

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Seventy-ninth session**

Bangkok and online, 15–19 May 2023

Items 4 (c) and (d) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission:****Environment and development****Disaster risk reduction****Annual reports of international and intergovernmental organizations provided to the Commission\*\****Summary*

The present information document contains overviews of the annual reports of the following international and intergovernmental organizations: the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia; the Mekong River Commission; the Typhoon Committee; and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

These organizations were established under the auspices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to work on areas under their respective competence to support economic and social development in the region.

The Commission may wish to comment on the work of these organizations and take note of the present document.

**I. Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia**

1. The Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia has been established under the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) since 1966. In 1991, the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia has become an independent Intergovernmental Organisation.

2. Starting from January 2021, the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia has introduced a new strategic plan (2021-2025) with a vision “to be a leading intergovernmental Geoscience Organisation for sustainable development in East and Southeast Asia”. The Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia has worked towards its mission “to work together on advancing geoscience for better lives on a future earth, in line with the goals of

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\* ESCAP/79/1/Rev.2.

\*\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

international conventions including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework, and the Paris Agreement, through: the application of geoscience knowledge and provision of technical solutions, provision of advice and geoinformation for economic development and sustainable management of the national resources and environment; adapting to digital transformation in geoscience for future earth; and the promotion of education, capability building and outreach”. The organisation also promotes young geoscientists and equal gender issues.

3. The Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia now has a total of 16 member countries including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. The Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia also has 14 cooperating countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America); and 17 cooperating organizations located around the world. The activities of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia cover a wide range of geoscience with the priority including geohazards, geodata and information, mineral resources, groundwater resources, urban geology, energy resources, environmental geology and climate change, geoheritage for sustainable geology, geoscience education and geological survey. It is notable that “groundwater”, “digital transformation”, and “geohazard” are the top 3 priorities among the Member Countries and cooperating countries which were raised during the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia Annual Session 2022 in Bandung, Indonesia.

4. In 2022, robust cooperation and communication in the region have been achieved. Most strikingly, the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia successfully held the historical 78th Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia Steering Committee in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, which is the first face-to-face Steering Committee meeting since the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Additionally, in the post-COVID era, the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia organized 32 physical/virtual workshops, training courses, and meetings in 2022, which focused on a variety of disciplines including urban geology, geohazard, carbon capture, utilisation and storage, groundwater, marine geology, geopark, mineral resources, etc., and involved over 870 participants to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among members and partners. Some of the highlights that support the sustainable development goals in the East and Southeast Asia region include:

(a) Projects in cooperation with the Republic of Korea and China on urban geology for sustainable cities in the region for the sharing of smart integrated solution system technology in response to cities’ complex geological hazards and disasters;

(b) A project with the Republic of Korea on vulnerability assessment to climate change of groundwater system in Greater Mekong subregion and comparative study of groundwater-dependent ecosystem;

(c) Projects on digital transformation of geo-information cooperating with the Republic of Korea (Geoscience Data Repository) and Japan (Geospatial Information Authority);

(d) Multilateral activities on mineral resource sustainable management with a focus on critical and strategic minerals with the Economic Commission for Europe, China-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Mining Cooperation Forum, ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Minerals, etc.;

(e) Capacity-building activities hosted by Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources; Geological Survey of Japan; and China Geological Survey.

More information about the activities of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia can be found at: <https://ccop.asia/about-annual>.

## II. Mekong River Commission

5. The Mekong River Commission is an intergovernmental organization for regional dialogue and cooperation in the Lower Mekong River Basin, established in 1995 based on the Mekong Agreement between Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam. The organization serves as a regional platform for water diplomacy and a knowledge hub of water resources management for the sustainable development of the region.

6. In 2022, in the context of climate change and rapid development, the Mekong River Commission launched the updated guidance for mainstream dams and the guidelines for transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment; launch new initiatives such as the State of the Mekong Address to draw regional and global attention to the climate challenge and development opportunities of the Mekong, a core river monitoring network and an integrated flood and drought web portal to better inform the public, the joint study with Lancang-Mekong Cooperation and proactive regional planning to chart a new development course; maintain cooperation among Member Countries on difficult issues on proposed hydropower projects; and secure core funding from countries and partners and tap into new funding sources for the communities relying on fisheries and resources of the Mekong.

More information about the activities of the Mekong River Commission can be found at: [www.mrcmekong.org/publications/governance/annual-reports/](http://www.mrcmekong.org/publications/governance/annual-reports/).

## III. Typhoon Committee

7. The ESCAP/World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Typhoon Committee is an intergovernmental body organized under the joint auspices of ESCAP and WMO in 1968 in order to promote and coordinate the planning and implementation of measures required for minimizing the loss of life and material damage caused by typhoons in Asia and the Pacific. The Committee has evolved into a collaboration of 14 members: Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Thailand; United States of America; and Viet Nam. The Committee develops activities under three substantive components: meteorology, hydrology, and disaster risk reduction, as well as training and research. The mission of the Committee is to reduce the loss of lives and

minimize social, economic and environmental impacts caused by typhoon-related disasters through integrated and enhanced regional collaboration.

