Fifth South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum

“Building Back Better from COVID-19 while Advancing the full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Virtual Meeting Format
28-30 September 2021
3 November 2021

The South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals provides governments, development partners, civil society, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders opportunities to share subregional perspectives, discuss collaborative measures to address subregional priorities and exchange good practices to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The outcomes and recommendations derived from the Forum will feed into regional and global processes, including the annual Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

While the South-East Asian countries were not on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030, the COVID-19 pandemic has further disrupted the subregion’s journey towards a more sustainable and resilient future. The pandemic has exposed long-standing development fault lines across the Asia-Pacific and exacerbated inequalities, leading countries to focus on the need to promote sustainable recovery and enhance resilience to address the possible lasting socio-economic downfalls experienced by most countries.

Against this backdrop, the South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will enable an inclusive dialogue across stakeholder groups in South-East Asia on the subregion’s SDG progress and subregional actions to address challenges in expediting advancements in the context of the socio-economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the Forum will aim to address the following questions:

- What are the impacts of COVID-19 on the region’s journey towards sustainable, resilient and equitable development?
- How can South-East Asian countries address the lasting socio-economic impacts induced by the pandemic? What policy recommendations, including financing options, can the subregion tap into and what do countries need to take into consideration in the process of contextualizing?
- What are good practices that the subregion can share to promote cross-country and cross-regional collaboration?

The Forum will highlight salient points emanating from the discussions and aims to develop partnerships and concrete action plans for the subregion’s sustainable and resilient recovery.
# Tentative Programme

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>09:45-10:00</td>
<td>OPENING SESSION</td>
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<td>- Welcome remarks, UN ESCAP</td>
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<td>- Key remarks, Thailand</td>
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<td>10:00-12:00</td>
<td>SESSION 1: Regional Action Towards Sustainability: APEC and the SDGs</td>
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<td>As the incoming host of APEC in 2022, Thailand’s overarching thematic thinking centres on a shift towards an inclusive and sustainable future by facilitating trade and investment, re-booting connectivity, and advancing balanced growth. APEC 2022 Thailand is an opportune time to engage in a whole-of-society approach and synergise partnerships to achieve the SDGs and the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 towards sustainable and inclusive development. The session aims to strengthen regional cooperation by building on the complementarities between APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the SDGs and share how Thailand, as APEC 2022 host economy, plans to drive APEC priorities and inject new dynamism of growth through synergising the bio-, circular-, and green economies.</td>
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<td>Moderator: Mr. Michael Williamson, Section Chief, Energy Division, UN ESCAP</td>
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<td>Panellists</td>
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<td>1. Ms. Sweta C. Saxena, Chief, Macroeconomic Policy and Analysis Section, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development, UN ESCAP</td>
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<td>2. Representative from Malaysia (Putrajaya Vision 2040)</td>
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<td>3. Representative from New Zealand</td>
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<td>4. Representative from Thailand</td>
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<td>5. Representative from APEC Secretariat (tbc)</td>
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<td>14:00-16:00</td>
<td>SESSION 2: Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery and Sustainable Development Goals Implementation at the Subregional Level</td>
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<td>Progress towards the SDGs was already stalled in South-East Asia, and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has further compromised their full achievement by 2030. The Asia-Pacific SDG Partnership Report 2021: Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic-Leaving No Country Behind, developed in collaboration with the ADB, UNDP, and UN ESCAP identifies such contrasting impacts due to the divergent pre-existing economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities in and response capacities of the countries. Understanding the underlying vulnerabilities and capacities of the countries becomes, therefore, essential in designing policies that respond to the ongoing pandemic and accelerate SDG actions.</td>
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The session will focus on identifying the unique set of challenges and needs of South-East Asia and its subregions. The session will also gather information on priorities, policies, stakeholder-led initiatives and projects for possible inclusion in the 2022 SDG Partnership report that are related to the HLPF theme 2022 “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

Moderator: tbc
Panellists: tbc
Q&A Session
Wrap-up and Summary

Day 2, Wednesday, 29 September 2021

08:00-10:30 SESSION 3: SDGs and Advancing Gender Equality & Women’s Economic Empowerment

The high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) is the United Nations platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For 2022, the five SDGs for review are Goals 4 on Quality Education, 5 on Gender Equality, 14 on Life Below Water, 15 on Life on Land, and 17 on Partnerships. The session will deliberate on strengthening SDG implementation during the Decade of Action through gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, quality education, and the sustainable management, protection and restoration of natural resources.

Welcome remarks
Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, UN ESCAP

Keynote address
1. Cambodia (tbc)
2. Canada (tbc)

Moderator: Ms. Sudha Gooty, Programme Manager, Catalysing Women’s Entrepreneurship, Social Development Division, UN ESCAP

Panellists

Increasing Access to Markets and Finance for Asia-Pacific MSMEs
1. Ms. Cristina Pineda, Senior Development Officer, Strategic Planning, Policy and Operations, Asia Pacific Bureau, Global Affairs Canada, and Mr. Hendry Predy, CTIF Programme Manager, Cowater
2. Ms. Vicky Singmin, Head of Cooperation and Counsellor (Development), Mission of Canada to ASEAN
3. Ms. Trinh Thi Huong, Director of Policy and General Affairs Division, Agency for Enterprise Development-Ministry of Planning and Investment, Vietnam
4. Ms Celia Boyd, Co-founder and Managing Director, SHE Investments Cambodia (tbc)

5. Mr. Jonathan Wong, Chief of Technology and Innovation Section, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UN ESCAP

