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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
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Agenda item 5
Review and adoption of the report of the Forum

Summary of round table discussions[*]

> This document is an addendum to ESCAP/RFSD/2021/4, the report of the Eighth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. As agreed during the adoption of the report on 26 March 2021, the addendum provides the summaries of the outcomes of nine round tables conducted under agenda item 2 on Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 13, 16 and 17 respectively.

I.   Goal 1: No poverty, in Asia and the Pacific

1.   The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 1 were informed by the relevant goal profile[1] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

2.   **Build human capabilities and empower people and government's service providers.** Increasing investment in building peoples' capacities before a crisis, and not only during a crisis is necessary. Countries that invested in human capabilities earlier saw a quicker recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Such investments could focus on supporting people to build their own capacities, such as through alternative livelihood opportunities, and on building skills for household financial literacy to empower people to make informed financial decisions. Governments can work with the private sector to build human capacities. Partnerships with the private sector can also help cities to reframe their thinking and build upon gaps and opportunities.

3.   Widening the scope of systems for human capacity development is necessary, in particular by equipping civil servants and social service providers at different levels of governments with the capacities to deliver broad responses. Officials working on reducing poverty could be stationed directly in the field and use a whole-of-society approach to strengthen human capacities and promote leadership. A multi-tiered qualification system could be developed for social service providers in government to support a broad-based

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[*]   The present document is being issued without formal editing.

[1]   www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%201%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v3.pdf.

public service delivery approach that would see a shift in public trust and improve public service delivery.

4. **Promote and protect economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to social security.** Social protection programs are currently fragmented, and coverage is low across the Asia-Pacific region. Expanding universal social protection in line with the ILO Social Protection Floors recommendation, following a life cycle approach, using the maximum available resources, in line with the right to security under international human rights treaties that all countries have ratified, and investing in people and social services, is key to reducing poverty. Social protection systems need to be enhanced through strengthening integrated, inclusive, transparent and accountable processes that are age and gender sensitive with mechanisms that allow grievances to be submitted and fairly addressed. Social protection programmes must be accompanied by other investments in good governance, such as independent and effective national human rights institutions and right to information laws. Participation and consultation are key elements of accountability in social protection programmes, and going forward, policies and programmes adopted without sufficient public participation must be avoided, as was the case in the context of COVID-19.

5. **Social protection systems need to be universal in coverage, coherent with other policies and be disaster-responsive and risk-informed**. While progress is noted in the adoption of national disaster risk reduction strategies, additional investments are required to strengthen multi-hazard disaster risk governance systems to enable multisectoral implementation of such strategies for effective reduction of risks and losses.

6. To this end, States must secure the fiscal policy space to guarantee minimum essential levels of economic and social rights and consider reallocating existing resources and "ringfencing" social spending. For equitable financing, States must also ensure that the burden does not fall disproportionately on those left behind, and adopt fair and progressive taxation, address tax avoidance, illicit financial flows and corruption. As a lesson learned from COVID-19, we must also urgently address the underlying causes of vulnerability, marginalization and discrimination.

7. **Build the resilience of poor and at-risk and marginalized groups and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to shocks.** Expanding the coverage of social protection is necessary for building the resilience and for sustained poverty eradication. Expenditure on social protection should be viewed as an investment in capital with return. The imperative of inclusive social protection has moved beyond its traditional protective role to a promotive and transformative function - a role which helps build resilience as well as reduce vulnerability and thus sustain human progress protecting from increased frequency and intensity of shocks including health shocks such as COVID-19. Enhanced risk-informed social protection systems, factoring in scalability and adaptability of social protection schemas in existing policies would contribute to enhanced responsiveness of social protection systems in times of crisis as well as enhance their value to prevent negative coping strategies, enable recovery as well as to reduce vulnerabilities to climate and disaster risks.

8. **Enhance climate and disaster risk reduction action to protect life, livelihoods and reduce disruptions in access to infrastructures and basic services.** Management of disaster and climate risks is very much necessary to minimise the human and economic loss in Asia and the Pacific, a region which

is most prone to disaster and suffers from higher loss compared to the other regions of the world. While progress is noted in the adoption of national disaster risk reduction strategies (with thirty countries in the Asia-Pacific region), additional investments are required in strengthening multi-hazard disaster risk governance systems to enable multisectoral implementation of such strategies for effective reduction of risks and losses.

9.   **Foster women's participation in all facets of decision makings for nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures.** To enhance economic empowerment by providing inclusive social protection, targeted efforts are required to address women's needs. It is important to recognise the transformational impact for women of increased ownership and opportunity to access to land and resources. Investment is needed in small-and medium sized enterprises owned by women and special support for women's access to decent jobs, while also reflecting the nuance of gender identification and the impact this has on the effectiveness of response measures. Social protection programmes must be more reflective of such nuances.

10.   Crafting gender-responsive fiscal stimulus packages and social protection programmes is vital to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable. Ensuring gender-diverse perspectives and women's participation in all stages of decision making for national social protection systems is a key to a more inclusive and prosperous society. There must be adequate grievance and redress mechanisms and a focus on formal as well as informal social protection systems.

11.   **Enhance the capacity for collecting disaggregated data and analysis.** It is necessary to collect high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics as mentioned in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Disaggregated data on who and how people are left behind is required for scalable and responsive social protection. Social protection should reach those that needs it most. We need data collection and management system to collect information on marginalized groups for governments to identify these vulnerable groups, and know where they live. Data is also key to ensure economic stimulus and other policy and programme initiatives and reach those who need them most (e.g., within the private sector). Robust data, information and statistics systems are enablers to strengthen social protection systems. Governments need to know who those marginalized peoples are, where they are and how to reach them. Collecting comprehensive and disaggregated data requires building frameworks for enhancing data development and analytical skills in governments, like skills for surveying, geographic information system, and aggregation, in order to ensure quality and accessible disaggregated data is collected and made available. Securing access to demographic data on marginalised and vulnerable groups is key, as well as to accurate population measuring and demography for identification of tenure security (indicator 1.4.2), but developing data collection systems that anonymize data but that are still useful for analysis comes with both technical and social acceptance issues related to data privacy. Governments should partner with civil society and the private sector to enhance their data collection capacities, in particular partnering with cities to identify their needs and options for digitalisation, and to promote city-led local initiatives.

