition of workers from the informal to the formal economy to promote decent work. In that regard, ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation 2015 (No. 204), adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2015, encourages countries to design coherent and integrated strategies to facilitate such transition and to make, where appropriate, formalization of employment a central goal of national employment policy frameworks.\(^3\)

27. Transform adverse gender norms and attitudes and recognize and redistribute care work to reduce gender disparities. Specific actions to implement the first recommendation include removing discriminatory laws and regulations; preventing violence and harassment against women; collecting data and carrying out research on gender norms and attitudes; and supporting women’s leadership in decision-making and policy-making processes. Actions to implement the second recommendation include universal paid maternity benefits and health care; parental leave; ensuring accessible and affordable public care services; providing decent working conditions in the care sector, including for domestic workers; and developing and supporting family-friendly workplace policies and practices. On enhancing opportunities for the youth, some specific recommendations include developing national action plans on youth employment and entrepreneurship and easing the school-to-work transition.

28. Adopt progressive income and wealth taxes. While the ecological budget and tax reforms mentioned above can raise revenues for environmental purposes and to fund government expenses in health, education and social protection, the adoption of progressive income and wealth taxes can contribute significantly to reducing inequality. However, the likelihood of success in enhancing the progressivity of the tax system depends on many factors, including institutional and administrative capacities and, most importantly, the

\(^3\) See ILO Recommendation No. 204, Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy.
social consensus and political will to implement the necessary reforms. A pragmatic strategy is to promote public debate and consensus and undertake small-scale reforms that are feasible under the current circumstances, such as reducing tax evasion.4

29. Further operationalize the use of green finance instruments to ensure their effectiveness.5 In recent years, institutional investors and businesses have been increasingly considering Environmental, Social and Governance criteria in guiding their investment decisions, and it has been estimated that sustainable businesses have the potential to unlock over $12 trillion in new market value and increase employment by 380 million jobs by 2030.6 However, the use of Environmental, Social and Governance criteria in investment decisions needs to be operationalized more effectively to ensure that it effectively channels financing to green investments. For that purpose, market regulators and representatives from the finance industry need to work together in four areas: (i) corporate disclosures of climate and broader sustainability implications to adequately inform stakeholders of investors' strategies; (ii) a unified taxonomy of sustainable activities to provide clarity on which activities can be considered 'environmentally sustainable'; (iii) standards and labels for green financial products; and (iv) benchmarks and indexes of sustainable companies to facilitate comparisons with individual companies.7

30. Attract foreign direct investment (FDI) into key sectors for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal. In a context of diminished private capital flows to developing countries,8 it is important for governments to maximize not only the quantity but also the quality of FDI and ensure its alignment with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.9 Several actions can help on this regard. First, Investment promotion agencies could incorporate sustainability considerations in the criteria they use to target potential investors.10 For that purpose, the development of FDI sustainability indicators could be used to measure the impact of FDI on sustainable development and prioritize, identify and channel FDI into key Sustainable Development Goal sectors. Besides promotional activities, it is important for governments to improve, as needed, their domestic business climates. In that

5 Green finance refers to any financial instrument issued under contract to a firm, person, project or agency in exchange for the delivery of positive environmental externalities that are real, verified and additional to business as usual. See http://climatemundial.com/whatisgreenfinance/ for a more detailed definition.
8 Gestrin, Michael V., The contribution of international business investment to the Sustainable Development Goals: Key actors and recent trends (Paris, OECD, 2019).
regard, in the area of sustainable infrastructure it is particularly important to improve the effectiveness of government institutions and capacities to select projects that provide most value-for-money for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to implement them in the most cost-effective manner.\(^\text{11}\)

C. **Food systems and nutrition patterns: priority areas for regional action**

31. Governments can help to reduce hunger, improve nutrition and transform food systems by reviewing national policies and investments and integrate nutrition objectives into food and agriculture policy and programming to enhance nutrition sensitive interventions and climate-smart agriculture, ensure food security and enable healthy diets.

32. Strengthen local food production and processing, especially by smallholder and family farmers, giving special attention to youth and women’s empowerment, while recognizing that efficient and effective trade is key to achieving nutrition objectives.

33. Improve storage, preservation, transport and distribution technologies and infrastructure to reduce seasonal food insecurity, food and nutrient loss and waste.

34. Encourage gradual reduction of saturated fat, sugars and salt/sodium and trans-fat from foods and beverages to prevent excessive intake by consumers and improve nutrient content of foods, as needed.

35. Establish and strengthen institutions, policies, programmes and services to enhance the resilience of the food supply in crisis-prone areas, including areas affected by climate change.

36. Establish food or nutrient-based standards to make healthy diets and safe drinking water accessible at home, workplace, school and public facilities and encourage the establishment of facilities for breastfeeding.

