Summary

The present document is submitted to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for its consideration. It covers the activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission during the period June 2020 to March 2021. The Commission may wish to take note of the report and provide comments on it.

I. Introduction

1. The present document covers the activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission during the period June 2020 to March 2021. The Advisory Committee appointed Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal (Nepal) to serve as Rapporteur of the Advisory Committee, with the responsibility of presenting its report to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) at its seventy-seventh session.

II. Activities of the Advisory Committee

2. During the period under review, the Advisory Committee held six regular sessions.

3. The secretariat briefed the Advisory Committee on the work of the Commission and the secretariat, its role and work, and its position in the United Nations development system to help to orient representatives of the Advisory Committee.
4. At its regular sessions, the Advisory Committee discussed, inter alia, the following subjects:

(a) Preparations for the seventy-seventh session of the Commission: the Advisory Committee was briefed by the secretariat on the preparations for the seventy-seventh session of the Commission and provided useful guidance, including in relation to the development of its provisional agenda and tentative programme;

(b) Outcome of the seventy-sixth session of the Commission: in its review of the outcome of the seventy-sixth session of the Commission, the Advisory Committee considered the major achievements of the Commission under the theme “Promoting economic, social and environmental cooperation on oceans for sustainable development”. The outcomes of the session, including the two resolutions adopted by the Commission, guided its work on strengthening regional cooperation to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the region and in redoubling efforts to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans;

(c) Resolutions adopted by the Commission at its seventy-sixth session: the Advisory Committee extended advice and provided useful guidance on the implementation by the secretariat of resolutions adopted by the Commission;

(d) Proposed calendar of meetings and training programmes of the Commission for 2021: the Advisory Committee noted the proposed calendar;

(e) Review of the preparations for and the outcomes of the following meetings:

(i) Third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation;
(ii) Seventh session of the Committee on Statistics;
(iii) Sixth session of the Committee on Social Development;
(iv) Sixth session of the Committee on Transport;
(v) Sixth session of the Committee on Environment and Development;
(vi) Seventh session of the Committee on Trade and Investment;
(vii) Third session of the Committee on Energy;
(viii) Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;

(f) Review of the preparations for the following meetings: Eighth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development;

(g) Review of the outcomes of the following meetings of the regional institutions:

(i) Fifteenth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development;
(ii) Sixteenth session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;
(iii) Sixteenth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;
(iv) Sixteenth session of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization;
(v) Fifth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management;
(vi) Fifteenth session of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

5. The secretariat presented to the Advisory Committee the draft programme plan for 2022.

6. The Executive Secretary regularly informed the Advisory Committee of activities relating to the priority issues of the United Nations and of ESCAP, as well as the outcome of her virtual participation and engagements at major meetings, cooperation between member States and the secretariat, and administrative and programmatic matters concerning ESCAP. Regular updates on the reform of the United Nations development system were provided. Moreover, the Advisory Committee was briefed by the Executive Secretary on the key recommendations from the Regional Conversation Series on Building Back Better, which was held in conjunction with the commemorative event for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, as well as on activities of the secretariat to assist member States in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Advisory Committee expressed its continued appreciation for the briefings of the Executive Secretary, noting that it found them useful and informative.

7. As part of an ongoing effort to share knowledge about the work of ESCAP and its support to member States in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the secretariat organized virtual briefings for the Permanent Missions of ESCAP member States to the United Nations in New York.

III. Conclusions

8. The members of the Advisory Committee actively contributed to strengthening its deliberative and advisory role during the reporting period. The Advisory Committee provided advice and guidance on important issues concerning the Commission and the secretariat, including the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Commission and the organization of various intergovernmental meetings and initiatives of the secretariat.

9. In the light of the unprecedented challenges and socioeconomic impacts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, continued constructive cooperation and mutual support between the Advisory Committee and the secretariat will be instrumental in strengthening the contribution of the Commission towards building back better and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific.

10. The Commission may wish to take note of the report and provide comments on it.