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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Social Development

Eighth session
Bangkok, 8–10 October 2024

Report of the Committee on Social Development on its eighth session

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. The following decisions adopted by the Committee on Social Development are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific:

Decision 1

The Committee on Social Development requests the secretariat to support members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, upon request and within existing mandates and available resources, in strengthening their capacity to develop inclusive policies that can address rising poverty, unemployment and widening inequalities in view of the multiple socioeconomic and environmental challenges faced by the region, in alignment with national priorities.

Decision 2

The Committee on Social Development renews its commitment to the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific and requests the secretariat to support members and associate members, upon request and within existing mandates and available resources, in its implementation and in strengthening their capacity to foster more resilient societies and promote a just transition to a sustainable future.

Decision 3

The Committee on Social Development requests the secretariat to continue its work on population and development issues, with a focus on intergenerational relations, within existing mandates and available resources, and invites members and associate members to promote and work on intergenerational issues, in particular in the light of the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025 and the forthcoming fifth review and appraisal

Please recycle

of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, in Asia and the Pacific.

Decision 4

The Committee on Social Development notes the progress made in the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, and requests the secretariat to continue to support member States, upon their request and within existing mandates and available resources, in implementing the Jakarta Declaration.

II. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

2. The Committee held its eighth session in Bangkok from 8 to 10 October 2024. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of the Commission and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, Mr. Anukul Peedkaew.

B. Attendance

3. Representatives of the following member States attended: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kiribati, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

4. Representatives of Macao, China, an associate member, also attended.

5. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds also attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and United Nations Population Fund.

6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities also attended: ASEAN Disability Forum; Asia Monitor Resource Centre; Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability Foundation; Asia-Pacific Disabled Peoples' Organizations United; Asia-Pacific Down Syndrome Federation; Community-based Inclusive Development Asia-Pacific Network; Community-based Rehabilitation Asia-Pacific Network; Development Pathways; Development, Welfare and Research Foundation; Disabilities Thailand; Disabled Peoples International, Asia-Pacific region; Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia; Federation of Free Workers; HomeNet International; International Foundation for Electoral Systems; Rehabilitation International; Transforming Communities for Inclusion; Transportation for All; Tsao Foundation; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing; World Blind Union – Asia Pacific; World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry; and Zhongshan Vocational College.

7. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the bureau examined the credentials of the representatives of member States and reported upon them to the Committee. The credentials of the representatives of 28 member States were found to be in order. Acknowledging the report of the Credentials Committee to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session,[1] and in line with Assembly resolution 396 (V) of 14 December 1950, the bureau decided to defer any action on the credentials pertaining to the representatives of Myanmar at the eighth session of the Committee pending a decision by the Assembly on the representation of Myanmar.

8. The Committee took note of the oral report of the bureau on credentials.

C. Election of officers

9. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Maliki (Indonesia)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. Prakash Kumar Shrestha (Nepal) Mrs. Serap Ersoy (Türkiye)

D. Agenda

10. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
   (a) Opening addresses;
   (b) Election of officers;
   (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. The future of social protection systems in Asia and the Pacific.
3. Strengthening regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific.
4. Assessing demographic trends and intergenerational relations in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Social Development on its eighth session.

E. Other events

11. The following seminars, side events and special sessions were held in conjunction with the eighth session of the Committee:

(a) 8 October 2024, side event entitled "Disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific: leaving no one behind in our efforts", organized by the secretariat, the Embassy of Japan, the Japan International

[1] A/78/605.

Cooperation Agency, the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability Foundation and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center;

(b) 10 October 2024, side event for the launch of the Asia-Pacific companion report to the *World Social Protection Report 2024–26: Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition*, organized by the secretariat and ILO;

(c) 10 October 2024, briefing on the Asia-Pacific preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 2025, organized by the secretariat;

(d) 10 October 2024, side event on social protection to leave no one behind, organized by the secretariat.

