



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 June 2022

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Seventy-eighth session

Bangkok and online, 23–27 May 2022

Account of proceedings

Agenda item 1

Opening of the session

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) elected Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi (Thailand) Chair of its seventy-eighth session on 23 May 2022, and he presided over the opening of the session. A statement was delivered by Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. Video messages were played from Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile, seventy-seventh President of the Economic and Social Council; General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.), Prime Minister of Thailand; Mr. Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China; and the Secretary-General. The Executive Secretary delivered welcome remarks and a policy statement.

2. The following Heads of State addressed the Commission on its seventy-fifth anniversary by video message: Mr. Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia; Ms. Salome Zourabichvili, President of Georgia; and Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan.

3. The following Heads and Deputy Heads of Government addressed the Commission on its seventy-fifth anniversary by video message: Ms. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh; Mr. Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia and Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2022; Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji and Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum for 2021–2022; Ms. Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa; Mr. Hu'akavameiliku Siaosi Sovaleni, Prime Minister of Tonga; Mr. Minute Alapati Taupo, Acting Prime Minister of Tuvalu; Mr. Bob Loughman Weibur, Prime Minister of Vanuatu; and Mr. Sardor Umurzakov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan.

4. Mr. Vu Duc Dam, Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam, addressed the Commission on its seventy-fifth anniversary in person.

Opening addresses on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Commission

5. The President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly underscored the significant development gains made by countries in the region during recent decades but noted that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, compounded by environmental degradation, climate change and

natural disasters, was threatening those gains. The Ukraine crisis had upset global commodity and food markets, affecting countries in the region, directly and indirectly. Countries in special situations had been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. In that context, the President of the Assembly noted the importance of the theme of the session, “A common agenda to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”, and identified four key proposals to address the multiple challenges faced by the countries in the region. First, to leave no one behind in terms of access to vaccines, funds or technology, paying particular attention to countries in special situations. Second, to invest in areas that contribute to environmental protection and climate action and to increase the flow of funds for addressing climate change to developing countries. Third, to provide debt relief to countries in the region, combined with innovative incentive packages such as debt-for-nature swaps, debt-for-climate adaptation swaps and Sustainable Development Goal bonds. Fourth, to integrate new technologies into plans and strategies to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. ESCAP had an important role to play in facilitating the realization of those proposals.

6. The seventy-seventh President of the Economic and Social Council highlighted that States were still coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic while also exploring options to rebuild societies and economies that were inclusive and more sustainable. Equity in vaccine distribution and access was needed to ensure a full recovery from the pandemic. At the same time, Governments were also having to deal with a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The President of the Council noted the consequences of the current complex geopolitical situation on the prices of food, energy and fertilizers, with the world economy’s gross domestic product expected to be a percentage point lower due to the war. In that regard, he noted the importance of the theme of the seventy-eighth session of the Commission as it marked its seventy-fifth anniversary and recognized the opportunity provided by ESCAP to identify the means to build the resilience of countries in Asia and the Pacific and ensure nature-positive economic growth and inclusive societies. The Council, including its subsidiary bodies, continued to work to better align itself with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The high-level political forum on sustainable development was the main review platform for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and seven States from the Asia-Pacific region would be undergoing voluntary national reviews at the forum in 2022.

7. The Prime Minister of Thailand highlighted the important role of ESCAP in fostering dialogue and cooperation among States and in promoting inclusive development since its establishment. While the COVID-19 pandemic had stalled efforts to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations and ESCAP had a crucial role to play in addressing that challenge. As States in the region transitioned from post-COVID-19 recovery to sustainable development, it was necessary to focus on promoting balanced, resilient, comprehensive and inclusive growth. That meant moving towards environmentally friendly development, strengthening capacities to deal with shocks and promoting connectivity in all dimensions. In that context, the Prime Minister noted that the sufficiency economy philosophy remained the sustainable development pathway for Thailand and that initiatives such as the Eastern Economic Corridor and Thailand Digital Valley, within the Eastern Economic Corridor of Innovation, promoted and supported the development of low-carbon industries and digital businesses that had the potential to expand throughout the region. Thailand had promoted and extended access to essential public services under its universal health coverage scheme. Thailand saw

ESCAP as the main think tank of the region and reaffirmed its commitment to the work of the Commission.

8. In her policy statement, the Executive Secretary outlined a five-point plan to promote a common agenda for realizing sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. First, to encourage the participation and empowerment of women and girls, youth and persons with disabilities, so as to leave no one behind, in line with the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific. Second, to accelerate climate action, scale up support for the development and implementation of national road maps on Sustainable Development Goal 7 and regional energy connectivity, promote sound environmental management and address air pollution. Third, to formulate effective policies, regulatory frameworks and concrete solutions to leverage digital technologies and innovation, including through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative. Fourth, to embrace climate-smart trade and investment policies and frameworks, in line with which all States members of ESCAP were encouraged to accede to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. Fifth, to safeguard investments for the Sustainable Development Goals by prioritizing domestic resource mobilization, debt sustainability and innovative instruments to mobilize additional funds for development-related expenditures. The Executive Secretary concluded by expressing her appreciation to member States and partners for their unwavering support to ESCAP in its efforts to promote multilateralism and sustainable development in the region.

9. In his remarks, the State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China recalled the remarkable achievements made in the region since ESCAP had been established in Shanghai, China, in 1947, but expressed concern about the challenges the region was currently facing. While the Asia-Pacific region occupied a prominent role in the world, a prosperous shared future would only be possible through enhanced cooperation for sustainable development. States should safeguard peace and stability, promote economic development, build an open economy and leverage complementary strengths. Free trade and enhanced regional trade supply chains and integrated connectivity were important. Moreover, the States of the region should actively promote economic development efforts characterized by joint participation and shared benefits to promote poverty reduction, food security, green development and an inclusive digital economy. China would firmly safeguard the peace in Asia and the Pacific, promote regional development, participate in regional cooperation and support the work of ESCAP.

10. In his statement, the President of Indonesia noted the multiple crises affecting the region, which had led to an increase in climate-related impacts, high levels of unemployment, inequitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and a resurgence in extreme poverty. The reduction in economic growth and the increase in inflation meant that there had been a lack of progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which, at the current rate, would be met only in 2065. There were new sources of growth that presented opportunities for the region, if supported by new technologies, digital trade and financial inclusion for small and medium-sized enterprises. Recovery efforts should be aimed at ensuring green growth and strengthening revenues from the utilization of carbon taxes and enhanced regional supply chains. ESCAP should increase its support for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by prioritizing private sector financing, supporting financial inclusion and ensuring the transition to green sources of energy.

11. In her statement, the President of Georgia said that the global pandemic, combined with an increase in climate-induced disasters, had tested the region's resilience. Food insecurity and poverty levels too were on the rise, as a result of the Russian military intervention in Ukraine, which had disrupted transport and energy infrastructure between Europe and Asia. The development ties between Georgia and Asian economies were important and it was necessary to rapidly develop transportation and energy links between Europe and Asia. Georgia was actively cooperating with States in the Central Asia and the South and South-West Asia subregions in the development of new transboundary partnerships for more effective and sustainable energy, transport and logistical systems.

12. In his statement, the President of Tajikistan expressed concern that the COVID-19 pandemic had led to a steep reduction in economic growth and had negatively affected socioeconomic development in his country. It was necessary to scale up partnerships with the private sector so as to increase investment in the region in support of a sustainable recovery. Improvements in living standards, energy sufficiency, food and water security, intelligent transport and industrialization were key priorities for Tajikistan in its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

13. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Cambodia emphasized the importance of ensuring a shared peace, social stability and economic prosperity for no one to be left behind in the achievement of sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. The effects of the war in Ukraine, which hampered socioeconomic recovery and might also have long-term impacts, were worrying. It was important to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for developing countries to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which had disrupted efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. States in the region should reopen their economies, promote free trade and ensure connectivity to spur greener and more inclusive growth. As the Chair of ASEAN in 2022, the Prime Minister of Cambodia encouraged enhanced multilateralism and regional cooperation between subregional institutions and the United Nations to ensure stronger efforts to achieve the Goals.

14. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Fiji noted that reclaiming the region's future meant addressing the effects of the health, economic and climate crises together through integrated responses. He emphasized the fragility of small island developing States that were highly dependent on imports while also being threatened by the effects of climate change, especially sea-level rise and related disasters. The enhancement of trade and of green and blue investments in close cooperation with the private sector were key priorities for Fiji. The Government had reframed its economic development plans to bring them into line with sustainable development principles and, in so doing, had leveraged blue bonds to promote the resilience of coastal communities to climate change. The Prime Minister called for the development of a comprehensive global plan to enable Governments to continue to make progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as they recovered from the current crises and encouraged the post-2025 climate finance framework to prioritize financing support for small island developing States.

15. In her statement, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh noted with concern the effects of the war in Ukraine while the Asia-Pacific region struggled to recover from the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh had incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals into its long-term development strategy to promote poverty reduction, social inclusion, food security, environmental protection, information and communications technology (ICT) and economic development for all.

Moreover, Bangladesh had cooperated actively with ESCAP on cross-border paperless trade, renewable energy and connectivity. It was important to foster, through an established network for public service innovation, South-South exchange mechanisms to share knowledge and experiences on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for shared prosperity. ESCAP should support knowledge-sharing and innovation in States that had graduated from least developed country status and promote access to increased and adequate climate adaptation financing for vulnerable countries.

16. In her statement, the Prime Minister of Samoa highlighted that regional cooperation and collective efforts were critical for strengthening efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Many small island developing States operated in common contexts and faced the same challenges associated with climate change, natural disasters, transport and ICT connectivity, which required collective responses and transboundary approaches. Greater regional cooperation was needed to achieve a shared prosperity that was anchored in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development expressed in the Goals. All communities should be empowered to deal with shocks and stressors and be encouraged to participate in decision-making to build resilience and prosperity. ESCAP should further develop networks to share innovative solutions aimed at achieving greater well-being, promoting sustainable development in developing countries and enabling people in the different subregions of Asia and the Pacific to access opportunities and work together to unlock solutions.

17. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Tonga noted with concern that the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had been exacerbated by a volcanic disaster that had affected employment, businesses, communication and connectivity in his country. The Government had responded with economic measures to address those impacts, especially for vulnerable groups within society. It was necessary to allocate adequate resources to address both the climate change crisis and the debt crisis. Debt-for-climate adaptation swap initiatives were a good example, as they had strengthened ocean management and protection.

18. In his statement, the Acting Prime Minister of Tuvalu noted that his country remained heavily affected by climate change, which was causing more extreme weather events and multiple climate hazards. Climate change posed an existential threat and regional cooperation was needed to address its multidimensional challenges in a spirit of solidarity. In order to find lasting development solutions, it was important to integrate cultural practices into responses, for example through community engagement in ocean and land use management. Science and technology, enhanced trade, and communication services had played a transformative role in addressing climate change. To address the additional social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, external support measures to buffer national financing gaps should be adopted and more durable partnerships with existing regional and subregional organizations were needed to leave no one behind. Multilateralism and regionalism should be enhanced to enable States to face those varied challenges, including through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

19. In his statement, the Prime Minister of Vanuatu observed that the region's development progress was threatened by both the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, with natural disasters occurring with increased frequency and intensity. The crisis in Ukraine had further complicated efforts to achieve sustainable development due to its far-reaching socioeconomic impacts, especially higher food and fuel prices, with women and persons with

disabilities especially at risk. While Vanuatu had graduated from least developed country status, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic had been further exacerbated by tropical cyclones that had led to devastating landslides and other disasters. The Government's priority was to recover, rebuild and make all communities more resilient to such shocks. States should meet the \$100 billion annual climate finance goal in support of the Paris Agreement to adequately resource climate adaptation efforts in the most vulnerable small island developing States and promote inclusive and resilient economic recovery in the Asia-Pacific region.

20. In his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam reflected on the increased multidimensional risks faced by developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, which threatened to thwart progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. To achieve a sustainable and shared recovery from multiple crises, it was important to place people at the centre of all policy decisions. It was also important to strengthen regional cooperation on climate action and sustainable transport connectivity, thereby ensuring the transition to green sources of energy and an inclusive digital transformation to build resilience. ESCAP should continue to strengthen regional partnerships and technical cooperation among States in these areas for the sustainable recovery of the region.

21. In his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan highlighted the importance of ESCAP as an inclusive intergovernmental platform whose aim was to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. Some key areas where the Government of Uzbekistan had strengthened partnerships with ESCAP and other multilateral partners were: the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals, the co-chairmanship of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and several capacity-building events at the regional level. Uzbekistan had a strategy to accelerate sustainable development by focusing on the following priorities: (a) to support favourable conditions for mutual trade, the removal of trade barriers and the digitalization of customs procedures; (b) to promote food security, including through partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization; (c) to enhance transport connectivity as a driving force to expand corridors for Central Asia to connect with other regions, such as South and South-West Asia and Europe; and (d) to leverage the potential of tourism to connect actions across all Sustainable Development Goals.

22. During the opening of the session, the Commission was informed of the demise of Mr. Minute Alapati Taupo, Acting Prime Minister of Tuvalu. The Commission observed a minute of silence in tribute to the late Mr. Taupo.

Agenda item 2

Theme topic, "A common agenda to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific"

Sub-item (a)

General debate

23. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the summary of the theme study on a common agenda to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/1).

24. The Executive Secretary delivered a brief presentation introducing the theme study.

High-level thematic round table on strengthening health responses and preparedness

25. The high-level thematic round table was moderated by the Executive Secretary. The President of the Economic and Social Council delivered introductory remarks. Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, delivered a keynote address. Ms. Helen Clark, Co-Chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, and Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, World Health Organization, made statements.

26. The round-table participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had had devastating effects and exacerbated inequalities and that the poor, older persons, women, migrants, children and youth had been disproportionately affected. Older persons, people with congenital diseases and those who had not been vaccinated were still vulnerable to COVID-19, and vaccination gaps persisted. The round-table participants called for universal access to health care and access to vaccines and recognized the role of ESCAP in enhancing regional cooperation among member States so that they would be better prepared for future pandemics.

High-level thematic round table on ensuring resilient supply chains and connectivity

27. The high-level thematic round table was moderated by the Deputy Executive Secretary. Mr. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce of Cambodia, delivered a keynote address. Mr. Albert Park, Asian Development Bank, Mr. Young Tae Kim, International Transport Forum, and Ms. Deborah Elms, Asia Business Trade Association, made statements.

28. The round-table participants reviewed key challenges with a view to improving supply-chain resilience and outlined policy options to support the sustainability, inclusiveness and efficiency of supply chains while protecting vulnerable groups and the environment. Open and liberalized trade and investment were important for regional supply chains. The COVID-19 pandemic had affected the production and distribution of critical goods such as medical supplies and food. It was also important to further facilitate trade, including paperless trade, and digital connectivity. The work of ESCAP to provide options for trade in times of crises had been valuable. Moreover, the round-table participants noted the importance of decarbonization for transport connectivity.

High-level thematic round table on realizing climate action in Asia and the Pacific

29. The high-level thematic round table was moderated by Ms. Sonja Leighton-Kone, Acting Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Ms. Hyoeun Jenny Kim, Ambassador and Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Republic of Korea, delivered a keynote address. Mr. Petteri Taalas, World Meteorological Organization, Mr. Peter Thomson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Ocean, Ms. Sunita Narain, Centre for Science and Environment, and Ms. Feng Chang, Bank of America, made statements.

