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"

Session #1
Regional Action Towards Sustainability: APEC and the SDGs

Tuesday, 28 September 2021; 9:45 – 12:00 hrs (Bangkok Time: UTC +7)
Virtual meeting, MS Teams

Overview

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [1] (APEC) is the premier forum for facilitating economic growth, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region. In 1994, APEC Economic Leaders adopted the Bogor Goals to realise free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region by 2020. Last year, the Leaders adopted the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 as the cooperative framework for an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community over the next two decades. It adds to the Bogor Goals by outlining "Strong, Balanced, Secure, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth" as one of the three economic drivers[2] to pursue this vision. It encompasses current and forward-looking issues, including greater health and well-being for all, human resource development, economic and technical cooperation, economic policies that address environmental challenges, that mutually reinforces the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

COVID-19 has disrupted our journey towards a more sustainable future and revealed the interdependency of all things in our world, but it also presents new opportunities to change the business-as-usual modus operandi. As highlighted by the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021 by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the pandemic has exposed long-standing development fault lines across the Asia-Pacific and exacerbated inequalities, resulting in long-term and far-reaching consequences. Therefore, enhancing sustainable recovery and resilience is critical for lasting socio-economic development of all countries.

APEC has pivoted and prioritised strong, inclusive and resilient economic recovery, underscoring the importance of cooperation and cross-sectoral engagements in the post-COVID world. 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. This draws on our national recovery strategy to optimise our productivity and revitalise our natural resources through the Bio-Circular-Green Economy model (BCG) by leveraging science, technology and innovation. APEC 2022 Thailand is an opportune time for us to engage in a whole-of-society approach and synergise our partnerships to achieve the SDGs and the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 towards sustainable and inclusive development.

[1] APEC accounts for 39% of global population (2016), 60% of world GDP and 48% of world trade (2018).
[2] The three economic drivers outlined in the Putrajaya Vision 2040 are (1) trade and investment, (2) innovation and digitalization, and (3) strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals provides a unique opportunity to continue shaping the sub-regional perspectives and priorities and explore closer multi-stakeholder collaboration for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This session will deliberate on initiatives with countries aimed at building their capacity through technical cooperation and training programs to develop the necessary policies and institutional capacity.

Objectives

- To strengthen regional cooperation by building on the complementarities between APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the SDGs;
- To exchange views on the impact of COVID-19 on the region's sustainable development and best practices on the path towards a strong, inclusive and resilient economic recovery; and
- To 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.

Target Audience

Participants include official representatives from each of the ESCAP member States in South-East Asia, related United Nations organizations, civil society representatives, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector.

Further Information

The session will take place in a virtual modality on 28 September 2021. It will be conducted in English. All questions regarding the session and the SDG Forum can be sent to escap-sea@un.org.

Tentative Programme

Session outline
Moderator Mr. Michael Williamson, Section Chief, Energy Division, UN ESCAP **Panellists** 1. Ms. Sweta C. Saxena, Chief, Macroeconomic Policy and Analysis Section, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development, UN ESCAP 2. Mr. Hairil Yahri Yaacob, Deputy Secretary General (Trade) of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), APEC Malaysia 3. Mr. Mark Talbot, Senior Official, APEC New Zealand 4. Mr. Cherdchai Chaivaivid, Director General of International Economic Affairs, APEC SOM Thailand 5. Ms. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Executive Director, APEC Secretariat **Discussion points** • Overview of APEC and how APEC's priorities have evolved over the years in response to the changing nature of trade and investment environment to include issues, such as sustainable and inclusive growth, and environmental issues; • Complementarities between the APEC Putrajaya vision 2040 and the SDGs; • Recovery from COVID-19 in a sustainable and inclusive manner; alignment between the APEC 2021 priorities and the SDGs; • Advancing strong, sustainable, and inclusive growth: APEC 2022 priorities and the overarching theme of bio-circular-green economy; • Towards Post-COVID-19 Resilient Economies: Recommendations for possible synergies and collaboration between APEC and ESCAP. **Q & A Session** **Wrap-up and Summary by Moderator**
Closed Session