



ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

## ESBN Monthly Update

December 2020

### ESBN related news

#### ESBN, 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 25 November 2020

The 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network was held virtually on 25 November 2020 to discuss areas of collaboration between ESNB and ESCAP divisions, focusing on climate action, plastics, digitization and tsunami monitoring.

<https://esbn.unescap.org/events/escap-sustainable-business-network-esbn-8th-meeting>



#### 3rd ESNB Augmenting Tsunami Monitoring Steering Committee Meeting, 23 November 2020

The 3rd SC discussed the draft action plan of the project, aimed at augmenting the capacity of tsunami early warning systems. This initiative brings together the maritime private sector, academia, government and international agencies to further enhance disaster risk management.

<https://esbn.unescap.org/events/3rd-esbn-augmenting-tsunami-monitoring-steering-committee-meeting>

### **New ESNB members**

We are pleased to welcome NEC corporation, City Developments Limited, ISA TanTec Ltd., IX Fintech Group Limited, March Capital Limited and Athenasia Consulting Limited as ESNB members.

### **Youth and Women Entrepreneurship Taskforce Activities, November 2020**

Members of the ESNB Youth and Women Entrepreneurship Taskforce participated in the following:

- "3 Events, 3 Continents" - a business-governmental talk which aims to establish a network of business cooperation between Europe, Asia and south America.
- UXAthon 2020 - an Entrepreneurial Cross discipline & cross-geography sprint where students collaborate on a one-week intense program focused on User Experience (UX) and design thinking.
- SDGAthon 2020 - With a core focus on social impact, this cross-collaboration program for students and aspiring entrepreneurs provided an opportunity to address social problems using the SDG framework with an entrepreneurial approach, and increased understanding of the work being done at a global level by governments, civil society and entrepreneurs towards the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

### **Survey on progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific**

In preparation of the 8th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), we invite all ESNB members to participate in an online survey to gather multi-stakeholder views on progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia and the Pacific. To participate, please take this 15-minute [survey](#) before 15 December 2020.

### **SDG SME toolkit**

The Global Compact Network Malaysia launched an SDG SME toolkit curated to help SMEs accelerate their sustainability practices and performance as a source for growth. The toolkit is available free for all to use: <https://ungcmalaysia.org/toolkit/>

### **GOESG ASEAN**

This one-day ESG themed event for ASEAN organized by the Global Compact Network in Malaysia discussed corporate sustainability leadership and how to raise ASEAN Business Ambition for SDGs.

<https://www.goesg.org/>

### **Webinar series on science-based targets for business**

This 4 session webinar series, organized by CDP Hong Kong, WWF Singapore, WRI Indonesia, UN Global Compact Malaysia (GCMY) and UN Global Compact Network Singapore (GCNS) provided a region-focused discussion, guidance and deep dive into setting emission targets in line with a 1.5 degree trajectory. See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8s32Ndm1wM&list=PLFnXNznu-sA6M5KF4AfGArg-2zNIVIkPB>

### **Upcoming events by ESNB members**

*10 December: ASEAN Responsible and Inclusive Business Forum (virtual)*

Organized by ASEAN CSR Network and ASEAN Business Advisory Council the Forum will explore how going “All-in for Digital Transformation” can help organizations emerge stronger and thrive in the new normal. Tickets are free for basic level. Register at: [www.araiba.org/ribf](http://www.araiba.org/ribf)

### Other news of ESNB interest

Paperless coming into force 20 Feb 2021

**Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific enters into force on 20 February 2021** Following the ratification of China on 22 November 2020, and earlier ratifications/accession of Azerbaijan, the Philippines, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Bangladesh, this inclusive and enabling treaty will enter into force on 20 February 2021. The Agreement, effectively builds upon the large number of bilateral and (sub)regional paperless trade initiatives, ensuring greater harmonization and interoperability between systems and promoting adoption of international standards. It has the potential to cut trade costs by 25% and make contactless trade a reality where supply chains are resilient even in the time of pandemics such as the COVID-19. The Agreement in Chinese, English and Russian languages is available on the website of the Treaty Section of the UN Office of Legal Affairs, along with an up-to-date list of countries who signed, ratified or acceded to the Agreement [link](#). More information at: [here](#).

**UN Secretary General’s speech on the “State of the planet”** UN Secretary General’s held a speech at Columbia University on the “State of the planet”, setting the stage for scaled-up #ClimateAction & ambition. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BpFEoGK4jU>

### ESCAP events of potential interest to ESNB members

**2 December 2020: High-Level Meeting on Regional Cooperation for Trade and Transport Connectivity in the Age of Pandemics in Asia and the Pacific (virtual)**

The meeting will discuss proven and emerging best practices, including digitalization reforms, and concrete ways to foster greater regional cooperation to ensure resilience and efficiency of trade and transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific. See: <https://www.unescap.org/events/high-level-meeting-regional-cooperation-trade-and-transport-connectivity-age-pandemics-asia>

**2-3 December 2020: 3-4 December 2020: South Asia Forum on Sustainable Development 2020 (virtual)**

Jointly organized by the ESCAP and the Government of Maldives, the forum will discuss strategies and responses for South Asia to build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic in line with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. <https://www.unescap.org/events/fourth-south-asia-forum-sustainable-development-goals>

**3 December 2020: Web Forum: Enhancing Women’s Economic Empowerment in ASEAN countries**

The objective of the Web Forum is to facilitate exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learnt with respect to the progressive implementation of Beijing+25 commitments in ASEAN countries.