30. The round-table participants emphasized the role of the Asia-Pacific region as a pacesetter in achieving the transition to a low-carbon economy. International collaboration was important for innovative climate action, including through technological advancements involving all parts of society, all sectors and all regions, to make progress towards the objectives set out in

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. Ecosystems, including marine ecosystems, needed to be protected, conserved and restored as part of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, and financial flows needed to be consistent with the aim of building a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development. Strong regional partnerships were needed for robust international climate action. ESCAP was a catalyst for achieving regional cooperation and mobilizing multilateral support to member States.

Statements

31. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made oral statements or submitted written statements: Armenia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; France; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Micronesia (Federated States of); Mongolia; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Turkmenistan; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and United States of America.

32. Representatives of UNEP, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies made statements.

33. The Commission emphasized that progress on the 2030 Agenda had been set back by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic crisis amid overall weak economic performance. In 2022, recovery had been further hindered by high inflation and a surge in food and energy prices attributable to the war in Ukraine. As a result of all those crises, millions of people in Asia and the Pacific had been pushed back into poverty. In that regard, several representatives stressed the importance of solidarity, along with the need to promote multilateralism, including South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, to address common challenges and attain a more inclusive and sustainable future.

34. The Commission was informed of several initiatives undertaken by Governments to address the impacts of the pandemic and other challenges by strengthening health responses and preparedness. For example, Governments had: adopted a whole-of-society approach to leaving no one behind; increased medical supplies, including access to vaccines; recognized that no one is safe until all are safe; improved social protection, strengthened cash transfers and accelerated progress towards universal health coverage; closed gaps in the context of food security and social development; and promoted training programmes on women's leadership to enhance disaster risk reduction strategies. The relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals in addressing poverty and inequalities was highlighted. Representatives also called for an inclusive recovery with a focus on people and the environment.

35. The Commission highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the existing challenges and agreed that collaborative regional action was imperative to tackle the crisis and achieve a more inclusive and sustainable recovery. Development policies and regional action were needed to minimize harm to the environment and ensure that economic growth was based on a model that was responsive to the environment and climate change.

36. Several representatives reiterated their respective Government's commitment to the Paris Agreement by delivering on the targets for nationally determined contributions and on carbon neutrality goals, including by reducing their reliance on fossil fuels, accelerating the deployment of renewable sources of energy, cutting emissions in all sectors, improving resource efficiency, enhancing ecosystem-based solutions, investing in innovation and technology, sharing knowledge and experiences, and improving access to climate finance.

37. The Commission called attention to the negative impacts of climate change, in particular the existential threats posed to small island developing States and cities in coastal areas. In that regard, one representative called for efforts to support financing, technology and capacity-building to vulnerable States for climate action and to mitigate the negative impacts of disasters on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The Commission noted that it was urgent to fund climate adaptation measures, as stressed in the Glasgow Climate Pact and in line with the commitments made by ESCAP member States in the context of the Pact.

38. Several representatives advocated the need to manage and protect marine and land resources, biodiversity and ecosystems in the region, noting issues related to the open dumping of waste, plastic pollution and the use of unsanitary landfills, desertification, the growing shortage of raw materials and energy resources, the need to modernize agriculture, and food and water insecurity, all of which threatened people's livelihoods.

39. Several representatives expressed concern about the COVID-19 pandemic and about climate change's deleterious impacts in urban areas, particularly coastal cities. To address those risks, several Governments in the region had made efforts to improve the sustainability of cities in areas such as safe, adequate and affordable housing, green urban mobility and sustainable solid waste management.

40. Some representatives added that the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters such as sand and dust storms and environmental degradation required inclusive policy planning, the building of resilient infrastructure, concerted regional cooperation and the pursuit of digital cooperation.

41. The Commission noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted global and regional supply chains, international trade and investment flows. In that regard, the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States were emphasized. Those countries faced specific institutional and development challenges linked to their geographic remoteness, high trade costs and limited economies of scale, which compelled them to rely heavily on multilateral frameworks and regional cooperation to support their recovery response from economic and environmental shocks.

42. Some representatives noted the recent positive signals towards recovery in merchandise trade, the importance of trade facilitation efforts in the region and paperless trade solutions for trade and transport facilitation during the pandemic. Some representatives reported on progress in ratifying the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. In that regard, one representative expressed appreciation for the regional economic cooperation and integration initiatives of ESCAP in support of sustainable supply chains.

43. The Commission recognized the importance of open and transparent investment regimes to promote and facilitate flows of foreign direct investment. Recognizing the importance of high-quality and comprehensive free trade agreements for boosting regional trade, investment and supply chains, one representative reported on his territory's intention to accede to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

44. The Commission noted the importance of investing in digital connectivity, utilizing digital technologies and promoting the digital transformation of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. One representative noted his Government's active engagement in the development of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway action plan for 2022–2026 and called for the active participation of ESCAP member States in the Asia-Pacific digital ministerial conference to be held in November 2022 to strengthen digital cooperation and reduce the digital divide in Asia and the Pacific.

45. The Commission recalled the achievements made in the development of transport infrastructure and connectivity, including through the expansion of the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway networks. Enhanced regional cooperation was needed for maintaining essential supply chains and for the efficient operationalization of international transport corridors to fully harness the transit potential of landlocked developing countries.

46. The Commission emphasized the importance of seamless transport connectivity for reversing the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthening international supply chains. Furthermore, the Commission acknowledged the additional challenges faced by landlocked developing countries in terms of transit transport and cross-border connectivity and the heightened vulnerabilities of small island developing States, which were affected by the growth in freight tariffs and inadequate infrastructure.

47. The Commission noted that digital transformation was key to facilitating the economic recovery. Representatives acknowledged the crucial role of innovation and emerging technologies, including smart traffic management systems, artificial intelligence and autonomous vehicles, in enhancing mobility and economic growth. The development of smart, green and resilient transport systems was noted as an opportunity to shift demand towards renewable energy and low-carbon vehicles to address climate change and achieve carbon neutrality.

48. The Commission advocated the development of new strategies to halt the loss of hard-won development gains for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and stressed the importance of strategies that integrated accelerated action on the Goals into national development plans.

49. Some representatives highlighted that making progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would require additional financing and investments, especially in a context of limited fiscal space. For that purpose, the development of innovative financial instruments such as green or Sustainable Development Goal bonds and the mobilization of private financing were seen as crucial. The Commission noted the need to address tax collection challenges, to tackle debt sustainability problems in selected countries and to continue to provide financial support to developing countries for the achievement of the Goals.

50. Some representatives requested developed countries to provide support to developing countries on capacity-building, financing and technology, especially for global public goods, including for climate action. Several representatives recognized the role of ESCAP as the most inclusive intergovernmental platform and called upon ESCAP to coordinate regional cooperation to address environmental challenges and advance sustainable development, taking into consideration the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

51. The Commission recognized the importance of collective actions and regional approaches to achieve a sustainable recovery and called for strengthened multilateralism to overcome global crises.

52. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission adopted resolution 78/1, entitled “Bangkok Declaration Commemorating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: a Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific”.

53. Prior to the adoption of the resolution, the representative of the United States stated that her delegation was pleased to join in the consensus opinion on the document, which underscored how much the region had in common. She reaffirmed her Government’s commitment to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and acknowledged the critical role of ESCAP in helping countries to achieve their development goals. At the same time, she noted that the resolution was non-binding, that it did not create new or affect existing rights or obligations under international law and that it did not entail any new financial commitments. She also noted that trade-related language negotiated or adopted by the Economic and Social Council or under its auspices, including by the regional commissions, had no relevance for the trade policy of the United States, its trade obligations or commitments, or for the agenda at the World Trade Organization, including the discussions or negotiations held in that forum. In closing, she congratulated ESCAP for its seventy-five years of excellence and stated that her Government looked forward to continued cooperation on implementing the 2030 Agenda and other shared priorities.

