78th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

What can Finance Ministers do for climate action?
High-level Side Event

Meeting Room H, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok and online

CONCEPT NOTE (as of 23 May)

Description
Climate change presents a myriad of daunting challenges for all countries globally, but its adverse effects are proving particularly severe for countries in Asia and the Pacific. If carbon emissions continue as business-as-usual, our region is likely to experience severe heat waves, extreme precipitation, hurricanes, drought, and changes in water supply causing trillions of US dollars in losses per year. The Pacific small island developing States are among the most vulnerable countries in the world to ravages of climate change such as changes in temperature and rainfall patterns, storm surges, flooding, soil erosion, and sea-level rise, which could cause food and water insecurity, loss of livelihoods and climate-induced migrations.

Finance Ministers can play a leading role in spearheading climate action. They not only understand the risks and economic consequences of climate change but can also help unlock opportunities for investments to address them, while creating new jobs along the way. Finance Ministers can also play a leading role in the use of fiscal policy tools such as carbon taxes and emissions trading systems to cut carbon emissions, advocate for a better alignment of public budgets with climate action, and support the expansion of green financing instruments.

The Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, which currently has 71 member countries globally, aims to contribute to the global climate response and in securing a just transition towards low-carbon and resilient development pathways. Currently co-chaired by Finland and Indonesia, the Coalition’s work is driven by the Helsinki Principles: (1) Align their policies and practices with the Paris Agreement commitments; (2) Share their experience and expertise with each other in order to provide mutual encouragement and promote collective understanding of policies and practices for climate action; (3) Work towards measures that result in effective carbon pricing; (4) Take climate change into account in macroeconomic policy, fiscal planning, budgeting, public investment management, and procurement practices; (5) Mobilize private sources of climate finance by facilitating investments and the development of a financial sector which supports climate mitigation and adaptation; and (6) Engage actively in the domestic preparation and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions submitted under the Paris Agreement.

The Coalition currently includes 12 members from Asia and the Pacific: Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka.

This side event convened by Finland, in collaboration with ESCAP, will discuss perspectives from ESCAP member States that are members of the Coalition on the possibilities and challenges in implementing the Helsinki Principles in the region, and how regional cooperation could support further climate action. Hopefully, more member States will consider joining the Coalition after such exchange of views.
Objectives

The objectives of this virtual side event are the following:

I. To understand the work of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action
II. To learn about the experience of selected Finance Ministers of the region that are members of the Coalition on the potential and challenges in implementing the Helsinki Principles
III. To discuss synergies between the Coalition and ESCAP in furthering regional cooperation on climate action.

Tentative programme

The main discussion will kick-off with high-level speakers sharing their opening remarks, starting with the Special Representative of the Finance Minister on Climate Action of Finland and the Finance Minister of the Republic of Indonesia in their capacity as the co-chairs of the Coalition (4-5 min for each finance minister, 25 minutes approx.).

The rest of the discussion will be based on questions asked by the moderator to each finance minister. The questions will be shared later, well in advance of the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 12:45 – 13:43 | **Opening remarks**  
Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana  
Executive Secretary of ESCAP  
**Moderator**  
Mr. Hamza A. Malik  
Director, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division  
UNESCAP  
**Finland:** Co-Chair of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action and convener of this side event  
**Mr. Pekka Morén**  
Special Representative of the Finance Minister on Climate Action, Finance Ministry, Finland  
**Indonesia:** Co-Chair of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action  
**H.E. Ms. Sri Mulyani Indrawati (video message)**  
Minister of Finance, the Republic of Indonesia  
**Maldives:** Member of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action  
**H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Ameer**  
Minister of Finance of the Republic of Maldives  
**New Zealand:** Member of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action  
**H.E. Ms. Megan Woods**  
Minister of Housing, Minister of Energy and Resources,  
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation, and  
Associate Minister of Finance, New Zealand  
**Kyrgyz Republic:** Member of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action  
**H.E. Mr. Ruslan Tatikov**  
Deputy Minister of Finance, the Kyrgyz Republic |
| Philippines: Member of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action  |
| Ms. Paola Sherina A. Alvarez |
| Assistant Secretary for International Finance and Special Projects, Department of Finance, Philippines |

| Bangladesh: Member of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action  |
| Mr. Sanjay Kumar Bhowmik |
| Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh |

**Expert on climate action**

| Mr. Deo Gabinete |
| Regional Manager Asia Pacific and Eastern Europe, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Partnership |

**Q&A and open discussion**

| 13:44 – 13:45 |
| **Closing remarks** |

| Mr. Pekka Morén |
| Special Representative of the Finance Minister on Climate Action, Finance Ministry, Finland |