II. Goal 2: Zero hunger, in Asia and the Pacific

12. The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 2 were informed by the relevant goal profile[2] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

13. **Further investment and strong public- and private partnerships in food systems.** It is important to make nutritious food more affordable to people so that more people can access a healthy diet. Efficient value chains can contribute to making healthy food more affordable. Even if people can afford a healthy diet communication and education are also necessary so that people can make informed choices. Healthy diets can be promoted with social media, for example. Providing women with training on nutritious and healthy food in collaboration with the public and private sector should be considered to improve food security and nutrition. Food fortification can be one path forward to improve nutrition with use of technologies. Keeping a good taste of food is an important factor to respond to consumer demands.

14. **Investing in cost-effective technologies for data collection, and improved surveillance to monitor nutrition, food security, and livelihood indicators**. Action is needed to respond to a host of issues in terms of data governance in food systems to avoid increasing inequality, while promoting data privacy and transparency (part of human rights). Participants underlined that collection of data is not neutral: it can help to monitor progress on Goal 2, but it can also be misused for proprietary gains. Policy measures in this regard need to assess a variety of aspects about digitalization: from technologies to infrastructure, and governance and market aspects along food chains.

15. **Upscaling digitalization across the food system from production to consumption, improve access to food markets and nutrition by all.** Digitalization offers great promise for transforming food systems, adding values and improving efficiency. However, upscaling need to be matched with robust measures to narrow the digital divide and create enabling conditions to expand the digital innovations and possibilities to the excluded and women. Evidence-based policies to ensure inclusive access, avoid further exclusion, especially for rural households lacking access to internet or digital skills. In addition, digitalization policies need safeguards to avoid exclusion (employment, access to markets and nutritious foods) and to reduce the digital divide between countries, rural-urban and, and between women and girls and their male counterparts. Digitalization require investments in basic transport and information and communications technology infrastructure, extension services and other enabling conditions.

16. **Strengthening urban agriculture, local food production, and short value chains to improve nutrition and access to food among the urban poor.** The role of governments is critical to local food and shorter food chains governance and to integrating this issue into urban planning. Many countries in the region have moved to promote urban food gardening, especially following COVID-19 pandemic. The role of local government in regulating and providing incentives is critical, including facilitating access to underutilized lots for urban gardening. Also highlighted was the impact of ambient air pollution, residual water and its impact on urban food quality. Likewise the use of pesticides for food production can also increase pollution in urban settings. Urban food governance require policies, regulations and

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[2] www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%202%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v3.pdf.

infrastructure support for sustainable urban food development protective of the environment and human health.

17. **Leveraging social protection system to enhance food security and nutrition outcomes.** 'This requires collaboration with other sectors such as health, education and agriculture, as well as involvement of civil society'

18. **Stronger investments in disaster and pandemic preparedness needed across the systems.** Investing in education and research as part of endeavours to strengthen disaster and pandemic preparedness. Disaster and pandemic preparedness systems need to overcome existing biases in favour of urban versus rural areas, and in favour of large private sector actors, particularly in light of decreasing public investments in agriculture. Governments need to invest in stronger disaster preparedness, early warning, monitoring, and response systems

19. **Increase women's access to productive resources, markets, training and technology to meet the agricultural productivity and nutrition targets.** In order to meet the agricultural productivity and nutrition targets, it is important that we understand the challenges that women face such as lack of access and opportunities, depending on the country-specific situation. It is important to tackle vulnerabilities of women in agriculture, including the issue of gender-based violence and lack of access to related services in rural areas. Women should be engaged in policy-making process such as those that determine access to productive assets such as land. Women also need better opportunities for training and skill development adapted to their needs. Engaging women in urban agriculture is critical and require facilitating access to farming equipment, space for production and marketing opportunities through inclusive procurement.

III. Goal 3: Good health and well-being, in Asia and the Pacific

20. The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 3 were informed by the relevant goal profile[3] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

21. **Coverage of health services.** Countries should focus on health systems strengthening, to sustain and protect the progress that has been made and recover the gains that have been lost during the pandemic. Countries should achieve more equitable coverage of health services, particularly comprehensive sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health services. This will be made possible through improving the numbers, distribution and retention of health workers, particularly midwives, and ensuring they are trained to high-quality standards. Addressing harmful gender and social norms will contribute to reducing inequities in access and use of health care, particularly for vulnerable population groups and in fragile settings.

22. **Innovation.** Innovations in healthcare provision should be explored to ensure coordination and continuity of care, using new technologies. Innovation can be used both for capacity building of the health workforce through virtual learning, and to increase service delivery through telemedicine, point of care diagnostics and self-care medical innovations. Partnerships with the private sector can support the development and use of new technologies for health.

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[3] www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%203%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v4.pdf.

23.   **Data for health.** To achieve better coverage and quality of health services, countries should invest in health and logistic management information systems, strengthen data quality and improve the availability of disaggregated data. Investments are needed to build local capacities to collect, synthesise and analyse reliable and comparable data, disaggregated by equity stratifiers such as gender, age, income and residence. This will allow countries to identify those who are left behind, enable rapid decision making and inform equity-oriented health programs, policies and practices, to attain health for all. Investments are also needed in learning systems focused on continuous quality improvement to generate and translate data for action.

24.   **Quality of care.** The quality of care should be improved for all, including for gender non-conforming communities, women and adolescent girls, older persons, migrant and indigenous populations, people living with disabilities, and other marginalized and disadvantaged groups. There is a need to enhance an accountability framework using human centered approaches to reach those left behind, and to provide efficient, equitable care while maintaining quality across populations. Countries should strengthen and reform primary health care, a key to achieving Universal Health Care, as it addresses community health needs. Ensuring timely procurement, equitable distribution, appropriate use and maintenance of essential medical commodities can facilitate delivery of high-quality health services. Attention is needed on continuous quality improvement of healthcare across the life-course, at all levels of services, and across population groups.