54. Also prior to the adoption of the resolution, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirmed that his delegation attached great importance to the realization of sustainable development at the national, regional and international levels based on the principles of fairness, inclusivity, partnership, cooperation, country ownership, common but differentiated responsibilities and the historical responsibilities of developed countries. Unfortunately, the final text of the resolution did not properly reflect the concerns and priorities of developing countries of the region and, in particular, it was inadequate on the means of implementation required to achieve sustainable development. Furthermore, while emphasizing the voluntary and non-legally binding nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated that the national laws and regulations, development priorities and national upstream policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran should be viewed as the main references at the national level.

Sub-item (b) **Subregional perspectives**

55. The Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme of the Economies of Central Asia on its sixteenth session (ESCAP/78/2), the note by the secretariat on subregional cooperation

to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/3) and the note by the secretariat entitled “Asia-Pacific riskscape at 1.5°C: subregional pathways for adaptation and resilience” (ESCAP/78/13).

56. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; Thailand; and United States.

57. The Executive Secretary and the President of the Economic and Social Council made introductory remarks. A dialogue ensued among the following representatives of subregional organizations and groupings: Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary-General, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC); Mr. Zhang Ming, Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization; Mr. Mikhail Myasnikov, Chair, Eurasian Economic Commission; Mr. Tenzin Lekphell, Secretary-General, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation; Mr. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary-General, Economic Cooperation Organization; Ms. Ou Boqian, Secretary-General, Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat; Mr. Satvinder Singh, Deputy Secretary-General, ASEAN; Mr. Filimon Manoni, Deputy Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; and Mr. Andrey Smorodin, Director, Secretariat of the Greater Tumen Initiative.

58. The representatives emphasized the need for a regional and subregional common agenda that would align socioeconomic recovery efforts with the 2030 Agenda. There were a variety of subregional and multilateral initiatives and strategies that were aimed at monitoring, implementing and achieving sustainable development, such as the SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund, the Strategic Directions for Developing the Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, the Ashgabat Consensus for Action, the Trilateral Cooperation Vision for the Next Decade, the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and the *Second Quadrennial Pacific Regional Sustainable Development Report 2022*. Furthermore, dialogues and coordination on the priority areas of each subregion were being held.

59. Several representatives agreed that there was a need for regional and subregional cooperation on knowledge-sharing and capacity-building for implementing the 2030 Agenda. They noted the key role played by ESCAP in consolidating the views of States in Asia and the Pacific on important regional issues, forging links across the subregions through joint consultations and thematic meetings and pursuing collective actions for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.

60. The Secretary-General of SAARC stated that, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, South Asia had regressed on many Sustainable Development Goals and thus was urgently seeking a pathway to accelerate implementation. SAARC had developed a strategy that would mitigate the threats posed by the pandemic through initiatives such as the COVID-19 information exchange platform and by facilitating the cross-border distribution of vaccines at affordable rates. The Goals needed to be clustered into broad themes with cross-cutting implications to advance a common agenda for sustainable development. Among those themes were economic diversification, augmented investment, learning, health and nutrition, fortified social protection measures and clean energy. The South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals assisted States in achieving the Goals. ESCAP should take the lead in establishing a regional architecture for fostering deeper and wider regional collaboration.

61. The Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization informed the Commission that his organization was incorporating the 2030 Agenda into its plans and activities. He highlighted the ongoing partnership between the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and ESCAP on new priority areas for joint work, which included the digital economy, trade and investment, transport and the improvement of transit potential, energy and ecology management, industry, sustainable agriculture development and tourism, as well as the eradication of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. He welcomed cooperation with the non-governmental structures of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, such as the business council, the interbank association, the consortium of economic and analytical centres, the youth council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization University.

62. The Chair of the Eurasian Economic Commission remarked that the States members of his Commission had recorded recovery-based growth as a result of coordinated actions. Record values for mutual trade among its member States also demonstrated the significant market potential of the Eurasian Economic Union. Current geopolitical challenges, however, would have negative consequences and could result in the weakening of global food security, the postponement of the green agenda and disruptions to international logistics and production chains. Constructive proposals on the comprehensive elaboration and practical implementation of a greater Eurasian partnership were welcome.

63. The Secretary-General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation highlighted the need for enhanced regional collaboration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. There were seven sectors of cooperation – trade, investment and development; the environment and climate change; security; agriculture and food security; people-to-people exchanges; science, technology and innovation; and connectivity – that would contribute to realizing the Goals. He also informed the Commission about the adoption of the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity and its implementation plan. The disruptions to the global supply chains meant that trade facilitation measures needed to be improved. Moreover, it was necessary to cooperate on public health matters, including in the areas of research, capacity-building and the use of technology. Climate change and disaster risk reduction were also areas of priority.

64. The Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization highlighted the complementary roles played by regional and subregional organizations in facilitating socioeconomic recovery and making progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. He acknowledged the strategic partnership and long-term collaboration between the Economic Cooperation Organization and ESCAP, which had been renewed through the signing of a new memorandum of understanding in November 2021. A more comprehensive and long-term partnership with ESCAP was needed on infrastructure projects and socioeconomic development to achieve common objectives in Asia and the Pacific.

65. The Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat highlighted that subregional dialogue was important for advocating cooperation for sustainable development. The States members of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat worked closely together for regional sustainable development in the areas of environmental protection, disaster management, health, agriculture, forestry and water resources. The Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat also worked with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to facilitate knowledge-sharing and cooperation among youth groups, academia, think tanks and the media. ESCAP had been a valuable

partner in implementing the 2030 Agenda and further cooperation was encouraged in health-related areas. The Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat had engaged in carbon neutrality endeavours and had held, with ESCAP and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, a forum on carbon neutrality in 2021; a second forum would be held in 2022.

66. The Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN noted that the efforts made to build back better in South-East Asian countries were rooted in the principles of inclusive and sustainable development. ASEAN had identified the following five strategic areas not only to build back better but also to narrow the development gap within and among ASEAN member States: health systems, human security, economic integration, inclusive digital transformation and the foundations for a sustainable and low-carbon future. Additionally, the fourth industrial revolution, gender and social inclusion, and environmental sustainability were key areas for narrowing the development gap. New areas of cooperation to be pursued by ASEAN included sustainable finance and sustainable economic development, the transition to a circular and low-carbon economy and multi-stakeholder cooperation.

67. The Deputy Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat noted the joint efforts undertaken by the States members of the Forum for the localization and implementation of and the reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, which reflected the principles of the “Blue Pacific” narrative and of solidarity. Climate change remained the single largest threat to the subregion. In 2021, the Forum had adopted the Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise, reiterating the need for decisive action to limit temperature increase to 1.5 °C. The COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated debt levels and put pressure on the debt-servicing capabilities of Pacific island countries. It was necessary to focus on economic recovery and partnerships to address vulnerabilities in the subregion, as well as to secure adequate financing to implement Pacific priorities that were also in line with the 2030 Agenda. Those included opportunities for funding and technical assistance through South-South cooperation initiatives, replicating solutions relevant to small island developing States through peer-learning. The digital economy held potential and it was necessary to capitalize on new and available technologies within the Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy 2020–2025 to bridge the gaps. The long-term 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent was a reaffirmation of the Pacific Islands Forum member States’ commitment to harnessing the power of the subregion’s collective will and resilience.

68. The Director of the Secretariat of the Greater Tumen Initiative stated that the COVID-19 pandemic required adjustments to the new realities and recognized that member States continued to respond effectively to new COVID-19 outbreaks. Sustainable and inclusive post-pandemic recovery was important. The North-East Asia Business Association, which was expected to be a platform to develop private sector partnerships, had recently been established. Strengthening partnerships with other international organizations was one of the strategic objectives of the Initiative, which was ready to conduct joint activities in areas such as trade, transport and energy, as well as in other cross-sectoral areas.

