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Second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok, 21-24 November 2017

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (section I) and the annotations to the provisional agenda (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

A. Senior officials segment

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Enhancing regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. Review of the region's progress in the four areas of regional economic cooperation and integration, keeping in view the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
 - (a) Removing obstacles to greater market integration;
 - (b) Towards region-wide seamless connectivity;
 - (c) Enhancing regional financial cooperation;
 - (d) Addressing shared vulnerabilities and risks.
4. Draft ministerial declaration on regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Other matters.

B. Ministerial segment

6. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
7. Policy debate on issues pertaining to regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the ministerial declaration on regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific.
10. Adoption of the report of the Conference.
11. Closing of the Conference.

II. Annotations

A. Senior officials segment

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening addresses

The detailed programme for the opening of the session will be announced in due course and will be available online at <http://www.unescap.org/events/reci-2017>.

(b) Election of officers

The list of participants will be available online at <http://www.unescap.org/events/reci-2017>.

The Conference will elect a chair, two vice-chairs and a rapporteur for the senior officials segment.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/L.1)

Annotation

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Conference, subject to such changes as may be deemed necessary.

2. Enhancing regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Documentation

Enhancing regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/1)

Annotation

This document contains a discussion on the importance of enhancing regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Highlights of lessons learned from economic cooperation and integration experiences are presented, and the need to take a consolidated and coordinated approach in pursuing regional economic cooperation and integration and implementing the 2030 Agenda is underscored. Also stressed in the document is the need to pursue the four priority areas pertaining to regional economic cooperation in an integrated manner and to work multilaterally to consolidate, simplify and streamline the complex web of bilateral and plurilateral agreements among Asia-Pacific economies that deal with the current and future aspects of regional economic cooperation and integration. Opportunities to integrate the current focus areas of regional economic cooperation and integration into the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda are also highlighted in the document.

3. Review of the region's progress in the four areas of regional economic cooperation and integration, keeping in view the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The four documents under item 3 will be discussed sequentially.

(a) Removing obstacles to greater market integration

Documentation

Removing obstacles to greater market integration in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/2)

Annotation

This document includes a review of trends associated with market integration in the Asia-Pacific region and an analysis of their driving factors. Possible obstacles and policy recommendations for addressing those obstacles are provided in the document. In addition, the need to further liberalize and facilitate intraregional trade for goods and services, the importance of foreign direct investment and regional investment regimes, and the untapped potential from enabling cross-border mobility of labour are highlighted.

(b) Towards region-wide seamless connectivity

Documentation

Towards region-wide seamless connectivity in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/3)

Annotation

Seamless connectivity entails facilitating the movement of people, goods, energy and information through investments and improvements in hard and soft infrastructure. In this document, the current state of transport, energy and information and communication infrastructure, including regional and subregional connectivity initiatives, is discussed, along with the main challenges in achieving region-wide seamless connectivity. Some recommended regional actions to address those challenges are given in the conclusion of the document.

(c) Enhancing regional financial cooperation

Documentation

Enhancing regional financial cooperation in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/4)

Annotation

The agenda for regional economic cooperation and integration set in the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific of December 2013 focuses on three issues: (a) to equip countries with tools to cope with financial volatility and ensure financial stability through cooperative arrangements; (b) to strengthen national financial markets and link them across countries; and (c) to promote an effective mobilization of resources across and within countries.¹ Keeping in view the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda, this document includes a discussion on recent developments in regional financial cooperation and suggestions to deepen it, with special emphasis on domestic resource mobilization, infrastructure financing and financial inclusion.

(d) Addressing shared vulnerabilities and risks

Documentation

Addressing shared vulnerabilities and risks in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/5)

Annotation

The achievement of the disaster risk reduction-relevant goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda will contribute towards the achievement of several other Sustainable Development Goals. Many large-scale disasters, which have repeatedly undermined the development efforts of countries, have transboundary dimensions in terms of the origin and extent of impacts. Regional cooperation can bring countries with shared vulnerabilities and disaster risks together to exchange information and knowledge to enhance their capacities and build resilience collectively. The regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda, adopted by members States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in 2017, has recognized this and identified disaster risk reduction as one of the priority areas of cooperation. In this document, there is a discussion on shared vulnerabilities and disaster risks caused by natural hazards, climate change, and food security, and

¹ E/ESCAP/MCREI/3.

strategic areas of regional action and innovative solutions related to building resilience to disasters are identified.

4. Draft ministerial declaration on regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific

Documentation

Draft ministerial declaration on regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/L.3)

Annotation

Senior officials will consider a draft ministerial declaration on regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific prior to submitting it to the ministerial segment for adoption. It will already have been reviewed by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission prior to being submitted to the senior officials. The declaration is intended to provide guidance on how to move forward to enhance regional economic cooperation and integration in the region and reaffirm the commitment of regional members and associate members to promote regional economic cooperation and integration in the most effective manner to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

5. Other matters

Under this agenda item, the Conference may wish to consider other matters.

B. Ministerial segment

6. Opening of the session

(a) Opening addresses

(b) Election of officers

The Conference will elect a bureau, which will comprise a chair, vice-chairs and a rapporteur for the ministerial segment.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/L.1)

7. Policy debate on issues pertaining to regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific

The ministers and heads of delegations will deliver their policy statements, highlighting the key issues, policies and initiatives that are central to economic cooperation and integration in their respective countries and the region. The policy statements will also cover ways in which regional economic cooperation and integration can be most effectively implemented to support the 2030 Agenda. Other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations will make brief statements on the policies and initiatives of their organizations in this important area.

8. Other matters

Any other matters raised by delegations and/or the secretariat will be considered under this agenda item.

9. Adoption of the ministerial declaration on regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific

The Conference may wish to consider and adopt the draft ministerial declaration on regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/L.3).

10. Adoption of the report of the Conference

The Conference may wish to consider and adopt the draft report of the Conference (E/ESCAP/MCREI(2)/L.2), which will include the report of the senior officials segment. The report will be submitted to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session, to be held in 2018.

11. Closing of the Conference

Closing statements will be delivered.