III. Account of proceedings

12. The discussions held during the session have been summarized in an account of proceedings (see annex II).

Annex I

List of documents

Symbol	*Title*	*Agenda item*
General series		
ESCAP/CSD(8)/1/Rev.1	Provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CSD(8)/1/Add.1/Rev.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CSD(8)/2	Summary of *Protecting Our Future Today: Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific*	2
ESCAP/CSD(8)/3	Regional actions to support the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific	3
ESCAP/CSD(8)/4	Demographic trends and intergenerational relations in Asia and the Pacific	4
ESCAP/CSD(8)/5	Accelerating the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032	5
ESCAP/CSD(8)/6	Report of the Committee on Social Development on its eighth session	
Limited series		
ESCAP/CSD(8)/L.1	Draft report	7

Note: The information for participants, the list of participants and the tentative programme are available at www.unescap.org/events/2024/committee-social-development-eighth-session.

Annex II

Account of proceedings

I. Introduction

1. The present account of proceedings contains a summary of the discussions held during the eighth session of the Committee on Social Development.

II. Summary of discussions

A. The future of social protection systems in Asia and the Pacific (agenda item 2)

2. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat containing a summary of *Protecting Our Future Today: Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific* (ESCAP/CSD(8)/2).

3. Senior Adviser at the Khazanah Research Institute Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram delivered a keynote speech in which he stressed the worsening trends in the areas of poverty, inequality and food security in the Asia-Pacific region. The debt crisis faced by many Governments had shrunk their fiscal space, making it harder to adequately invest in social development, including social protection. At the same time, global megatrends such as climate change and digitalization required more investments to secure inclusive social development. Mr. Sundaram encouraged member States to leverage innovative financing mechanisms and activate whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches like those that had been adopted by many Governments during the recent pandemic.

4. Representatives of the following member States made statements: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kiribati, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and Turkmenistan.

5. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities also made statements: Disabled Peoples International, Asia-Pacific region; and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing.

6. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for its timely analysis of opportunities for strengthening social protection systems to respond to the interconnected challenges faced by countries in the region. In the document, the secretariat provided information on emerging megatrends, including climate change, demographic shifts and digitalization, and stressed the need for stronger and more agile social protection systems capable of fostering an inclusive, sustainable and equitable future for all. Many members of the Committee stressed the importance of social protection to reduce poverty, build resilience and enhance social cohesion across Asia and the Pacific and highlighted that forward-looking social protection policies and systems required a holistic approach that addressed vulnerabilities while promoting resilience.

7. The need to build inclusive and adaptive social protection systems that left no one behind was emphasized. Representatives shared information about efforts to ensure social protection coverage in their countries, especially for

population groups in vulnerable situations, including children, women, older persons and persons with disabilities. Several representatives noted the particular challenges faced by people working in the informal sector, labour migrants, refugees and irregular migrants.

8. Many representatives emphasized that climate change was a major threat to efforts aimed at achieving inclusive social development and that it undermined, in particular, the well-being of vulnerable communities. Many members of the Committee underscored that social protection systems needed to be adaptable and that existing social protection targeting, coverage and delivery systems needed to be readjusted in a holistic manner. In order to address vulnerabilities, existing preparedness, response and recovery mechanisms needed to be enhanced. The pressing challenges related to ageing and the importance of intergenerational solidarity were also noted in the context of strengthening and investing in social protection systems. Representatives shared information on social protection systems targeting older persons and recognized the impact of those systems on reducing poverty and building resilience. The importance of ensuring access to social protection systems for all was highlighted in the context of the demographic shifts under way in the region. Several representatives acknowledged the opportunities and challenges brought about by digital technologies in the context of social protection systems and policies. Many representatives emphasized that digital technologies and interoperable data management systems were strengthening the design, benefit delivery, administration and monitoring of social protection systems. They expressed the view that automation and digitalization were prompting social protection systems to adapt to new forms of work, which included the need to invest in the reskilling and upskilling of workers.