69. The Commission noted the ongoing collaboration between the secretariat and subregional organizations to facilitate the exchange of best practices and development experiences. Important areas of work highlighted during the deliberations included climate change and resilience-building; innovative financing and digitalization in the Pacific; and carbon neutrality and cross-sectoral coordination on trade, transport and energy in East and

North-East Asia. Other areas included economic transformation and diversification; trade and transport connectivity; supply chain resilience; digitalization in North and Central Asia; disaster risk reduction; poverty and food insecurity; the sustainable graduation from least developed country status of States in South and South-West Asia; and connectivity in trade, transport and energy, the environment and climate action, as well as the mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals, in South-East Asia. Furthermore, it was important to deepen subregional cooperation and to strengthen communication and collaboration among subregional organizations.

70. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its sixteenth session (ESCAP/78/2) and took note of the note by the secretariat on subregional cooperation to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/3).

Agenda item 3

Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries

71. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2022: Financing a Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19 and Beyond” (ESCAP/78/4).

72. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Japan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Maldives; Nepal; Palau; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkmenistan; and United States.

73. Representatives of the following regional and intergovernmental organizations made statements: Asian Development Bank; and International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries.

74. The Executive Secretary presented the key findings of the *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2022: Financing a Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19 and Beyond*. The President of the Economic and Social Council and the representative of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States delivered keynote addresses.

75. The Commission highlighted the unprecedented socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region, which had hit countries with special needs – the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States – the hardest and exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities. In particular, the pandemic had had disproportionate impacts on: the least developed countries, which already suffered from inadequate productive capacity and structural transformation challenges; landlocked developing countries, which faced higher costs and longer times in trading owing to geographic constraints compounded by both hard and soft infrastructure limitations; and small island developing States, which continued to face high exposure and vulnerabilities to climate change, disasters and environmental degradation.

76. The Commission noted that countries with special needs had not been on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 even before the pandemic and that their prospects of doing so had worsened further. Notwithstanding early signs of recovery, those countries remained slow in

restoring their pre-pandemic pace of development, while climate change remained one of the greatest challenges for least developed countries and small island developing States in particular.

77. The Commission noted that national policy measures to counter the impacts of the pandemic had resulted in a depletion of reserves and rising debt levels, underscoring the importance of mobilizing more resources. To that end, several representatives referred to traditional measures, such as strengthening tax administration systems by leveraging technology, scaling up official development assistance and improving the business environment, as practical ways to enhance resource mobilization. Beyond those traditional measures, representatives also highlighted the importance of exploring innovative sources of financing and specific instruments such as green, blue and social impact bonds, Sustainable Development Goal bonds and debt-for-climate swaps for achieving sustainable development and transitioning towards a green recovery path.

78. The Commission reiterated the multidimensional challenges faced by countries with special needs, such as low productive capacities, narrow economic bases, geographic isolation and climate-related vulnerabilities, as a result of which they required constant support from development partners, the United Nations system and multilateral institutions. Several representatives highlighted the potential challenges that States graduating from least developed country status might face, such as higher tariffs and more stringent rules-of-origin requirements.

79. Representatives of least developed countries said that their Governments were in the process of formulating smooth transition strategies for graduation. One representative informed the Commission that the newly adopted Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries would be streamlined into the national planning process to lay the foundation for a smooth and sustainable graduation. Another representative drew attention to the increasingly difficult conditionalities associated with qualifying for financing and urged development partners to review their policies and practices. While the Commission noted as positive the fact that 10 of the 11 least developed countries in the region had met the graduation criteria at least once, it said that there was a strong case to be made for continuing with incentive-based international support measures, among other forms of support, for graduating and graduated least developed countries to make their economic transition smooth, sustainable and irreversible. One representative stressed the need for increasing broadband coverage and for building and strengthening a multi-hazard early warning system.

80. The Commission called for greater multilateral cooperation, solidarity and partnerships, as well as renewed commitments by the international community, to support countries with special needs in addressing the impacts of current and future crises. Several representatives highlighted the need for more concessional climate financing and innovative financing options for climate adaptation and mitigation measures. One representative highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional capacities to access sustainable development financing, especially in small island developing States, and stressed the need to adjust financial structures for disaster response and recovery, as disasters had become more frequent and the impacts more severe in terms of loss of life and damage to infrastructure. Another representative emphasized the need to extend support to strengthen the private sector, which could bring much-needed investment and contribute to domestic revenue.

81. Representatives of development partners expressed their commitment to continue to assist countries with special needs in addressing their development challenges, which had been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and the growing threat to food security, and in promoting sustainable development. In that regard, they highlighted several priorities, including strengthening multilateralism, increasing investments, facilitating trade, leveraging digital technologies, providing affordable high-speed Internet access and delivering comprehensive health, social and economic assistance programmes.

82. Representatives of regional and intergovernmental organizations highlighted the continued need to support countries with special needs in addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and urged development partners to help mobilize resources, including through innovative financing mechanisms, for key development areas such as strengthening global supply chains and international trade, developing infrastructure connectivity, accelerating climate action and improving public health and social protection systems. Swift, comprehensive and coordinated policy responses at all levels of Government, together with augmented spending, were prerequisites for countries with special needs to achieve the Goals by 2030.

83. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the summary of the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2022: Financing a Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19 and Beyond (ESCAP/78/4).

Agenda item 4

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

84. The Commission had before it the notes by the secretariat on the summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (ESCAP/78/5) and on the summary of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission held in the period 2021–2022 (ESCAP/78/6) and the annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/78/INF/1).

85. The Deputy Executive Secretary delivered an introductory presentation on the agenda item.

86. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the matters calling for its action or brought to its attention emanating from the meetings of its subsidiary bodies held in the period 2021–2022 (ESCAP/78/6).

87. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on the summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (ESCAP/78/5) and the annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission (ESCAP/78/INF/1).

Sub-item (a)

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

88. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (ESCAP/78/7).

89. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

90. The Chair of the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development presented the report of the Forum.

91. The Commission noted the role of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development as the leading regional platform for follow-up on and review of the 2030 Agenda. The Forum had been instrumental in advancing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by enabling a credible review of regional progress and recognizing the need for solidarity and cooperation. At the same time, the Commission noted with concern the slow progress made by the region towards the achievement of the Goals and drew attention to Goals 12 and 13 in particular.

92. Some representatives highlighted that the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and for creating synergies between subregional organizations and the United Nations system. Various representatives called for the Forum to further engage youth, the private sector and civil society. Some representatives requested the secretariat to continue to develop multi-stakeholder partnerships and support commitments on sustainability and resilience, connectivity and collaboration towards inclusiveness instead of a zero-sum game.

93. The Commission stressed the importance of the Forum in supporting mutual learning. One representative noted the importance of the preparatory subregional forums for in-depth discussions and exchange of experiences on follow-up and review.

94. The Commission was informed of the efforts made by member States to create inclusive green societies and promote low-carbon development.

95. The Commission recognized the benefits of adopting Sustainable Development Goal frameworks at the national level, highlighting that institutional monitoring mechanisms at the national level led to harmonizing monitoring systems for key development priorities.

96. Some representatives highlighted the nexus between innovation and technology and recognized the importance of strengthening cooperation on key issues in the Asia-Pacific region to tackle common challenges, including those related to resource mobilization and technology transfer. Those challenges were not insurmountable if the international community enhanced experience- and knowledge-sharing mechanisms to forge an environmentally sustainable, inclusive and resilient future that left no one behind.

97. One representative noted that the efforts to achieve sustainable development would be futile without peace and stability and that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals depended on global, regional and national security.

98. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the report of the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (ESCAP/78/7).

Sub-item (b)
Social development

99. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on key social development issues for consideration in 2022 (ESCAP/78/8) and the report on the seventh session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022 (ESCAP/78/9).

100. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; and Thailand.