25.   **Integration and response.** Engagement and awareness among both health and non-health stakeholders should be increased, as progress in other Sustainable Development Goals is critical to achieving Goal 3. Countries should promote "health in all policies" – a coherent approach to public policies across all sectors that takes into account health implications, seeks collaborations and addresses the social determinants of health. Countries should adopt policy frameworks that promote integrated approaches between environmental, animal, and human health, including climate change and air pollution. Countries need to have a preparedness, response and recovery plan for pandemics and other emergencies that includes comprehensive risk communication, continuation of health services, procurement of emergency supplies. These plans should be developed using participatory and gender responsive approaches, including focus on the intersectionalities and leaving no one behind.

26.   **Health financing.** Health expenditures should be increased and and allocation of sufficient resources ensured by all countries to strengthen their health systems and finance their national health plans, including pandemics and other emergencies preparedness and response plans. This should be achieved by strengthening domestic resource mobilisation and increasing public revenues, for example by improving the tax system administration and designing more equitable tax policies, such as smart earmarking of taxes to support health programs. Countries should improve public expenditure efficiency and enhance the prioritisation of health programs. Countries should also expand access to essential health services coverage by reducing out-of-pocket and catastrophic health expenditures and improving financial protection, through the implementation of national health insurance schemes and strengthening public-private sector partnerships.

IV. Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth, in Asia and the Pacific

27. The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 8 were informed by the relevant goal profile[4] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

28. **Be inclusive in setting and strengthening the institutional mechanisms for decent work-led sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.** Given its breadth, making progress on Goal 8 necessitates the integrated planning of a broad array of actors including ministries of economy, environment and labour, local governments, trade unions, employers' organizations, and the private sector, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. A particular emphasis should be made to ensure that also the voices of marginalized groups are included in the decision-making process. Gender-responsive economic stimulus packages and other economic support should target not only big business but also be channeled to self-employed workers and affected employees, including in the informal sector, and to small and medium enterprises who underpin the economy in Asia and the Pacific. Specific attention should be aimed at sectors such as manufacturing, tourism, and hospitality, which have been particularly vulnerable to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

29. **Strengthen labour market institutions for effective and inclusive labour market governance.** Key labour market institutions include legislation and regulations on employment and social protection, freedom of association, anti-discrimination, occupational safety and health, unacceptable forms of work, minimum wages, and collective bargaining. These labour market institutions, when properly enforced, are critical to supporting recovery from the current COVID-19 crisis and serve as the basis for the achievement of Goal 8 and also interlinked Goals such as the eradication of poverty (Goal 1), achieving gender equality (Goal 5), reducing inequalities (Goal 10), climate action (Goal 13) and promoting just institutions (Goal 16). Special consideration is needed to extend the reach of labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, home-based workers, and migrant workers. Governments in countries of destination and countries of origin as well as employers and hiring agencies should provide all migrant populations, irrespective of their migration status, the full protection of their human rights during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, without prejudice and discrimination and in compliance with international law and relevant UN and International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions. Particular focus is warranted on the promotion and ratification of: Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Also related to strengthening institutions is the call to increase the capacity of national statistics offices to ensure regular collection of regular labour force surveys, or other household surveys needed to monitor decent work and inclusive growth, with adequate disaggregation for monitoring Sustainable Development Goal indicators as applicable to all target groups.

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[4] www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%208%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v4.pdf.

30.   **Accelerate occupational safety and health as a fundamental labour right.** The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the importance of proactive occupational safety and health preventive measures. Upgraded occupational safety and health measures and renewed commitment for protecting all workers, including informal workers, migrant workers, and frontline health care providers, from future pandemic and emerging occupational safety and health hazards and risks are required. Governments, workers' and employers' organizations and civil society organizations must work together to ensure the activation of prevention and mitigation strategies in outbreak areas with inadequate resources, such as in informal settlements of migrant populations. Collaborative interventions should include the provision of essential emergency needs such as food, medical treatment, and water sanitation and hygiene, including sanitary products as well as consideration for the provision of flexible working arrangements, paid leave, and housing.

31.   **Step up investments in human capital to provide all people the opportunities to realize their full potential throughout the lifecycle.** While education for all, lifelong learning and building technical and core skills are themes featured under Goal 4, they also serve as key input to human development as well as the decent work and economic growth outcomes of a country. The pandemic has elevated the importance of inclusive reskilling, especially for workers in impacted sectors like tourism and manufacturing who could be trained for future growth sectors. What is more, the crisis has laid bare the situation of youth not in employment, education, or training as well as the persistent inequality in education and training systems throughout the region linked to the digital divide. For this reason, and in the context of rapid technological advances, progress in Goal 8 will necessitate increasing investments in people's capabilities and strengthening formal and non-formal education and training capacities with particular attention to boosting capabilities within vulnerable populations including women. This can include a universal entitlement to lifelong learning that enables people to acquire market-relevant skills and to reskill and upskill, while also increasing investment in the institutions, policies, and strategies for delivery of labour market programmes and employment services that will support people to navigate the increasing number of labour market transitions over the course of their lives.

32.   **Progressive policy reforms through social dialogue are required to promote a "just transition" towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.** With economic prosperity and social progress in the region threatened by environmental degradation and climate change, there is an urgency to act on climate change. The transition to a low greenhouse gas economy is expected to lead to a net creation of jobs, including green jobs. Substantial progress can be made to reduce the global material footprint through greater resource efficiency in the key sectors of agriculture, food, construction, and infrastructure. Reversing the increased rate of material extraction requires an adoption of a new economic model that decouples economic growth from environmental degradation. To achieve a positive impact at the required scale, decoupling needs to be at the heart of national economic planning. Green and inclusive policies should therefore be integral to COVID-19 socio-economic recovery plans and stimulus packages. This may require technical, legal, and financial assistance and the implementation of public industrial policies in support of the transition to low greenhouse gas economies, with increased levels of research, innovation, and enhanced social, environmental, and economic sustainability. As more countries are encouraged to adopt broad and comprehensive policy frameworks on the green economy,

attention will need to focus on implementation especially in view of ensuring that no one is left behind in the transition process.