9. Representatives shared information on efforts to build stronger and more comprehensive social protection systems for all, expand universal coverage and establish multi-pillar systems. The importance of securing long-term financing for social protection systems was raised in the context of specific structural pension and fiscal sector reforms and the reprioritization of spending towards social sectors. In addition, representatives emphasized the need to enhance the capacity of staff in ministries and other government employees working on social protection. Many representatives recognized the importance of regional and international cooperation and expressed their continued commitment to enhancing cooperation on social protection. Several representatives called for international cooperation to address the nexus between migration and social protection.

10. Representatives of non-governmental organizations underscored the challenges faced by workers in the informal sector, who constituted up to two thirds of all employed persons in Asia and the Pacific, and called upon Governments to remove legal barriers hindering such workers' enjoyment of the right to freedom of association, to include associations representing such workers in the governance structures of social protection systems and to strengthen the organizational and leadership capacities of such organizations. In the context of global megatrends and the risks they posed to persons with disabilities, one representative called for more inclusive disaster-risk management strategies and the establishment of inclusive social protection systems to support persons with disabilities in the changing world of work, especially with new alternatives in the area of entrepreneurship. The representative also called upon member States to develop national plans that were inclusive, in particular in terms of facilitating access to digital technologies for all.

B. Strengthening regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific (agenda item 3)

11. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on regional actions to support the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CSD(8)/3).

12. The discussions of the Committee were informed by a panel discussion on opportunities to strengthen social protection systems in view of the critical regional trends affecting populations in vulnerable situations in Asia and the Pacific. The panellists were: Head of Department, General Directorate of Social Assistance, Ministry of Family and Social Services, Türkiye, Mr. Ali Üstünyer; representative, Asian Roundtable on Social Protection, and Secretary-General, Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion, Ms. Boonsom Namsomboon; Deputy Minister, Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia, Mr. Maliki; Chief Executive Officer and Principal Social Protection Specialist, Development Pathways, Mr. Stephen Kidd; Chief Executive Officer, Maldives Pension Administration Office, Maldives, Ms. Sujatha Haleem; and Director of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection, Fiji, Mr. Veremo Muria.

13. The panellists emphasized the need to build universal social protection systems for all people to facilitate sustainable economic growth and a stronger social contract. Discussions focused on the central role of social protection in building resilience to risks and vulnerabilities arising from lifecycle contingencies and climate change. Many panellists highlighted that climate change was exacerbating vulnerabilities and shared information on initiatives aimed at fostering more adaptive and shock-responsive social protection systems, including initiatives on: mapping areas particularly vulnerable to climate-related risks; the expansion and tailoring of benefits to those experiencing shocks; the development of cross-ministerial road maps outlining steps to adapt existing systems to shocks; anticipatory social protection systems; and the use of parametric insurance schemes. More flexible financing mechanisms were highlighted as being critical for responding to climate change and other shocks in a timely and effective manner. The importance of engaging people working in the informal sector in the development of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies to promote a just transition was stressed. Moreover, such workers should be encouraged to engage more broadly with national and intergovernmental bodies to ensure the effectiveness of schemes and regional advocacy campaigns by workers in the informal sector on social protection. Multi-tiered pension systems could contribute to ensuring a universal social protection floor, with significant benefits in the form of reduced poverty and vulnerability among older persons. One panellist noted that political will at the highest level had enabled investment in a solid technological backbone and that coordination among and the interoperability of databases were considered key to the development of a digitalized social protection system and enable the transparent, effective and equitable distribution of benefits. Highlighting the pitfalls of poverty-targeted schemes, some panel members emphasized that the focus should remain on protecting all people throughout the life cycle and on creating decent work. The importance of political commitment, legal frameworks, institutional support and interministerial collaboration was highlighted as essential for the success of social protection systems. Panellists stressed the importance of developing capacity, including through regional platforms and South-South and North-South learning opportunities, with a focus on increasing the ability to adapt to shocks and climate change, making use of data, promoting digitalization and

strengthening the financial sustainability of schemes. Furthermore, the panellists also stressed the need for research on good practices in the region.

14. Representatives of the following member States made statements: Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

15. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities also made statements: Federation of Free Workers and Tsao Foundation.