101. The Commission noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had intensified existing inequalities, leaving vulnerable groups further behind. Representatives reiterated their commitment to realizing the human rights of groups in vulnerable situations, in particular women and girls, persons with disabilities and older persons. One representative pointed out that countries in Asia and the Pacific were ageing rapidly and that it was important to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

102. The Commission highlighted that the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic should follow an inclusive and people-centred approach underpinned by solidarity and fairness and stressed the important role of social protection. Several representatives stressed that extending social protection coverage along the lines of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific was essential for building resilient societies that left no one behind and for supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

103. The Commission was informed of the initiatives of several Governments to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through measures that enhanced the inclusion of persons with disabilities and initiatives to support migrant workers. Representatives highlighted the efforts that had been made to expand social protection coverage to population groups in vulnerable situations and to increase access to education. Some representatives stressed the importance of improved data collection systems and e-payment delivery mechanisms.

104. Some representatives expressed appreciation for the work of ESCAP in conducting policy dialogues and building capacity, including the regional consultation on gender and sustainable development in preparation for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the technical support extended for implementing the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022, and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

105. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on key social development issues for consideration in 2022 (ESCAP/78/8) and the report on the seventh session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022 (ESCAP/78/9).

Sub-item (c)
Environment and development

106. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/78/10) and the note by the secretariat on opportunities for reaching carbon neutrality in the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/78/11).

107. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; and Japan.

108. The Chair of the seventeenth session of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization presented the report of the Governing Council.

109. Representatives of UNEP and the Mekong River Commission made statements.

110. The Commission noted that climate change had emerged as one of the biggest threats to sustainable development and emphasized the need for climate action and economy-wide green transformation. Representatives highlighted national mitigation commitments to achieving more ambitious and updated nationally determined contributions, carbon neutrality pledges, plans to achieve peak carbon emissions and ambitious emission reduction targets. The Commission was informed of national climate action efforts, including initiatives to phase out coal and transition to renewable sources of energy, to establish national climate financing mechanisms and to develop carbon pricing policies. Green industrial development efforts, the circular economy, waste management and nature-based solutions, including sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration, were also mentioned as critical to supporting climate change abatement and climate-resilient sustainable development.

111. The Commission emphasized that the Asia-Pacific region had to urgently face the issue of plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. One representative expressed support for the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution aimed at ending plastic pollution throughout its life cycle and at forging an international legally binding instrument by the end of 2024. The representative indicated the importance of collaboration in the negotiations taking place in the second half of 2022 and noted the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision concept.

112. Some representatives noted the need to mainstream sustainability considerations, including sustainable natural resource management, in economic development. One representative reported on activities for tapping into the potential of marine resources and managing the blue economy for mining, tourism, coastal shipping, marine safety and surveillance in a sustainable manner.

113. Some representatives highlighted the importance of transitioning to sustainable food systems, including by strengthening food security, enhancing nutrition circularity, promoting sustainable agriculture and reducing food loss and waste. One representative commended the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization for its efforts in promoting sustainable agriculture development and facilitating food security in the region.

114. The Commission highlighted that regional collaboration was critical in fighting the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and land degradation, as well as food, water and energy insecurities, all of which were issues common to States in the Asia-Pacific region. One representative stressed that developing countries required support, including financial and technological support, to respond to climate change and advance post-pandemic sustainable development.

115. The representative of UNEP highlighted the importance of soundly managing chemicals and waste and of preventing pollution, including air pollution, which was one of the most significant environmental health risks in the region.

116. The representative of the Mekong River Commission reported on efforts to work with partners to help countries in the Mekong River Basin and States members of ASEAN to address transboundary water security challenges and to improve flood and drought forecasting and monitoring, riverine plastics monitoring, irrigation, drought management and sustainable hydropower development.

117. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/78/10).

118. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on opportunities for reaching carbon neutrality in the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/78/11).

Sub-item (d)

Disaster risk reduction

119. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its sixth session (ESCAP/78/12), the regional plan of action on sand and dust storms in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/12/Add.1) and the note by the secretariat entitled “Asia-Pacific riskscape at 1.5°C: subregional pathways for adaptation and resilience” (ESCAP/78/13).

120. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Mongolia; and Thailand.

121. The Chair of the seventh session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction presented the report of the Committee. The Vice-Chair of the sixth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management presented the report of the Governing Council.

122. The Commission recognized the importance of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction as an integral part of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Commission highlighted the rise in economic and human losses from the increasing impacts of climate change, such as floods, sand and dust storms, land degradation and desertification.

123. The Commission noted the need to step up cooperation efforts at the regional and global levels for multi-hazard monitoring, for developing forecasting and early warning mechanisms to combat sand and dust storms

through the Regional Plan of Action on Sand and Dust Storms in Asia and the Pacific and for mitigating transboundary hazards such as floods and droughts, particularly through the regional platforms for multi-hazard early warning systems. The Commission called for efforts to be made to strengthen assessments of the risk of emerging disasters and to increase anticipatory actions for disaster risk reduction. The Commission emphasized the need for inclusive disaster risk reduction measures, highlighting gender equality, as well as the need to strengthen implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, including through the Bangkok Principles.

124. The Commission recognized the contribution of the application of space and geospatial technical information and big data to improve disaster monitoring and early warning capabilities. One representative informed the Commission of her Government's continuing support to the region by providing remote sensing and satellite data and products; supporting regional cooperation on drought monitoring and early warning, including through the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning, in Asia and the Pacific; and supporting field projects that integrated spatial and temporal data for disaster risk reduction.

125. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its sixth session (ESCAP/78/12) and the Regional Plan of Action on Sand and Dust Storms in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/12/Add.1).

126. Also at its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat entitled "Asia-Pacific riskscape at 1.5°C: subregional pathways for adaptation and resilience" (ESCAP/78/13).

Sub-item (e) **Energy**

127. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on implementing the global road map for accelerated action on Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/78/14).

128. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Russian Federation; Thailand; and United States.

129. The Commission noted that the transition to renewable sources of energy affected efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to address challenges such as energy shortages. The Commission also noted the need to accelerate the energy transition to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and make progress towards carbon neutrality in the region. The Commission further noted the progress that had been made in terms of increased targets and support for the deployment of renewable energy resources. The need for increased capacity-building and financing was also noted. One representative noted the important role played by local stakeholders in the energy transition, including cities and small and medium-sized enterprises.

130. The Commission recognized the importance of energy security, including for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. One representative noted the role that international agencies could play in providing technical, legal, institutional and financial support for ensuring energy security.

131. Some representatives noted the role that fossil fuels played in current energy systems and in the energy transition, and that some States continued to invest in fossil fuel projects, including oil refineries and pipelines, to meet growing demand. Some representatives noted the role of natural gas, coal and biomass in the form of peat as transition fuels, as States sought to achieve net zero emissions.

132. The Commission was informed of efforts to increase cross-border energy system integration and trade, and of new initiatives to support increased cross-border energy system integration linked to the deployment of renewable sources of energy at both the regional and subregional levels, as well as of efforts to increase multilateral energy trading.

133. The Commission noted the importance of expanding access to electricity, improving the quality of access and ensuring the affordability of energy. One representative noted the role of clean fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas in enabling increased access to clean cooking and in empowering women. Some representatives also noted the importance of efforts to improve energy efficiency.

134. Some representatives noted the role of the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum as an important platform to advance regional cooperation. One representative proposed that energy security be a key topic at the Third Forum, to be held in 2023.

135. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on implementing the global road map for accelerated action on Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/78/14).

Sub-item (f) **Transport**

136. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport (ESCAP/78/15), the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/15/Add.1), the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) (ESCAP/78/15/Add.2) and the note by the secretariat on an efficient and resilient transport and logistics network in support of supply chain connectivity (ESCAP/78/16).

137. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; China; Japan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

138. The Chair of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport presented the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference.

139. The Commission welcomed the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Bangkok and online from 14 to 17 December 2021.

140. The Commission expressed support for the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) and recognized that its seven priority areas of work were of high relevance to the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

141. The Commission welcomed the progress that had been achieved by member States in strengthening regional transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, which would contribute to post-pandemic recovery and efforts to build back better. Several representatives noted that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports continued to act as a backbone for the development of infrastructure connectivity in the region and reaffirmed that the working groups established under those agreements were the main platforms for discussing persistent and emerging issues in the area of fostering regional transport cooperation.