33. **Design coherent and integrated strategies to ensure the dignity of work for all, including for informal workers and those in precarious employment.** Certain countries in the region have initiated strategies to formalize the informal economy in line with the ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2015. The guidelines of R.204 highlight the formulation of appropriate macroeconomic and skills policies; simplified registration procedures; extended scope of, and compliance with, labour laws; improved access to credit; and offering incentives, such as tax incentives, and extending social protection coverage to all categories of workers, including migrant and domestic workers. Technological advances and the growing digital economy demand the further extension of digital infrastructure, social protection, and regulation of new forms of work that have the potential to erode the quality of jobs for an increasing number of workers. More immediately, as part of their short- and longer-term COVID-19 recovery, companies must include gender-sensitive measures to ensure that women are not left behind in the workplace and across their entire value chains at a challenging time. The Women's Empowerment Principles, established by UN-Women and the UN Global Compact since 2010, provide guidance and tools for companies that are committed to this agenda.

34. **Develop and implement frameworks to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid and underpaid care work, advance equal pay and enhance public investment in care infrastructure.** There is an opportunity to professionalize and create secure and decent work opportunities in the care economy in the region. This can be accomplished by creating women-led/owned enterprises in care work and supporting the transition of care workers from informal to the formal economy through training, education, and certification. To remove barriers that prevent women's labour force participation and free more women up to work for pay requires: promoting gender-just skills training; expanding affordable childcare; ensuring safe public spaces, transport and workplace facilities; sharing unpaid work more equally between men and women through, for instance, policies promoting parental leave and flexible working; deploying digital technologies; and, most importantly, creating incentives to shift social norms that perpetuate women and girl's roles as family caregivers towards shared responsibilities between women and men. Also linked to Goal 8 and the aim for inclusive growth is the call for accelerated action to put in place and enforce equal pay with gender-based anti-discrimination legislation, including pay transparency measures. Particular focus is warranted on the promotion and ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206).

V. Goal 10: Reduced inequalities, in Asia and the Pacific

35. The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 10 were informed by the relevant goal profile[5] focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

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[5] www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%2010%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v3.pdf.

36. **Across the region, all countries need to step up investments in universal, accessible, gender-sensitive and disaster-responsive social protection, in accordance with the social protection floor**. If properly designed and implemented, social protection was a transformative investment in people. It boosted economic growth, dampened inequality, and protected against environmental and disaster risks. Social protection also shielded children from compounding risks. COVID-19 had brought these important functions of social protection into focus. Governments in the region should continue prioritizing human capital development through appropriate fiscal policies, such as progressive taxation.

37. **Policies should be developed along the four pillars of decent work, including principles and rights at work, job creation, social protection, and social dialogue.** Achieving equal pay for work of equal value required policies aimed at combating discriminatory practices and gender-based stereotypes, including concerning the value of women's work. It also required effective policies on maternity, paternity, and parental leave, as well as advocacy for better sharing of family responsibilities. As national economies continue to adjust to the challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 crisis, policymakers must be cognizant of the challenges facing low-income workers and those in the informal economy to ensure they are not excluded from the benefits of economic recovery.

38. **Governments should adopt and implement effective anti-discrimination legislation and policies, in recognition that inequalities are often the result of discriminatory laws, policies, and social practices that leave particular groups of people behind.** The legislation should contain comprehensive definitions of discrimination and grounds for discrimination, which should include all aspects prohibited under international human rights law including sex, race, skin colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, disability, economic position, property, marital status, birth and migration status. Governments needed to be accountable for the implementation of legislation by ensuring accessible mechanisms that provided equitable and effective remedies for discrimination. Efforts were also needed to address unconscious bias in the policymaking process as well as stigma and discrimination based on local and historical particularities.

39. **Address the disempowerment of marginalized communities and their lack of voice and visibility as a root cause of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, environmental hazards, and other large-scale crises.** The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated acutely how the most vulnerable are disproportionately affected by shocks and unexpected disruptions, thus widening inequality gaps. Disaster risk reduction mechanisms needed to be inclusive, taking into account the vulnerabilities of all groups irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status, and built on traditional knowledge systems and practices.

40. **Efforts to achieve equality must address inequality as a driver of precarious migration, climate and disaster displacement, and reduce inequalities faced by migrants, especially migrants in vulnerable situations.** Migration should be a choice made free of duress and take place in a safe, orderly, and regular fashion, respecting the human rights of migrants and their families in line with international law. Regular pathways for migration, including bridging the gaps between recruitment and re-integration of migrants, needed to be enhanced and institutionalized through a multi-stakeholder approach. Governments should ensure that all migrants have

non-discriminatory access to social protection, including through decent job creation, ethical recruitment and employer pay principles. Migrants' freedom of movement should be respected, including during crises. Mechanisms should also be developed to produce and share accurate, disaggregated data, including on the grounds of migration status, that are used to guide policy.

41. **Identify those who were the furthest behind through rigorous analysis, as this evidence would be the foundation for developing inequality-reducing policies.** Intersecting characteristics that aggravated disadvantage (or accentuated advantage), should also be explored, as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had recently started doing to support UN Country Teams' analysis. For example, when gender inequality intersects with other forms of discrimination, the impacts intensify on marginalized women and girls. Policymakers needed to emphasize the collection of disaggregated data, including on gender, age, disability, migrant status, and other relevant grounds. Additionally, strengthened regional cooperation for monitoring of emerging transboundary disaster 'hotspots' was needed, including disaggregated data highlighting the groups most at risk and comparatively most affected by disasters. For underrepresented and marginalized populations, citizen-led data and qualitative data might complement official statistics.