8. In 2022, the Typhoon Committee was successful in achieving its mission to integrate and enhance regional activities of Members within international frameworks to reduce the loss of lives and minimize social, economic, and environmental impacts by typhoon-related disasters. With the contribution, cooperation and support of all Typhoon Committee Members, the Advisory Working Group, working groups, and Typhoon Committee Secretariat, the Committee has implemented the decisions of the 54th Session of the Committee smoothly. All fourteen Committee Members reported their tropical cyclone-related activities. In 2022, twenty-five named tropical cyclones of tropical storm intensity or above formed over the western North Pacific and the South China Sea, which was about the same as the climatological average of 25.1 (1991-2020) as reported by the Regional Specialized Meteorological Center in Tokyo.

9. The strategic plan of the Typhoon Committee from 2022 to 2026 has been approved by the 54th session of the Committee, which was hosted by the Lao People's Democratic Republic from 23 to 25 February 2022. The agreement on technical cooperation and research activities between the Typhoon Committee and the Asia Pacific Typhoon Collaborative Research Center has been signed and the draft pilot project of the technical cooperation and research activities between the Typhoon Committee and the Asia Pacific Typhoon Collaborative Research Center has been initiated. The working groups on meteorology, on hydrology, and on disaster risk reduction successfully implemented annual operating plans in 2022 despite continued travel restrictions throughout most of the year.

More information about the activities of the Committee can be found at: [www.typhooncommittee.org/tc-annual-session/](http://www.typhooncommittee.org/tc-annual-session/).

#### **IV. Panel on Tropical Cyclones**

10. The WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones is an intergovernmental regional body jointly established by WMO and ESCAP in 1972 to promote collaboration for addressing the impacts of tropical cyclones. It has been recognized as an important regional cooperation mechanism that integrates the actions and plans of the meteorology, hydrology, capacity development and disaster risk reduction components to reduce the impacts of tropical cyclone-related disasters. The Panel is composed of 13 members: Bangladesh, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

11. The forty-ninth session of the Panel was held online and hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 27 to 30 June 2022. The session was attended by 68 participants from the thirteen Members of the Panel, and representatives from the ESCAP and WMO secretariats, and observers from the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management and China. The session reviewed the past tropical cyclone season (2021–2022), and representatives from Member States presented their experiences of tropical cyclones in 2021 and 2022. In 2021, there were ten cyclonic storms and depressions formed over the North Indian Ocean. This includes extremely severe cyclone Tauktae and very severe cyclone Yaas in May and Severe Cyclone Shaheen in September. In 2022 (until May), four cyclonic storms and depressions were formed.

12. At the session, the Panel Members discussed follow-up actions of the forty-eighth session, including the promotion of impact-based forecasting, training for improving tropical cyclone forecasting skills and competencies including storm surge and wave forecasting by the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre in New Delhi, and addressing climate change impact on tropical cyclones. ESCAP and WMO have collaborated closely to support the Panel Members to enhance their capacity for impact-based forecasting and warning services and building resilience to natural hazards.

13. The session also reviewed amendments to its operational plan and report of the Task Team on the Panel on Tropical Cyclones structure and working mechanisms. Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre presented the Tropical Cyclone Operational Plan draft edition, mainly highlighting the initiatives taken by Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre in updating the Operational Plan and improvements in observations, modeling, warning services and dissemination mechanisms at Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre New Delhi during 2021.

14. The Panel noted that it was coming to the 50th anniversary since its first session in 1973. It was agreed that the 50-year anniversary of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones was an important opportunity for the Panel and its Members to promote their publicity and visibility in the region and at the national level and should be celebrated well throughout the year. The panel discussed ways to celebrate its 50th anniversary and provided ideas/opinions on how to proceed with commemorating this occasion of the anniversary.

15. The session also reviewed the report of the Task Team on the Panel on Tropical Cyclones' structure and working mechanisms. The Panel on Tropical Cyclones Task Team presented some basic documents on the structure of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones, as recommended by the forty-eighth session of the Panel, consisting of five groups: working group on meteorology, hydrology, disaster risk reduction, training and research, and advisory working group. In addition, the Panel on Tropical Cyclones Secretariat will serve as the executive arm of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones, led by the Panel on Tropical Cyclones Secretary. The Panel had a common view that it is urgent to find a Panel on Tropical Cyclones Member who will be hosting the Panel on Tropical Cyclones Secretariat and providing required personnel, facilities and services, as set in the terms of reference for the Panel on Tropical Cyclones Secretariat, and conditions/criteria. The Panel decided that after the forty-ninth session of Panel, the Chairperson of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones should circulate a letter to the Panel on Tropical Cyclones Members to invite their hosting of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones Secretariat.

More information about the activities of the Panel can be found at: <https://community.wmo.int/tropical-cyclone-programme-final-reports-meetings>.