142. States members of the Commission reported on developments to further enhance regional transport infrastructure networks, including the construction of new roads and bridges along the routes of the Asian Highway, the promotion of technical solutions in support of more resilient and interconnected multimodal infrastructure and the planning and construction of new dry ports. The Commission noted the initiatives to strengthen international railway transport through the construction of missing rail links, efforts to operationalize east-west and north-south transport corridors, the electronic tracking of containers transported by rail, the construction of high-speed rail networks, the double tracking of rail networks and the increasing speed of freight trains.

143. The Commission was also informed of the development of land transport corridors connecting countries of the region, such as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor, the East-West Transport Corridor and the International North-South Transport Corridor, and of developments in both infrastructure and the enhancement of coordination arrangements for the operation of such corridors.

144. The Commission stressed the importance of maritime connectivity in supporting regional and interregional supply chains and welcomed the priority given to maritime and interregional transport connectivity in the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026). Several representatives highlighted the role played by the port-centred integrated logistics network in the overall efficiency of the global supply chain and in sustainable transport development, noting that new maritime routes, such as the Northern Sea Route, could be developed.

145. The Commission recognized that digitalization was becoming increasingly important for the successful development of sustainable, resilient and more environmentally friendly transport in the region. In that respect, the Commission noted the progress that had been made in the region in terms of introducing innovative and comprehensive digital solutions in transport connectivity, mobility and logistics. Among those solutions were artificial intelligence, big data and smart transport systems, the digitalization of transport documentation and workflows, the development of a port community system for efficiently sharing information among stakeholders, the application of automatic vehicle identification systems to minimize delays at toll gates during peak hours and satellite communication systems for monitoring transport activities. In that regard, the Commission highlighted the need for better cooperation in developing and implementing related technology policies

and rules and for sufficient funding to promote the integration of technology in the transport sector.

146. Recognizing the urgent need to address climate change and the related transport development challenges faced by States in Asia and the Pacific, the Commission reaffirmed that particular attention should be paid to promoting environmentally sustainable transport options, particularly in urban areas. The Commission took note of the progress made by several member States in fulfilling their emission reduction commitments, including through the development of long-term policies and road maps to accelerate the transition to electric mobility to support climate action.

147. The Commission recognized that safe and inclusive transport was a priority and was informed of national strategic plans for the development of sustainable transport.

148. The Commission was informed of the financial contributions made by the Governments of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation for technical cooperation projects on sustainable transport development and of their continued commitment to supporting the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).

149. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission adopted resolution 78/3, on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific.

150. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the report of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport (ESCAP/78/15).

151. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on an efficient and resilient transport and logistics network in support of supply chain connectivity (ESCAP/78/16).

Sub-item (g)

Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development

152. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on economic policies for inclusive recovery and development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/17).

153. Representatives of Bangladesh and China made statements.

154. The Chair of the third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development presented the report of the Committee.

155. The Commission was informed about the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related socioeconomic crises on the economies of the region, especially in terms of poverty. In that regard, the international community was called upon to work towards strengthening fiscal and monetary policy coordination to ensure global and regional economic and financial stability, to ease inflationary pressures and to reduce international financial risks.

156. The Commission noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had also created opportunities for socioeconomic transformation that could move forward the development agenda. It was important to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals into development and economic recovery plans and South-South cooperation was needed to support the economic recovery. The Commission called upon developed countries to fulfil their development assistance commitments and support developing countries in mitigating debt and liquidity risks.

157. The Commission highlighted the role of ESCAP in facilitating regional cooperation in macroeconomics, poverty reduction and development financing, including through cooperation projects in the areas of public-private partnerships and infrastructure financing.

158. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on economic policies for inclusive recovery and development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/17).

Sub-item (h)
Trade and investment

159. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/78/18), the report on the 7th meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation (ESCAP/78/19), the report of the Paperless Trade Council of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific on its first session (ESCAP/78/20) and the notes by the secretariat on leveraging trade and investment to address climate action in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/21) and on policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development (ESCAP/78/22).

160. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; and Thailand.

161. The Chair of the seventeenth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology presented the report of the Governing Council. The Chair of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network briefed the Commission on the work of the Network.

162. The Commission recognized that digital and sustainable trade and investment were indispensable for implementing the 2030 Agenda. The Commission noted the particular importance of simplifying cross-border trade procedures through digitalization and the removal of barriers to trade and investment. Some representatives highlighted the importance of promoting an environment conducive to sustainable foreign direct investment. One representative added that efforts to facilitate trade and investment could increase trade and flows of foreign direct investment. Another representative highlighted the importance of ensuring environmentally friendly, low-carbon trade and investment to help countries to increase their resilience to disasters and climate change.

163. The Commission recognized the importance of South-South and triangular collaboration in science, technology and innovation. The Commission also recognized the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Science, Technology and Innovation Policy as an important platform for sharing knowledge among researchers and policymakers to support

evidence-based policymaking. The Commission also heard the call for further building the capacity of policymakers to facilitate inclusive and digital trade growth.

164. The Commission noted the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation on trade and investment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, several representatives noted the importance of the World Trade Organization. One representative noted that the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement had come into effect in 2022 and that it would inject new impetus into trade and investment growth in the region.

165. One representative recognized the need for business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development, the importance of corporate social responsibility and the need for the private sector to integrate social and environmental factors into business operations. Another representative recognized the need to accelerate business transformation and promote sustainable business best practices and highlighted the importance of investments adhering to global and national sustainability principles.

166. Some representatives expressed appreciation for the work of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology in supporting and strengthening the capacity of member States and facilitating regional technology cooperation on Sustainable Development Goals 3, 7, 9, 13 and 17. The Commission was informed of a regional conference on energy resilience through decentralized power plants and smart grid integration to be held in September 2022.

167. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/78/18).

168. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the report on the 7th meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation (ESCAP/78/19), the report of the Paperless Trade Council of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific on its first session (ESCAP/78/20) and the notes by the secretariat on leveraging trade and investment to address climate action in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/21) and on policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development (ESCAP/78/22).

Sub-item (i)

Information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation

169. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its sixteenth session (ESCAP/78/23) and the notes by the secretariat on digital cooperation for an inclusive digital society (ESCAP/78/24) and on policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development (ESCAP/78/22).

170. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

171. The Chair of the sixteenth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development presented the report of the Governing Council.

172. The Commission underlined that ICTs, as well as science, technology and innovation, were key means of implementing the 2030 Agenda and that the COVID-19 pandemic had further accentuated the need to advance digital transformation and the digital economy for inclusive and sustainable development.

173. The Commission recognized that sharing knowledge on best practices and developing digital skills for enhanced human and institutional capacities were key to advancing digital transformation and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the areas of ICT infrastructure, digital connectivity, digital technology applications, digital data, digital trust and cybersecurity, as well as for addressing climate change-related challenges and building sound digital economies and societies.

174. The Commission highlighted the importance of regional digital cooperation and partnerships and expressed support for the action plan for the next phase of the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, for 2022–2026, which would be reviewed and considered for endorsement by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation at its fourth session, in August 2022. The Commission acknowledged that the action plan would contribute to bridging the digital divide, enhancing digital trust and safety and accelerating the digital transformation by promoting the sharing of emerging technologies, the exchange of knowledge and best practices, capacity-building and lessons learned among States in the Asia-Pacific region.

175. The Commission was informed that the Republic of Korea, in cooperation with the secretariat, would be holding the Asia-Pacific digital ministerial conference in Seoul on 9 and 10 November 2022.

176. The Commission recognized the important role played by the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development in capacity-building, regional cooperation and exchange of experience on cybersecurity and digital development and transformation. One representative expressed appreciation for the Centre's efforts to strengthen the capacities of member States and policymakers in the area of digital development and encouraged member States to collaborate and to share experiences, best practices and resources to further make progress and foster capacity-building in the area of digital technologies.