42. **Address a growing digital divide in the region by prioritizing digital literacy, infrastructure and accessibility related to digital spaces. Increased digitization held the potential to flatten inequalities by granting universal access to opportunities and services previously accessible only to some.** However, the COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated how digital systems could exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and lead to discrimination, for example children without electricity or internet access who were unable to attend online school or workers in the informal economy who could not work remotely. Specific attention should be given to the existing and projected future digital divide in the region as it pertained to the socioeconomically disadvantaged, marginalized and excluded populations, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

VI. Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production, in Asia and the Pacific

43. The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 12 were informed by the relevant goal profile[6] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

44. Accelerate efforts for **efficient plastic waste management**. Strong regulatory and legal frameworks are needed to address land and marine pollution issues and to control plastics movements. National roadmaps to address plastic waste can catalyze action including supporting investment in alternative material to plastics. Support to local governments to invest in capital and infrastructure is needed for a circular economy approach, and to harness effective policy instruments, such as Extended Producer Responsibility, fiscal policy, and regulatory instruments. Basel Convention Annex 2 has a list of materials that need to be tracked and plastic scraps could be added to this list. Involve all schools and universities and convert them into environmentally friendly practicing places.

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[6] www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%2012%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v4_0.pdf.

45.   Accelerate efforts to **strengthen monitoring systems and indicators.** To measure progress and prioritize action, monitoring systems and indicators need to be developed that integrate natural resources, socio-economic development, and policies, from process to impact. The number of people from the general public and schools and universities' awareness should be raised – behavior should be measured. All monitoring data should be publicly available.

46.   Accelerate **awareness raising on sustainable consumption and production and Goal 12**. Sustainable consumption and production policies and action plans are shaping up in countries at national and sub-national levels. However, the policymakers and stakeholders are not yet fully aware of the sustainable consumption and production implications cutting across all the sectors and all the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, further work on awareness-raising and capacity building on mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production across different sectors and national and sub-national policies and actions is required. Capacity building on implementation of sustainable consumption and production policies, action plans and reporting on Goal 12 can also to be included along with awareness-raising as one of the key priority areas for action. Awareness of the general public, schools and universities should be enhanced (science-education for the general public and educational institutes).

47.   Accelerate **mainstreaming of approaches through sustainable consumption and production integration into core national strategies** and more holistic approaches to sustainable consumption and production policies that address production as well as lifestyles and consumption in all sectors such as energy, agri-food and other agri-industries, mobility, construction, housing, tourism, public procurement, small scale industries, health and education.

48.   Accelerate **empowerment of women entrepreneurs.** Women are in the position to provide sustainable products and services in any sector to every corner of communities. Financing women entrepreneurs in sustainable products and services as well as providing capacity building, ensuring their access to technology, designing supporting policies, and establishing financial frameworks are the keys to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Shifting towards more sustainable habits in daily consumption in workplaces, homes, schools, and communities as well as ensuring a proportional representation and participation of women in all facets of decision making at all levels, such as in industries and policy planning can promote sustainable consumption and production processes.

49.   Accelerate efforts to **promote green recovery as the engine for COVID-19 recovery.** Countries should be encouraged to take the socio-ecological crisis more seriously given for example the state of plastic and air pollution in the region. Human health and environmental sustainability should be the new normal, and they should be high on the list of national priorities. Also, the removal of subsidies to energy products (petroleum products, electricity production, and electricity consumption) should be part of the overall framework of the country's tax reform. The revenue freed up from the rationalization of the energy products could be used to provide social welfare and social safety nets for those who are affected by COVID-19. Governments can create an enabling environment for sustainable consumption and production as a vehicle for green recovery.

50.   Accelerate efforts to **enhance stakeholder involvement**. For instance, we can encourage corporate change through policy tools. Business taxonomy to translate circular economy for sustainable consumption and production that makes business sense is needed. Clear roadmaps and targets for business transitions to a circular economy can enhance stakeholder involvement. Appropriate policy tools including regulations, taxes and subsidies will trigger corporate decisions on green innovation investments as well as regenerative of economy by design and encourage green consumption. Extend producer responsibility to make the products durable. The informal sector is often overlooked but it is a key to drive a circular economy in the region. To achieve Goal 12 targets and given that Pacific Islands are vulnerable to the changing climate, a transition to a low carbon society is needed. Initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as paperless society are urged. New or existing platforms such as Partner for green growth and global goals 2030 and Low Emission Development Strategy, can be used to strengthen stakeholder engagement.

51.   Accelerate efforts to **strengthen the regulatory frameworks for sustainable consumption and production**. Despite the economic benefits of resource efficiency, market forces alone are insufficient and too slow to overcome systemic barriers to sustainable consumption and production. All countries need a strong regulatory framework to make the transition to responsible consumption and production before planetary boundaries are crossed, and in time for major capital investments in the region. Three policies that can support this include strict industrial standards on environmental protection and pollution mitigation, the internalization of environmental externalities into the price of goods and services, and strict standards on air pollution and emissions from vehicles. Regulatory frameworks should also create an enabling environment for private sector to produce sustainability and for consumers to consume sustainably.

52.   Accelerate efforts to **implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes**. With a rapidly urbanizing population and a growing middle-class, the 10YFP programmes on consumer information, sustainable tourism and sustainable lifestyles and education provide toolkits and lessons learned from other countries that can be rolled out in the region. Accelerated and active engagement of private sector and youth should be in focus to implement the 10 YFP project.

53.   Accelerate efforts for **an integrated circular economy approach.** The region must transition toward a more circular model that strengthens resource efficiency (Goal 12.2), improves waste management (Goal 12.3, 12.4, 12.5) and embeds environmental impacts in various sectoral and national development policies. A shift toward circular production and consumption pathways can reduce pollution on land and in water (Goal 14, 15), lead to innovation in industry and energy infrastructure, reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Goal 7, 9, 13), and provide decent jobs to reduce poverty and inequality (Goal 1, 8, 5, 10). Social engineering, citizen awareness, effective incentives and financing to make circularity feasible in local businesses is needed. Technological innovation — in technologies that make circular economies possible, and viable policy roadmaps and coordination can also support action.

54.   Accelerate efforts to **strengthen capacity building, technical and financial support.** Sustainable consumption and production is significantly externally driven with many processes requiring technical assistance from, and funding of, external actors. Strengthening domestic support and the

development of financial instruments at national levels is needed. Technology transfer and Capacity building on Hi-Tech are needed for Asian countries. Climate Finance initiatives should be collaborated on between private sectors and international agencies.