<https://www.unescap.org/events/web-forum-enhancing-women-s-economic-empowerment-asean-countries>

**4 December 2020: Digital Acceleration Dialogue: Enabling MSME E-commerce in Southeast and South Asia**

This event, organized by ESCAP and the Alliance for eTrade Development supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will bring together policymakers, regulators, and leading technology companies to discuss policy and technology solutions to Asia's micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) pain points in ecommerce, and develop ideas for new pilots and solutions. Interested participants can contact [escap-cwe@un.org](mailto:escap-cwe@un.org)

**9 December 2020: Launch of the Online Readiness Assessment Guide for Cross-border Paperless Trade**

This interactive online tool is designed to support countries to conduct self-assessments of legal and technical readiness on cross-border paperless trade. Developed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in collaboration with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), is relevant to all countries globally, as it can support the implementation of not only the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CBFA), but also the full digital implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). More information at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/launch-online-readiness-assessment-guide-cross-border-paperless-trade> . For registration, click [HERE](#).

**9-10 December 2020: Committee on Environment and Development, Sixth Session (virtual)**

The Committee will discuss the region's environmental challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on required actions in four key environmental domains critical to the Asia-Pacific region: Raising Climate Ambition, Safeguarding Ecosystem Health, Clean Air for All, and Cities for a Sustainable Future.

<https://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-environment-and-development-sixth-session>

**10-11 December 2020: Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2020**

This regional forum for the Pacific provides a space for the identification and amplification of the specific situation of small island developing States ahead of discussions within the APFSD and HLPF scheduled for 2021. <https://www.unescap.org/events/pacific-forum-sustainable-development-pfsd-2020>

**17 December 2020: ARTNeT Webinar: Post Globalization Movement - Supply & Value Chain Thought Leadership**

Project PGM (Post-Globalization Movement) is an industry research project that combines the intellectual powerhouse of research faculty, graduate students, and industry experts to envision the Global Value Supply Chain's future. For info, see: <https://www.unescap.org/events/artnet-webinar-post-globalization-movement-supply-value-chain-thought-leadership> . To register: <https://bit.ly/378A0Lo>

**27-29 January 2021: Committee on Trade and Investment, Seventh Session (hybrid)**

The Committee on Trade and Investment of ESCAP will discuss recent trends and developments in trade and investment in Asia and the Pacific, including the impact of rising protectionism and COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-trade-and-investment-seventh-session>

**18-19 February 2021: 2nd Forum on Trade Digitalization for Sustainable Regional Integration**

The Forum will feature presentations of selected bilateral, regional and global initiatives aimed at enabling the electronic exchange and legal recognition of electronic data and documents to reduce trade costs and boost regulatory compliance. Panelists will share insights on how governments may deepen cooperation in this area, including through collaboration with the private sector and enhancing South-South cooperation. The Forum will also provide updates on how frontier technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence are being applied to make trade easier and more inclusive. Finally, it will facilitate exchange of views on how to ensure that trade digitalization can most effectively contribute to the sustainable development of the region. <https://www.unescap.org/events/2nd-forum-trade-digitalization-sustainable-regional-integration>

**24-26 February 2021: Committee on Energy, Third Session**

The Committee will be organized under the theme “Energy transition for a greener, more resilient and inclusive energy future in the Asia-Pacific”. It will review and discuss relevant issues on energy transition and provide guidance and propose areas for regional cooperation that contribute to enhancing the security and resilience of the region’s energy systems. <https://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-energy-third-session>

**23-26 March 2021: 8th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)**

The 8<sup>th</sup> APFSD will be held in hybrid mode on 23-26 March under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific”.

For a short overview of ESCAP related news, please see <https://www.unescap.org/news> or subscribe: <https://unescap.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=c0fdb6e03fa08a5e575b433c0&id=e318af22fc>

All ESCAP upcoming events: <https://www.unescap.org/events/upcoming>

**Recently published by ESCAP**

[Sustainable Agriculture Transformation in North and Central Asia \(25 November 2020\)](#)

[Seamless trade and transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific: regional cooperation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic \(20 November 2020\)](#)

[Risk-informed Infrastructure Planning, Central Asia Pilot in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic \(19 November 2020\)](#)

[Policy Brief: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific \(19 November 2020\)](#)

[Towards more affordable medicine: A proposal to waive certain obligations from the Agreement on TRIPS \(18 November 2020\)](#)

[Asia-Pacific countries' COVID-19 policy responses \(11 November 2020\)](#)

[UNESCAP SSWA Policy Briefs 7 - Marine Plastic Pollution in South Asia \(7 November 2020\)](#)

[COVID-19 and its impact on Railway sector in Asia and the Pacific \(5 November 2020\)](#)

[State of the Space Industry in Central Asia: Policy Brief, Achievements, Challenges and Perspective \(15 October 2020\)](#)

**Working paper series**

Macroeconomics: <https://www.unescap.org/publication-series/mpfd-working-papers>

Trade: <https://artnet.unescap.org/publications/working-papers>

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us to provide input, questions or suggestions for the monthly update: [esbn@un.org](mailto:esbn@un.org).

Best regards,

ESBN Secretariat