37. Improve child nutritional status and growth, particularly by addressing maternal exposure to the availability and marketing of complementary foods, and by improving supplementary feeding programmes for infants and young children.

38. Invest in nutrition sensitive social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes to improve child and maternal health and nutrition.

D. **Enhancing power grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for all**

39. Member states recognize the enormous opportunity for connectivity to contribute delivering the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

40. The following recommendations for acceleration on Enhancing Power Grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for All are extracted

from the draft roadmap and the energy-related issues at the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific,\textsuperscript{12} (see above).

41. Strengthen political commitment for enhancing power grid connectivity. This can be achieved through a number of specific actions. To build trust, political consensus and promote continuous dialogue, a regular regional meeting on power system integration could be delivered. Harmonizing policy and regulatory frameworks could be achieved by identifying gaps in policy, regulations and standards and by developing sub-regional associations of national regulators. Ensuring coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals is another priority where political will is required, through the adoption of a set of principles to enable assessment of power grid projects against sustainability criteria.

42. Strengthen regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is essential to ensure power grid connectivity and all its benefits in terms of achieving affordable and clean energy for All. In particular, the development of a regional Masterplan would allow the identification of existing cross-border transmission and generation assets and the development of a blueprint for planned intra- and inter-sub-regional grid connection is recommended. Developing new intergovernmental agreements would also vastly facilitate regional cooperation, including an intergovernmental body for the Northeast Asian subregion and at least one additional sub-regional interconnection agreement. The launch of the International Solar Alliance, which provides a mechanism for cooperation on renewable energy\textsuperscript{13} will also strengthen regional cooperation. Further, reinforced and scaled-up regional and global coordination for science and technology transfers including for energy efficiency is recommended. Lastly, coordination of transmission planning and operation would be needed for the development of common codes, technical regulations, transmission plans, protection schemes and feasibility studies.

43. Ensure that adequate finance, trade and innovation agreements are in place. Of critical importance for acceleration on Enhancing Power Grid connectivity is to ensure that adequate finance and trade agreements are in place. Investment can be mobilized through the creation of sub-regional platforms for financial institutions, utilities and government. Additional relevant innovations-based initiatives could be developed such as Green Building Action Plans and National Cooling Action Plans. The tracking of energy efficiency in buildings and increases in energy efficiency have the potential to save significant resources, which makes green buildings a viable investment. Green Building Action Plans, together with Cooling Action Plans will contribute significantly to the CO\textsubscript{2} reductions in the residential sector and can also be used to encourage more investment in this sector. Finally, from a trade perspective, delivering studies to evaluate social, economic and environmental benefits of multilateral trade and competitive markets for cross-border trade of electricity could advance the work towards multilateral trade and the creation of competitive markets.


\textsuperscript{13} Note also that the International Renewable Energy Agency, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, International Energy Agency, Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century and various United Nations bodies including ESCAP are making significant contributions in supporting the energy transition across the region.
44. Share learnings and build capacity. Developing capacity-building, knowledge generation and data support plans with identified resources are key elements to support enhanced power grid connectivity in Asia and the Pacific.

E. Urban and peri-urban development: priority areas for regional action

45. Asia-Pacific countries need to accelerate progress in urban and peri-urban areas by empowering local governments and community groups to deliver against the sustainable development goals in an integrated fashion. While it has been estimated that 65 per cent of the total Sustainable Development Goal targets need to be delivered by local authorities and actors, this is not matched with requisite decision-making authority required to drive local implementation against all urban related targets. In line with the Global Sustainable Development Report and as a response to these complex challenges and to seize the opportunities which urban centres can play in accelerating localization of the Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda in the region, the 15 policy pathways on urban and territorial planning; urban resilience; smart and inclusive cities; and urban finance, highlighted in *The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities Report 2019* are particularly important to chart a new course for urban sustainability.

46. Sustaining the momentum for change – accelerate decentralization to ensure that local governments have the appropriate responsibility, authority, resources, and capacities to take action for sustainable urban development. Partnerships between national and local governments and their communities in localizing and accelerating the sustainable development goals should be enhanced. Greater decentralization of functions to local authorities to support their efforts to deliver the sustainable development goals on the ground should specifically focus on deepening fiscal devolution processes to address the issue of “unfunded mandates” which is hindering progress against all of the goals. Many of the sustainable development goal indicators require data collection, including geographic, sex, age and disability disaggregated data and for spatial indicators, from sub-national actors to effectively measure and report on progress. Harmonization, cooperation and capacity development aimed at sub-national data collectors in partnership with national statistical authorities should be a priority moving forward for sustainable urban and peri-urban development.