VII.   Goal 13: Climate action, in Asia and the Pacific

55.   The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 13 were informed by the relevant goal profile[7] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

56.   **Redesign the finance and investment systems to become climate action compatible**: The amount of climate financing utilized in Asia-Pacific is increasing year on year; countries in East Asia and the Pacific are the largest receivers of climate finance flows, 41 per cent or USD 238 billion in 2017-2018. To elevate the levels of climate finance a favourable environment and systemic approaches to climate finance must be fostered to incentivize such investment, while ensuring gender responsiveness and human rights. This includes engagement of private sector and increasing accessibility of climate finance for many sectors, including local communities and marginalized groups, to generate demand. Several important measures need to be undertaken, including:

(a)   a thorough subsidy reform to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies coupled with Sustainable Development Goal 7 roadmaps;

(b)   incorporate climate action conditionality in post-COVID19 recovery packages to avoid investments in carbon-intensive activities;

(c)   robust enforcement of the polluters' pay principle, including through the establishment of carbon taxes/carbon pricing instruments and fostering of sub-regional and regional carbon markets;

(d)   working with private finance sector to integrate climate action and risks into their operations;

(e)   new, additional, non-debt creating climate finance, observing principles of inclusion and human rights, including a focus on adaptation and considering loss and damage; and

(f)   incentivize the leapfrogging to avoid carbon intensive activities in transition to zero carbon society.

57.   **Seize COVID-19 recovery opportunities to accelerate climate and disaster risk reduction action**: The national COVID-19 recovery initiatives, including promotion of digitalisation, provide a window of opportunity for green, healthy, safe and more resilient recovery with the ambition towards zero emissions. There is potential for leveraging climate actions from mitigation, adaptation and resilience-focused efforts in line with the Paris Agreement with co-benefits for realization of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, across all levels (local, sub-national, national, sub-regional, regional) over the short, medium and long-terms. Climate actions can leverage co-benefits in areas of, inter alia, air pollution (including transport, energy) – and contribute to multiple Sustainable Development Goals. To leverage recovery opportunities a review of climate and disaster risk governance mechanism (laws, policies and strategies) at central and subnational levels is urged to ensure better

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[7]   www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%2013%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v3.pdf.

coherence across the various frameworks and the adoption of a multi hazard approach.

58. **Increase ambition levels in Nationally Determined Contributions**: The path to achieving safe climate is the one where countries undertake ambitious climate action to achieve Paris Agreement compatible 1.5°C emissions pathways, which are also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. This will entail that emissions peak in 2020-2021, and then with sufficient measures for mitigation, the emissions decline by 45 per cent by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050. Most recent nationally determined contribution updates from the region show ambitions towards achieving the latter target and it is imperative for the other regional countries to follow suit with ambitious pledges and nationally determined contribution reviews in 2021. Those can well be aligned with green and inclusive, pro-poor, post-COVID-19 recovery strategies for achieving both human and planetary health. Since emissions from fossil fuels constitute the sizeable amount of the overall regional emissions, it is important for the countries in the Asia-Pacific region to embark on a path of decarbonization of power generation by 2050. One key factor to achieving this scenario is increasing the share of renewables. The co-benefits of such a pathway are numerous, ranging from creation of new jobs, fostering new revenue streams and opportunities for economic growth and business development, to drastic reduction of air pollution with direct and indirect impact on health. Member States are urged to submit enhanced nationally determined contributions, including mitigating of short-lived climate pollutants, especially black carbon, to achieve co-benefits and to strive at pledging to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Development of roadmaps to affordable and clean energy would allow countries in Asia-Pacific to design best scenarios for the energy production, energy supply, and energy use in industry, transport and housing to achieve net zero emissions, develop renewable energy business options, ensure access to affordable and clean energy for all, and create new job opportunities.

59. **Enhance institutional frameworks, adopting a whole-of-society approach**. Integrating the nationally determined contribution commitments in sectoral and subnational budgets, with the endorsement of financial ministers, will ensure gains in implementation and further raising the ambition of the second editions of the nationally determined contributions. Engagement of public sector in developing climate finance strategies would ensure mobilization of domestic financial resources needed for implementation and upscaling of nationally determined contributions, as for example is achieved in the Philippines with the strategy for a just transition to a zero emissions society and promoting green jobs. Policy actions should include empowerment of youth, women, vulnerable and marginalized communities.

60. **Integrate climate change and disaster risk reduction into public financial management and private investment**. Urgent action is needed to use scientific forecast to understand risk, prevent new risks, reduce existing risk, adapt to a changing climate and enhance anticipatory humanitarian action approaches by strengthening coherent climate and disaster risk governance systems and develop evidence-based and inclusive policies that are linked to financial resources and locally led participatory action. Measures noted below, can also be used to strengthen the climate dimension of National Integrated Financing Frameworks:

(g)   Adoption of tools to support such action, including policy instruments, such as Climate change financing Frameworks; Climate and Disaster risk management Public Expenditure and Institutional reviews; and Climate Budget Tagging

(h)   Action that encourages and incentivizes private investors and banks to strategically align their investments with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals and scale up their contribution to the achievement of both. Innovative schemes can include launching carbon pricing instruments, such as emissions trading systems or a carbon tax to incentivize industries to reduce emissions as well as to develop risk-informed resilient infrastructure. Tools such as green and catastrophic bonds and integration of climate change and disaster risk reduction into business operations should be promoted to support decision making regarding potential impactful weather or climate vents on the business and communities in which they operate.

(i)   Increase institutional capacity of governments, civil society, local and indigenous communities, public and private stakeholders to develop 'bankable' proposals that enable harnessing co-benefits for human rights and gender equality and allow investors to make gender-responsive climate-related investments (for instance, through creating climate finance training in universities, taking down barriers hindering women's access to climate finance) and ensuring continued work across humanitarian and development communities, e.g. on anticipatory actions. Support to youth-focused and youth-led organizations can be prioritized, given their active role in implementing climate solutions on the ground and the intergenerational inequity caused by the climate crisis. Developing countries, especially small island developing States, least developed countries and climate vulnerable areas, will require 'readiness' support to accredit direct access entities and help them develop successful green climate fund proposals. Finance reporting needs to be improved and climate finance flows need to become more transparent to address the gap between pledged and received resources. This can be supported by engaging civil society in the review of proposals.