16. Members of the Committee renewed their commitment to strengthening regional cooperation on social protection, including by fostering collaboration, sharing good practices and exchanging knowledge to build more resilient societies and promote a just transition to a sustainable future. Some members highlighted the importance of continuing to provide a regional platform for peer learning and the sharing of good practices; improving data and developing digital platforms; integrating social protection with other sectoral policies, for example on economic empowerment, disaster management and climate change mitigation; encouraging investment; and enhancing the human resource capacity of social protection systems. Several representatives highlighted actions taken to support the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific.

17. Recognizing the key role of social protection in building people's resilience to climate shocks and other crises, representatives emphasized the importance of taking adaptive and shock-responsive social protection measures. Several representatives noted that investment in social protection was essential for inclusive and sustained economic growth. In that regard, one representative reported that his Government had adopted a social protection floor as a key component of its national development plan to ensure comprehensive income security and universal health care. The importance of legislative frameworks, national integrated social protection frameworks and digital social protection systems was highlighted, as was the need to complement social protection with access to employment services and skills development opportunities.

18. Information was shared on initiatives taken to expand coverage, including through non-contributory programmes that provided in-kind support through food stamps, cash transfers for adolescent mothers and children and publicly funded health insurance. Efforts had been made to expand contributory schemes to include informal workers as beneficiaries and by adapting social protection frameworks to accommodate gig and freelance workers. The importance of a rights-based approach to social protection was acknowledged and the need to promote the engagement of persons with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, was stressed. Maternity benefits and access to antenatal care were being provided in some countries as part of maternity protection policies. The care economy played an important role and should be integrated into social protection schemes. In preparation for the transition to an ageing society, measures were being taken to expand contributory and non-contributory pensions for older persons. Several representatives reported that bilateral agreements had been reached to protect migrant workers by addressing issues such as double contributions and portability arrangements, including in alignment with the ASEAN Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits for Migrant Workers in ASEAN.

19. Representatives of non-governmental organizations highlighted the importance of regional cooperation to leverage social protection as a policy tool to address challenges from megatrends. In particular, the negative impact of climate change on workers, especially workers in the informal sector, was emphasized. The need for a just transition to a low-carbon economy with social protection as a main component was underscored. Moreover, such a transition should be made while protecting jobs, safeguarding livelihoods, championing gender justice and encouraging youth participation. Some representatives of civil society organizations added that social dialogue and tripartism, as well as transparent climate financing mechanisms that were just, equitable and focused on the public good, were instrumental to a just transition. The need to balance the needs of today's generations with the longer-term needs of future generations by engaging young people in the development of policies aimed at building the resilience of older persons was emphasized. The importance of engaging stakeholders, including young and older persons, as well as the private sector, to build stronger intergenerational relations was stressed.

C. Assessing demographic trends and intergenerational relations in Asia and the Pacific (agenda item 4)

20. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on demographic trends and intergenerational relations in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CSD(8)/4).

21. The discussions of the Committee were informed by a panel discussion on the same topic. The panellists were: Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Strategy Officer, Tsao Foundation, Mr. Paul Ong; Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge India, Mr. Rohit Prasad; Director, Social Data and Indicator Development Division, Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, Thailand, Ms. Suphannada Lowhachai; and Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, and Director, Sau Po Centre on Ageing, University of Hong Kong, Ms. Weiqun Lou.

22. The panellists highlighted that the Asia-Pacific region was ageing rapidly, a trend driven by rapidly falling fertility rates and increasing life expectancy, while also experiencing rapid urbanization, a trend towards nuclear family structures, increased migration, more women in the workforce, higher education levels and technological development. While the demographic transition came with challenges, including shrinking workforces and higher health-care costs, intergenerational and life-course approaches that emphasized, for example, healthy ageing, could be adopted to mitigate those challenges. It was agreed that families played a crucial role, but intergenerational and community care, as well as more care-friendly working arrangements, could be leveraged. Infrastructure and housing would have to be adapted to promote such arrangements. Governments could make use of national transfer accounts, which were a valuable tool for policymakers to better understand economic transfers between age groups and offer insights into income and consumption patterns by age and over time.