47. Sustainable urban and territorial planning provides the foundation for an urban future which leaves no one and no place behind. All cities must strengthen their capacities, adopt inclusive planning and urban management processes, including by strengthening foresight functions, mobilizing all stakeholders, and develop long-term spatial and investment plans that effectively orient their mission and strategies for urban and peri-urban areas. These planning measures should prioritize and address unsustainable urban growth, as well as integrate quality-of-life goals and resource implications into urban and territorial planning as a means to accelerate progress for all people

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and places. Regional planning approaches need to be adopted for the development of peri-urban areas, along with an institutional framework for an efficient planning hierarchy integrating city and regional plans.

48. Guard against current and future urban risks by building city resilience. To ensure sustainable growth and development, it is critical that cities adopt and implement resilience strategies that apply systems thinking, break down governance siloes to improve policy efficacy, enable prevention of new risks and mitigation of existing climate and disaster risks, provide opportunities to scale up nature-based infrastructure solutions, an optimal mix of green and grey infrastructure and engage the creativity of the urban poor as solution providers to guard against potential shocks and stresses, including disasters induced by natural hazards.

49. Capitalize on appropriate technologies with inclusive governance to realize people-centred smart cities. City leaders must develop smart cities that are people centred, supporting accessible, resilient infrastructure and innovative technologies with inclusive governance and security systems to improve the quality of life of citizens and enhance their interactions with the urban environment.

50. Mobilize financing to invest in sustainable urban solutions at scale. Cities must access or adopt innovative investment tools, such as land value capture instruments and environmental user fee models. These can serve as important levers to catalyse economically impactful capital investments that create long-term value for citizens, the environment and the city as a whole. When addressing the urban infrastructure gap, cities in developing countries can opt for green and sustainable choices that consider life-cycle benefits and resilient features in their design which incorporate the full spectrum of environmental costs and disaster risk impacts, such as environmental degradation and carbon emissions.

51. While not every policy recommendation will prove applicable to every city in the region – a near impossibility given the size, scale and diversity found in Asia and the Pacific – they offer a useful summation of contemporary urban thinking as the region’s cities are poised to enter the critical final decade to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. If the 2019 demographic milestone making Asia and the Pacific a majority urban region is a potential tipping point, then these recommendations are designed to tip the scales in the right direction towards creating sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities for all.

F. Global environmental commons: priority areas for regional action

52. Urgent action is needed to reverse environmental degradation and accelerate action on securing the environmental commons in Asia and the Pacific in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Policy recommendations for acceleration include:

53. Strengthen political commitment for the integrated management and protection of the environment. Developing a shared vision for the sustainable management of the environment is critical. Transformation towards integrated and coherent policies that reconcile livelihoods and conservation, address the competing uses of land and water, allow equitable sharing of benefits, and discourage harmful investments are needed and should be supported by enforcement of laws and rules. Adequate governance and policies and management models at the national level will ensure that the right structures
and processes are in place for integrated management of environmental issues across various Ministries (Environment, Energy, Agriculture, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Planning, Finance, etc.). At the local level, municipalities should have the appropriate responsibility, authority and capacity to take action on environment, climate and disaster resilience. This should be coupled with the development and implementation of policy instruments that incentivize the protection of the environment and give full recognition and support to community-based management initiatives and local actors.

54. Strengthen global, transboundary and regional cooperation. The management of the global environment commons, as shared resources, requires cooperation amongst countries. Governments should adhere to and fulfill their commitments to existing multilateral environmental agreements (i.e. the Convention on Biodiversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) and UN Environment Assembly resolutions aimed at securing the global environmental commons. This includes leveraging and strengthening existing regional mechanisms on environment, such as the Regional Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment, and the Asia Pacific Ministerial conference on disaster risk reduction, as well as ensuring synergies with the regional Sustainable Development-related processes, such as the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. New multilateral agreements that guarantee the protection of terrestrial ecosystems and effectively extend marine protected areas to at least one third of the ocean by 2030 could be explored. Existing mechanisms, networks and initiatives that promote transboundary and regional cooperation for ensuring effective protection of biodiversity as well as terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems should be strengthened and coordination across regional programmes and initiative encouraged.