6. Ms. Alizé Duludé, Senior International Development Officer, Vietnam, Indonesia and ASEAN Development program, Global Affairs Canada

7. SEED (tbc)

Q&A Session

Wrap-up and Summary

Day 3, Thursday, 30 September 2021

10:00-12:00  SESSION 4: Subregional and National Progress Reporting on SDGs: Advice and Lessons from the Region in the Context of the Continuing COVID-19 Crisis

The session will focus on the follow-up to Voluntary National Reviews presented in 2021 and the preparations for VNR presentations at the 2022 HLPF. Part 1 will aim to promote ‘twinning’ by enabling different stakeholders from countries presenting their VNR in 2022 to interview their counterparts from countries that presented their VNR in 2021. Representatives from government, civil society, local authorities, supreme audit institutions and the business sector, will be engaged to share advice and lessons with countries submitting their VNR in 2022. Part 2 will include tailored interventions from other countries in the South-east Asia region. They will have the opportunity to share their progress since their last VNR and provide an update on SDG implementation.

Keynote remarks: Viet Nam (tbc)

Moderator: Ms. Caitlin Porter, Senior VNR Advisor, UN ESCAP

Part 1: Interviews with 2021 VNR countries: How different stakeholders approached the VNR

The Philippines will present their 2nd VNR in 2022. This session will aim to promote ‘twinning’ by enabling different stakeholders from the Philippines to interview their counterparts from countries that presented their VNR in 2021.

Interviewers: Representatives from the Philippines, including government representatives, local authorities, business sector, supreme unit institutions and civil society organizations.

Panellists

1. Lao PDR (Member country and business community/ Chamber of commerce)
2. Malaysia (Member country and local authorities)
3. Indonesia (Member country and Supreme Audit Institution)
4. Thailand (Member country and CSO representative)

Moderator of Plenary discussion: Mr. Roy Trivedy, UN Resident Coordinator, Timor-Leste (tbc)
Part 2: The impact of the VNR: lessons from different countries in the region.

Interventions on the VNR process from country representatives from the following Member States:

1. Brunei Darussalam
2. Timor-Leste
3. Viet Nam
4. Cambodia
5. Singapore

Moderator of Plenary discussion: (tbc)

Closure of session: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Sustainable Development Officer, UN ESCAP

14:00-16:45 SESSION 5: Sustainable Finance Recovery: Innovating Finance for the 2030 Agenda

The issuance of green, social and sustainability bonds has gained significant momentum in South-East Asia, with a record US$ 12.1 billion issued in 2020. However, across the region, gaps in national capacities and strategies to issue green and SDG-linked bonds have limited the growing potential of the bond market. The UN’s four-year strategy for financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identified the need to address all barriers that may impede the flow of finance to sustainable development.

The session will focus on the use of green and SDG-linked bonds as an instrument to address post-COVID-19 financing needs and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in South-East Asia. The discussion will also take heed of lessons learned from the practical experience of issuing green bonds in Europe. Policy makers, practitioners, academics and other stakeholders will engage in a discourse on useful insights to help South-East Asia develop strategies and policy options for financing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable socio-economic development post COVID-19.

Welcome remarks

1. UN ESCAP
2. ASEAN

Keynote address

1. Indonesia (tbc)
2. Cambodia (tbc)
3. Luxembourg (tbc)

Moderator: Mr. Patrick Martin, International Expert on Climate Finance, UN ESCAP

Panelists: tbc

Q&A Session

Wrap-up and Summary
SESSION 6: RCEP and the 2030 Agenda: Sustainable Investment

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) sets the standard for a new level of economic cooperation, integration, and inclusion across the Asia-Pacific region. The agreement recognises that all three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social, and environment) are interdependent, and that economic parentships can play an important role in sustainable development. Moreover, the signatories to RCEP have adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The session will raise the discussion of implementing RCEP in support of the 2030 Agenda, particularly the role of FDI and PPPs to better promote sustainable development in the region. Discussion will also touch on how RCEP can and has changed the investment landscape within the region, how it can contribute to the COVID-19 recovery efforts in the region through boosting investment prospects, how it can facilitate infrastructure development through PPPs that bring in new sources of finances, and the specific areas within the Agreement that offer room for incorporating more of a sustainable development orientation.

Introductory remarks: Ms. Tientip Subhanij, Chief, Investment and Enterprise Development Section (IEDS), Trade, Investment and Innovation Division (TIID), UN ESCAP

Opening remarks: ASEAN (tbc)

Moderator: Mr. Manjiao Chi, Professor, Center of International Economic Law and Policy, Law School, University of International Business and Economics

Presenter

1. Leveraging RCEP to Promote Sustainable FDI and PPPs, Ms. Heather Taylor-Strauss, Economic Affairs Officer, IEDS, TIID UN ESCAP

2. Infrastructure Financing and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) Network of Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Eric Roeder, Coordinator, IEDS, TIID, UN ESCAP

Panellists:

1. Dr. Sar Senera, Director, Legal Affairs Department, Council for the Development of Cambodia (tbc)

2. Atty. Marjorie Ramos-Samaniego, Governor, Board of Investments, Philippines

3. Mr. Syed Mohd Faizal Syed Mohd Dardin, Director, Investment Policy and Trade Division, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Malaysia (tbc)

4. Ms. Ankiti Bose, CEO and Co-founder, Zilingo

5. Ms Intan Murnira Ramli, Policy Fellow, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia

Q & A Session

Wrap-up and Summary

Closing remarks: Mr. Ruhimat Soerakoesoemah, Head, Sub-regional Office for Southeast Asia, UN ESCAP