23. Representatives of the following member States made statements: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

24. A representative of the United Nations Population Fund also made a statement.

25. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities also made statements: Development, Welfare and Research Foundation; Disabled Peoples International, Asia-Pacific region; Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia; and Federation of Free Workers.

26. Representatives shared information on the demographic shifts occurring in their countries, which were marked by declining fertility rates, increasing life expectancies, ageing, urbanization, migration and weakening intergenerational bonds. They stressed their commitment to addressing the socioeconomic impacts of those demographic changes by adopting forward-looking policies and doing more to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, including through the development of a regional implementation plan and strengthened regional cooperation. Several representatives mentioned national action plans and implementation strategies and their Governments' interest in engaging in regional cooperation to develop policies on ageing.

27. Representatives reported on key national initiatives aimed at enhancing intergenerational solidarity and well-being for people of all ages, including by: strengthening the family; implementing programmes on active longevity; implementing intergenerational volunteer assistance programmes; expanding social security, old-age allowance and universal pension systems; promoting universal health care; addressing the special health-care needs of older persons; improving maternal and child health and reducing maternal and infant mortality; increasing the digital skills of older persons; supporting the employment and skills development of youth, older persons and persons with disabilities; providing sexual and reproductive health education; strengthening mother and child welfare programmes, including through nutritional support, financial assistance, social infrastructure and legal protection; promoting multigenerational living through community-driven planning and age-friendly designs; and strengthening the environment to combine family with work. Several representatives stressed the need to strengthen the care economy and address the related issues of gender equality and community-based care.

28. Many representatives called for strengthening intergenerational relations, especially by supporting families and communities; promoting decent work and lifelong learning; adopting a balanced approach to investing in youth and older persons, including by investing in both kindergartens and care centres; adopting an international legal instrument on promoting and protecting the rights of older persons; providing new technologies; and strengthening data-driven policymaking. One representative noted her Government's commitment to providing a timely, science-based and comprehensive response to ageing, improving global ageing governance systems, encouraging technical innovation and cooperating on the development and delivery of care products and services. Another representative called for the issue of intergenerational relations to be discussed at the Second World Summit for Social Development, in 2025.

29. The representative of the United Nations Population Fund noted that fostering intergenerational solidarity was essential to enabling the prosperity of young people, people of working age and older persons, recommended the use of national transfer accounts and highlighted the importance of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

30. Representatives of non-governmental organizations stressed the importance of using existing research, including on intergenerational transfers, active ageing and data collection, for evidence-based policymaking. In order to adopt intergenerational approaches, policymakers should view different generations as complementary to each other. The contributions of older persons to economies and societies were recognized. The expansion of the informal sector was affecting access to social protection and, while the growth of the digital economy was creating opportunities, it also contributed to rising inequalities. The need to recognize care work, which was primarily performed by women, to respect the fundamental principles and rights at work and to uphold the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, regardless of age, was underscored.

D. Implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 (agenda item 5)

31. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on accelerating the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 (ESCAP/CSD(8)/5).

32. The discussions of the Committee were informed by a panel discussion on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration. The panellists were: Deputy Director General, International Affairs Department, China Disabled Persons' Federation, Ms. Ling Xu; Head, Overseas Business, Heralbony, Ms. Megumi Kobayashi; Chair, ASEAN Disability Forum, Mr. Lim Puay Tiak; Member, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ms. Saowalak Thongkuay; and Senior Programme Manager, Transforming Communities for Inclusion, Mr. Waqar Shahid Puri.

33. The panellists emphasized the critical role played by the Jakarta Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in guiding disability-inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific. They highlighted good practices in applying a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to implementing the Jakarta Declaration and the Convention by Governments, organizations of persons with disabilities and private sector stakeholders, including in the areas of accessibility, disability-inclusive employment and business, and the protection of the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities. Some panellists highlighted barriers to the direct and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, and their representative organizations in policymaking and decision-making in both development and humanitarian processes; mainstreaming disability inclusion into broader national socioeconomic development agendas and strategies, including those related to climate change, gender equality and online child protection; and effectively monitoring the implementation of relevant global, regional and subregional frameworks. They also highlighted the uneven development of disability inclusion policies and practices across countries. To address those challenges, the panellists called for action to be taken to strengthen multisectoral collaboration, further build the capacities of organizations of persons with disabilities, ensure the implementation of a rights-based approach to disability and engage a wide range of communities in the creation of inclusive support systems and societies.