177. One representative informed the Commission of the upcoming launch of a new frontier ICT capacity-building module, which would address challenges and opportunities brought about by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of things and blockchain technology.

178. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its sixteenth session (ESCAP/78/23).

179. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the notes by the secretariat on digital cooperation for an inclusive digital society (ESCAP/78/24) and on policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development (ESCAP/78/22).

Sub-item (j) Statistics

180. In addition to the documents for consideration common to agenda item 4, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/78/25), the report of the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/26), the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (ESCAP/78/26/Add.1) and the note by the secretariat entitled “From gross domestic product to well-being and sustainability: means and measures” (ESCAP/78/27).

181. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; Japan; Philippines; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

182. The Vice-Chair of the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific presented the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference. The Chair of the seventeenth session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific presented the report of the Governing Council.

183. The Commission acknowledged the importance of quality data for assessing progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. One representative highlighted the importance of technical assistance and noted the support received to develop a Sustainable Development Goals tracker and the support received from the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat through the Data for Now initiative.

184. The Commission reiterated its commitment to strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems and to the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, noting that, while progress had been made, much more still remained to be done.

185. The Commission highlighted the important role played by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in strengthening statistical capacity. Some representatives called upon the Institute to hold more train-the-trainer sessions so as to enable States to conduct more of their own training in the future.

186. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission adopted resolution 78/4, on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.

187. At the same meeting, the Commission endorsed the reports of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventeenth session (ESCAP/78/25) and of the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/26).

188. Also at the same meeting, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat entitled “From gross domestic product to well-being and sustainability: means and measures” (ESCAP/78/27).

Agenda item 5
Management issues

189. The Executive Secretary made an introductory statement on management issues.

Sub-item (a)
Proposed programme plan for 2023

190. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the proposed programme plan for 2023 (ESCAP/78/28).

191. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission endorsed the proposed programme plan for 2023 (ESCAP/78/28).

Sub-item (b)
Overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development

192. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development (ESCAP/78/29).

193. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; India; Japan; and Republic of Korea.

194. The representative of China expressed support for the work of ESCAP and announced the Government's pledge of approximately \$2.7 million and approximately RMB 1.7 million to ESCAP, the regional institutions, the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities and the China-ESCAP Cooperation Programme. The representative expressed the hope that the contributions would be used by the secretariat – with improved project management, capital efficiency and specific outcomes – towards sustainable development and the post-pandemic recovery in Asia and the Pacific.

195. The representative of the Republic of Korea stated that his Government intended to pledge \$4.8 million in support of ESCAP technical cooperation programmes, the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia and regional institutions.

196. The representative of Japan, as the host country of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, pledged approximately \$3 million in cash and in-kind contributions to support the 2022 workplan of the Institute.

197. The representative of India noted her Government's support for the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology and the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia. The Government of India announced its pledge of \$994,000 to support the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology.

198. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the note by the secretariat on the overview of partnerships, extrabudgetary contributions and capacity development (ESCAP/78/29) and expressed its appreciation for pledges amounting to approximately \$10.6 million for 2022 from the following members: Brunei Darussalam; China; India; Japan; Republic of Korea; and Viet Nam.

Sub-item (c)

Report on the evaluation activities of the Commission during the biennium 2020–2021

199. The Commission had before it the report on the evaluation activities of the Commission during the biennium 2020–2021 (ESCAP/78/30).

200. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the report on the evaluation activities of the Commission during the biennium 2020–2021 (ESCAP/78/30).

Agenda item 6

Review of the conference structure of the Commission pursuant to resolution 73/1

201. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the review of the conference structure of the Commission pursuant to resolution 73/1 (ESCAP/78/31).

202. The Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ESCAP, as Chair of the informal consultations on the conference structure, reported on the outcome of those consultations.

203. The representative of China noted that the outcome document of the review reflected the previous work of the Commission while keeping in line with the 2030 Agenda and considering priorities for a post-pandemic recovery. He called upon the Commission to perform its functions under the new conference structure, in accordance with its mandate, by facilitating regional policy dialogue, strengthening cooperation, fostering communication, coordinating policy and increasing technical support to enable a sustainable recovery from the pandemic while promoting sustainable development.

204. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission adopted resolution 78/2, on a conference structure of the Commission to advance sustainable development.

Agenda item 7

Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

205. The Commission had before it the report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ESCAP/78/32).

206. The Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to ESCAP presented the report of the Advisory Committee on behalf of its members.

207. The representative of China recognized the work done by the Advisory Committee despite the pandemic and expressed appreciation for the constructive work of its members. He reaffirmed the commitment of China to continuing to strengthen cooperation with members of the Advisory Committee and to facilitating the role of the Advisory Committee as a platform for communication and collaboration among its members in support of the mandate of ESCAP on promoting sustainable development in the region.

208. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission took note of the report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ESCAP/78/32).

Agenda item 8

Dates and venue of and theme topic for the seventy-ninth session of the Commission (2023)

209. The Commission had before it the note by the secretariat on the dates and venue of and theme topic for the seventy-ninth session of the Commission (2023) (ESCAP/78/33).

210. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission decided that its seventy-ninth session would be held in Bangkok from 15 to 19 May 2023. The Commission also decided that the theme topic for its seventy-ninth session would be “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development” (ESCAP/78/33).

Agenda item 9

Other matters

211. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission’s rules of procedure, the Chair and the Vice-Chairs examined the credentials of representatives of member States and reported upon them to the Commission. The credentials of 50 member States were found to be in order. The Bureau decided to defer any action on the credentials pertaining to the representatives of Myanmar at the seventy-eighth session of the Commission pending a decision by the General Assembly on the representation of Myanmar and in line with General Assembly resolution 396 (V) of 14 December 1950 and acknowledging the report of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

212. The Commission took note of the report of the Chair and Vice-Chairs on credentials.

213. Representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States made statements.

214. The representative of the Russian Federation exercised the right of reply to the statements made by some delegations in the course of the session on the situation in Ukraine. He pointed out that his delegation did not accept the accusations related to the special military operation being conducted in Ukraine and on the origins of the current global food insecurity and reiterated the position of the Russian Federation on those matters. His delegation considered unacceptable the attempts to politicize the work of the Commission. The Commission had managed to continue its work and deliver on its mandate throughout its 75 years of existence, in spite of political developments and tensions, and it would continue to work impartially, regardless of any political tensions, for the benefit of the whole region.

215. The representative of the United States exercised the right of reply to the statements made on unilateral coercive measures, stating that sanctions were an appropriate, effective, peaceful and legitimate tool for addressing threats to peace and security. In cases where her Government applied sanctions, it did so with specific objectives in mind, including to promote democratic systems, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to respond to security threats, while regularly taking

measures to minimize any unintended negative consequences. Moreover, sanctions were a legitimate way to achieve foreign policy, national security and other national and international objectives and her Government was not alone in holding that view or in following that practice.

Election of the members of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management

216. In addition to the host country, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Commission elected the following members and associate members to the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management for the period from 2022 to 2025: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Macao, China; Micronesia (Federated States of); Mongolia; Tajikistan; and Türkiye.

Election of the members of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development

217. In addition to the host country, the Republic of Korea, the Commission elected the following members and associate members to the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for the period from 2022 to 2025: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Philippines; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

Election of the members of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization

218. In addition to the host country, China, the Commission elected the following members and associate members to the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization for the period from 2022 to 2025: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Malaysia; Pakistan; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

Election of the members of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific

219. In addition to the host country, Japan, the Commission elected the following members and associate members to the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for the period from 2022 to 2025: Bangladesh; China; India; Malaysia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

Agenda item 10

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its seventy-eighth session

220. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 27 May 2022, the Commission unanimously adopted the report on its seventy-eighth session (ESCAP/78/34).