16 e.g. UNEA Res. 1/6, 2/10, 2/11, 2/12, 3/7, 4/6, 4/12, 4/13, 4/14.
18 Convened jointly by ESCAP and UNEP in 2017 as both the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.
19 http://apministerialenv.org/.
21 https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/6/.
23 There are numerous initiatives, networks and mechanisms to tackle marine and coastal ecosystem protection (i.e. the Regional Seas Programme, Conventions and Action Plans, the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security, the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia, Northwest Pacific Action Plan, the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, the work of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia, forest protection (i.e. Heart of Borneo initiative), biodiversity conservation (i.e. UNESCO sites including transboundary Biosphere reserves, wildlife corridors, initiatives on invasive alien species and on illegal wildlife trade), clean air (the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership), reduction of dust and stand storm (i.e. ESCAP’s North-East Asian Sub-regional Programme for Environmental Cooperation), management of acid deposition (Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia, ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change (Asia Pacific Adaptation Network) and other sub-regional initiatives, such as the North-East Asian Sub-regional Programme for Environmental Cooperation.
alignment between global, regional and national policies, conventions and initiatives further provides the opportunity to maximise political will and societal needs and to understand and clearly articulate the priorities for sustainable ecosystems management and restoration to a range of stakeholders.

55. Adopt adequate economic models and financing strategies. New accounting models that fully assess and value natural capital need to be adopted. This should go hand in hand with the implementation of financial policy instruments; incentivizing sustainable consumption and production practices, eradicating incentives that promote environmental degradation, and the adoption of production standards/safeguards and trade policies with positive impact on the environmental commons (i.e. fair-trade, remove restrictions on the use of farmer’s own seeds, combatting illegal wildlife trade, etc.). The mobilization of additional funds for sustainably managing the global commons is also needed, should it be through public financing, Official Development Assistance (ODA), global regional and national environmental funds; or through innovative and creative financing strategies, including those involving the private sector (green and catastrophic bonds, public private partnerships, blended finance tools, etc.). Ensuring the greening of Integrated national financing frameworks for the Sustainable Development Goals can include working with private banking sector to integrate climate and environment considerations into bank operations; greening stock exchanges; developing national capacities to issue green and blue bonds; strengthening environmental impact assessments and promoting integration of disaster impact assessment components to ensure investments are risk-informed and contribute to prevention and mitigation efforts.

56. Develop and strengthen partnerships, education and outreach. Given the wide spectrum of actors that have an impact on managing the environmental commons from local to global levels, meaningful engagement of all actors and strengthening partnerships is critical. Key strategies to increase protected areas and broader action on environment include expanding the role of the private sector, civil society as well as indigenous peoples and local communities through innovative and diverse participatory governance models that will allow the co-development of integrated environmental policies that take into account the synergies and trade-offs between different sectors as well as social aspects. Collaboration can also be strengthened in information sharing, best practices and transfer of technology. Inclusive policies that leave no one behind (landless farmers, indigenous people, women and girls, people with disabilities) should be promoted and developed in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. Partnerships should further be encouraged to create synergies for tackling and interlinking multiple Sustainable Development Goals. In parallel, education systems and awareness campaigns should be strengthened to build public knowledge on the role of biodiversity and ecosystems for societies, and on the co-benefits of action on biodiversity, ecosystems, disaster risk reduction and climate change.

57. Focus on science, data, monitoring and technology. National capacities for monitoring and reporting on the environmental and disaster-related dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals need to be strengthened urgently, including on status, trends, risks, threats and conservation needs for biodiversity and all ecosystems in Asia and the Pacific. There is currently too little data to formally assess the status of 63 of the 93 environment-related Sustainable Development Goals indicators (68 per cent),24 with some

indicators without available data corresponding to issues that have not received enough attention in terms of Sustainable Development Goals implementation. Efforts are needed to bring together traditional and new data sources (including big data) for better and faster data on the environment. Common definitions and consistent standards and methodologies for measurement and monitoring should also be supported, such as the development and implementation of harmonized National Marine Litter and Microplastic Monitoring Programmes under the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia. In addition, science diplomacy in global and regional policy processes requires strengthening, and needs to be extended to the management of ungoverned spaces, such as the seabed, space and cyberspace. This includes the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and of the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Periodic scientific assessments, for instance on transboundary climate risks, or on slow on-set disasters, will help policymakers to understand and diagnose their complexity and to identify potential risk hotspots. Science helps to unpack complex land-system dynamics and their governance and supports transformations to sustainability especially where it includes local, lay and indigenous knowledge, such as the Global Land Programme of Future Earth. Finally, experimentation and innovation leads to technological developments that support sustainability, for instance in fishing, agriculture (agro-ecology) and manufacturing (green construction materials, sustainable textiles, etc.).

IV. Conclusion

58. A number of policy recommendations are proposed in this document, as a basis for discussion between member States and other stakeholders on opportunities for transformative change in Asia and the Pacific, in line with six entry points for acceleration on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

27 Ibid.
## Annex

### Mapping of how each Sustainable Development Goal contributes to each entry point (ESCAP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry points</th>
<th>Human well-being and capabilities</th>
<th>Sustainable and just economies</th>
<th>Food systems and nutrition patterns</th>
<th>Enhancing power grid connectivity to achieve affordable and clean energy for all</th>
<th>Urban and peri-urban development</th>
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