34. Representatives of the following member States made statements: Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Kingdom and United States.

35. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities also made statements: Asia-Pacific Disabled Peoples' Organizations United; Community-based Inclusive Development Asia-Pacific Network; Disabled Peoples International, Asia-Pacific region; Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia; International Foundation for Electoral Systems; Rehabilitation International; World Blind Union – Asia Pacific; and World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry.

36. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to implementing the Jakarta Declaration. Actions had been taken to harmonize national laws with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; improve physical and digital accessibility; employ artificial intelligence for disability inclusion; reduce poverty and improve social protection for persons with disabilities; provide special and/or inclusive education and vocational skills training for persons with disabilities; improve health-care and rehabilitation services and access to assistive devices for persons with disabilities; support employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for persons with disabilities; promote inclusion in sports; enhance the political participation of persons with disabilities; promote disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction measures; establish grievance mechanisms and improve access to justice for persons with disabilities; promote gender equality and the empowerment of women with disabilities; strengthen data-driven disability-inclusive planning and programming; improve the issuance of disability certificates or identity cards and information management systems; establish one-stop-shop service centres for persons with disabilities; allocate a regular budget for disability programmes; and support international cooperation programmes on disability inclusion.

37. While progress had been made in disability-inclusive development, critical challenges remained that hindered the achievement of tangible outcomes for persons with disabilities in the region. Some representatives of member States highlighted certain challenges, including the intersectionality of disability, gender inequality and poverty; prevailing physical, informational and attitudinal barriers that underlined discrimination against persons with disabilities; and the impact of population ageing, climate change and other crises on disability-inclusive development.

38. Members of the Committee expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for supporting and facilitating the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration. Many members recognized that more needed to be done to mainstream disability inclusion into policies and programmes across sectors, strengthen inclusive education, develop the skills of persons with disabilities, enhance social protection for persons with disabilities to enable them to live independently with dignity, empower persons with disabilities to make decisions, engage families and communities in building stronger social support systems for persons with disabilities, adopt a gender-responsive life-cycle approach to policymaking and programming, further promote data-driven and evidence-based policy design and implementation, systematically combat misconceptions, stigma and discrimination based on disability, strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration among representatives of the Government, civil society and the private sector, and enhance regional cooperation and mutual learning on disability-inclusive development. One representative noted the impact of sanctions on the implementation of policies and programmes for the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

39. Representatives of civil society organizations shared information on actions taken to support the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Emerging issues in the context of megatrends, including the disproportionate impact of climate change on persons with disabilities, were highlighted. The inequalities and opportunities presented by technological transformation and artificial intelligence were noted. The specific intersectional challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities, older persons with disabilities, ethnic minority individuals with disabilities and persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities deserved particular attention and action. To address those challenges and accelerate progress in disability-inclusive development, representatives called for strengthened mechanisms to support the direct and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in decision-making and monitoring; the engagement of all actors across sectors and the global market to empower persons with disabilities; the allocation of sufficient funding to support programmes and initiatives, especially those for empowering women and men with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries; and the promotion of a rights-based approach to disability.

E. Other matters (agenda item 6)

40. No statements were made under this agenda item.

F. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighth session (agenda item 7)

41. The Committee adopted the report on its eighth session on 10 October 2024.

42. One representative noted that, while supporting the consensus reached on the decisions, she wished to express her Government’s disappointment about the removal of specific language on climate change and demographic shifts from the draft decision introduced under agenda item 2, noting that the new language introduced on socioeconomic and environmental challenges did not adequately cover the specific challenges to social protection systems resulting from climate change.