61.   **Strengthen climate information services** for vulnerable sectors and communities, integrate human rights-based approaches, and develop gender-responsive monitoring systems, data collection and application. Investment in climate and disaster risk assessments and disaster loss accounting systems, with strong emphasis on vulnerability analysis and sex-, age-, and disability disaggregated data collection can be strengthened to ensure that vulnerable populations (children, gender minorities, indigenous people, migrants, displaced etc.) and social sectors crucial to them (e.g. health, education etc.), are reflected in climate and disaster risk management and policies and investments. Shortfalls of sex-disaggregated data and lack of gender analysis undermines relevant policymakers and agencies to address the disproportionate climate-related impacts on women and that inevitably leads to gender-blind policies, planning, and strategies. National environmental and disaster statistics and disaster forensic capabilities can be improved to identify gender and socio-economic impacts of past extensive and intensive disasters, assess costs and benefits of disaster risk reduction investments and improve the accuracy of future disaster risk impact modelling that takes into account diversities across population groups. Voluntary National Reviews should also be used to assess and present progress on achieving climate and disaster resilience goals. Ministries responsible for managing monitoring systems and data collection should leverage existing platforms and mechanisms to strengthen coordination and data sharing across sectors, civil society, and other

stakeholders, including through targeted capacity building for government officials.

62.   A human rights-based approach should be integrated in any climate change adaptation or mitigation measures, such as the promotion of alternative energy sources, forest conservation or tree-planting projects, resettlement schemes, protected areas and others. Affected individuals, different groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and communities must participate without discrimination, in the design and implementation of these projects. They must have access to due process and to remedy if their rights are violated.

63.   **Investments in environmentally and climate friendly technologies should benefit women by providing equal green job opportunities.**   To address the widening gaps of gender equality and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, women's economic empowerment through green jobs should be a priority for COVID-19 recovery. One promising area for this is improving women's access to renewable energy solutions and sustainable and climate-friendly technologies. Decentralized renewables for energy access provide opportunities to open new economic potential for the poor as well as unlock resilient livelihoods for communities, including women, through access to electricity for irrigation, processing equipment or early warning systems. Investment in environmentally friendly technologies, eco-based climate change adaptation, climate-smart agriculture and climate-resilient food system is also crucial to help vulnerable people and to build climate-resilient societies.

64.   **Enhance the capacities of local governments to accelerate climate actions:** Multilevel climate action is essential to leverage local climate action and contribute to nationally determined contribution implementation. Effective decentralization through vertical and horizontal integration should be supported by clear governance frameworks and can be a key enabling instrument to enhance collaborative climate action among national and subnational authorities and develop shared responsibilities that may reduce the burden on central governments. . It is important to support the vulnerability assessments and mapping at district level done with the engagement of local or district disaster management committees. Support for financing of subnational actions and access of local governments to climate financing are essential to capitalize on local mitigation and adaption opportunities, including through renewable energy, energy efficiency, public transport and resilient urban infrastructure. Regional cooperation creates opportunities for sharing appropriate innovative solutions across cities and the domino effect from learning and raising ambition levels at subnational levels.

65.   **Mainstream climate change in education for sustainable development**: Climate education, including from a human rights-based approach perspective, needs to be mainstreamed across all aspects and levels of education systems, as well as in non-formal, informal education and lifelong learning to ensure strengthened understanding of the risks and remedial measures that can be taken at the national and local levels, leveraging the co-benefits with Goal 4. Higher education institutes can be supported to teach and study climate change mitigation and adaptation options, and communities can be encouraged and enabled to apply best practices. The five priority action areas for mainstreaming climate action into education for sustainable development include: 1) advancing policy - both at the national and at the school/community/local levels to integrate and implement climate action and education for sustainable development, 2) transforming learning environments - ensuring a whole-school approach that engages ALL stakeholders and actors into climate action, 3) building capacities of educators - ensuring that teachers

and learners are resilient in the face of crises and change, 4) empowering and mobilizing youth - ensuring engagement and inclusion of all and driving future change and solutions, and 5) accelerating local level actions - strengthening the holistic approach to climate action and education for sustainable development.

VIII. Goal 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions in Asia and the Pacific

66.   The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 16 were informed by the relevant goal profile[8] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

67.   **Uphold fundamental freedoms and ensure public access to information.** With civic space in the region continuing to shrink and a growing range of online restrictions and surveillance in place, the accountability of States in ensuring public and safe access to information and freedom of expression while combating disinformation remains a priority for the region. It is therefore important to protect those most at risk, namely, journalists, media workers, human rights, and environmental defenders with a particular focus on youth and indigenous people, by strengthening legislative and institutional safeguards and ensuring accountability for human rights violations. Building awareness of the critical situation requires enhanced monitoring at country-level, including collecting disaggregated data. Related legislation must meet international human rights standards, and effective implementation of legislation on access to information is required.

68.   **Equal access to justice for all during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.** Barriers to equal access to justice increased with the onset of the pandemic and led to the suspension of court hearings and further restricted access to legal assistance and legal aid services. Many judiciaries in the region reacted quickly in introducing, or expanding, the ability to hold court hearings online and both state and civil society legal aid providers in many countries developed applications and systems for remote access to legal advice, especially to assist the increasing number of survivors of gender-based violence. Innovations on e-justice or digital justice can increase access to justice in the region. However, particular attention must be paid to accessibility of digital technologies for all, including persons with disabilities, and to the technical, economic, and social constraints which exist. More broadly, international standards relating to human rights and rule of law, including space for traditional justice mechanisms, must be upheld by Member States.

69.   **Strengthen environmental rule of law and protect environmental defenders to build back better from COVID-19.** Environmental rule of law must be strengthened through effective legal frameworks, strong institutions, access to information and justice in environmental matters, recognizing and addressing the digital divide, and a by providing safe enabling environment for environmental human rights defenders, including indigenous peoples, children, youth and local communities, in order to sustainably recover from COVID-19, in order to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and meet globally agreed environmental commitments.

70.   **Address discrimination and stigma.** Public communication and public support campaigns that promote non-violence and rejects xenophobia, racism and all forms of intolerance, play a key role in countering the alarming

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8   www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/SDG%2016%20Goal%20Profile_Final%20Web_EDIT%20v3.pdf.

spike in intolerance and hate speech that has fueled longstanding challenges with discrimination and stigma including on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. At the same time, there is a need for increased efforts to change negative social norms and practices. As recalled in the UN Plan of Action on Hate Speech and Guidance Note on Addressing and Countering COVID-19-related Hate Speech, freedom of expression and the right to information play a central role in countering hate speech. A whole of society approach is required to proactively address on and offline misinformation networks, ensuring that government, civil society, private sector and vulnerable populations work together to inform policies and programming that balances freedom of expression with the need to curb mis/disinformation.

71. **Improve the collection and quality of data, particularly disaggregated data.** Recognizing the centrality of Goal 16 as an enabler and accelerator for the 2030 Agenda, further efforts are required to strengthen national capacities for data collection, analysis and data prioritization. As with many other Sustainable Development Goals it is also urgent to address the lack of data disaggregated by sex, race, colour, age, language, religion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, migration or other status.

72. **Increase efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and violence against children.** Increased efforts are needed to eliminate gender-based violence and violence against children and women, including by addressing drivers, such as discrimination, harmful social norms and practices as well as gender stereotypes with a view to interrupt the intergenerational cycle of the phenomenon. It is also important to repeal discriminatory laws and policies that facilitate gender-based violence and violence against children and women; to strengthen laws, policies, and national action plans on eliminating gender-based violence and violence against children and women, to increase the capacity of frontline law enforcement and justice actors on women's and children's access to justice, and of the social service workforce, and to take additional measures for persons at heightened risk of violence, such as women and girls with disabilities, indigenous women and LGBTIQ persons.

73. **Strengthen responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.** Further efforts to promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of all, especially women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, marginalized communities, and those left behind, in decision-making at all levels and in all fields of sustainable development. This includes commitments to achieving diversity, gender parity and equitable representation in decision-making bodies in support of Goal 16, as well as Goal 5, Goal 10, core international human rights instruments and the Women, Peace & Security and Youth, Peace & Security agendas, through promotion of social innovation and digital platforms, and comprehensive understanding of cultural contexts. Amendments to electoral codes, and the introduction of temporary special measures have effectively been used to close the gender gap and increase diversity of representation and similar measures should be adopted to strengthen political participation of other under-represented groups. Available tools for participant should be used, such as Citizen Oversight of Procurement and Local Budget Mechanisms, Sustainable Development Goal Localization, Environmental Impacts Assessments, and Citizen Score-Cards.

74. **Strengthen efforts towards providing a legal identity for all through universal civil registration and vital statistics.** Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics from civil registration records are critical for the region in order to recover from the current crisis and monitor progress towards

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Efforts need to be accelerated towards universal registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as agreed in the Ministerial Declaration to 'Get Every One in the Picture' in Asia and the Pacific, in order to achieve legal identity for all through a holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management. We must increase our attention on hard-to-reach and marginalized groups to ensure registration for all, including for unregistered adults, in alignment with the promise to Leave No One Behind in recognition of the increased need for individuals to prove their identity.

IX. Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals, in Asia and the Pacific

75. The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 17 were informed by the relevant goal profile[9] and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

76. **The modalities for development (North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation) are all important and complimentary**. Furthermore, the target of the North to achieve 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product as Official Development Assistance (ODA) must be honoured. Development partners in the Asia-Pacific Region including Member States of the Global South, developed countries, the UN Regional Collaboration Platform, intergovernmental organisations, and apex bodies of non-state actors to mobilise resources and scale up South-South and triangular cooperation as called for in the Second United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation and the subsequent strategy and action plans prepared by the United Nations for sub-regional, regional and interregional South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation. People-to-people connectivity, including through development volunteers, can enhance efforts to achieve Agenda 2030.

77. **The region to work on a comprehensive proposal on concrete ways to enhance the role and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation** and to improve its coordination and coherence in the region, particularly within the scope of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

78. **Investments in national data governance, stewardship and innovation, especially the integration of geospatial, citizen-led, and statistical information**, are critical to guarantee data accessibility, ownership and use to advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensure equitable coverage of all people and geographical areas while maintaining consistency and comparability and deliver on agreed follow-up and review mechanisms.

79. **Investments are critical to Asia-Pacific's shared vision of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems** that facilitate realization of rights and support good governance, health and development including for the 2030 Agenda and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for populations hardest hit by the pandemic.

80. **Public finance is critical for COVID-19 recovery packages and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for ensuring public goods and equity**. To enhance fiscal space, countries need to widen the tax base, increase tax progressivity, tackle tax evasion, strengthen tax administration and expenditure efficiency, where regional and global tax

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[9] www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/Policy%20Recommendations%20%28Breakout%20Groups%29.pdf.

cooperation are also crucial. Debt sustainability requires prudent debt management, innovative collaboration between monetary and fiscal authorities, more ambitious and broader debt relief and a review of debt conditionalities. Meeting of quantitative ODA targets that are equity-enhancing and risk-mitigating remains critical. Integrated national financing frameworks can help to align government budgets with national development plans and priority Sustainable Development Goals and facilitate collaborative efforts to mobilize international public resources and leverage private Sustainable Development Goal-aligned innovative financing instruments and investments.

81.   **Private finance needs to be leveraged at a much larger scale and directed more effectively to build forward better and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**. For this countries need to: identify climate action and Sustainable Development Goal-aligned development areas that can be financed privately (best as a part of integrated national financing frameworks); create an enabling environment and incentives for private investors to contribute in line with national development priorities and international human rights standards; ensure financial systems are inclusive and improve access to medium and long-term financing; leverage strong partnerships to use financing instruments such as blended finance to de-risk investments, public private partnerships, and capital market instruments such as thematic bonds to advance sustainable and gender-inclusive development.

82.   **Accelerate trade digitalization and make trade more inclusive**, including through the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

83.   **Increase access to finance** through digital technology to facilitate a more inclusive digital economy, with targeted efforts to close the most persistent digital and financial gender gaps.

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