Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies in
*South and South-West Asia*
Theme of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development drives global dialogue

2017 - Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world

2018 - Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

2019 - Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality
• **Growing risks** for the most vulnerable in the face of regional trends – rural-urban transitions; demographic change; economic integration; demand for resources;

• **Attention to the “social contract”** - Public institutions’ ability to balance and align the interests of different stakeholders - including the most vulnerable is critical

• **Structural dimensions** of poverty and marginalization to be addressed

Exploring the 2018 theme: “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”

What are some of the important trends that will impact sustainable development in North-East Asia?

What risks do these trends create for food, financial, social and other important human systems in the region?

Who is most in danger of being “left behind” because of these risks—what social protection and other measures are needed?

What “resilience capacities” are needed, and what is being done to build these capacities?
Increasing demand for natural resources

Water pressure
Water stress, ratio of withdrawals to supply
2040 forecast, %

Sources: OECD; World Resources Institute
What is resilience?

• Resilience is the ability of a society to absorb and recover from shocks, to adapt and transform their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change and uncertainty.

• “A resilient society not just tries to respond to disruption and crisis by trying to bring the system back into balance, but rather tries to develop solutions that bring a system in a new state that is capable of dealing with present and future challenges”

• Converting “risks into opportunities” and even transforming “when conditions require it”

Sources:
Resilience is not always a good thing ..(e.g. when poverty persists)

When a system “bounces back” – in which direction should it bounce?

The SDGS provide specific targets for transformations.
Resilience is about bouncing back..

But resilience is also about converting ‘risks’ into an opportunity.
# Resilience in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target 1.5</th>
<th>Resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target 2.4</td>
<td>Resilient agricultural practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 9 (Target 9.1, 9.a)</td>
<td>Resilient infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 11 (Targets 11.b, 11.c)</td>
<td>Resilient cities and human settlements; resilient buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 13.1</td>
<td>Resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (using similar indicators to target 1.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target 14.2</td>
<td>Resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems</td>
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</table>
## What capacities need to be built?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resilience capacity</th>
<th>Specific ability of the social system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Absorptive capacity</strong>&lt;br&gt;How big is the “cushion”?</td>
<td>• Absorb &amp; cope with impacts of shocks and stresses.&lt;br&gt;• Maintaining/accumulating an adequate and diverse <strong>“stock” of different kinds of capital</strong> (social, financial, environmental, other) to act as a buffer and foundation for action&lt;br&gt;• Diversity of paths/options available to maintain system function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipatory capacity</strong>&lt;br&gt;-How well do we anticipate?</td>
<td>• <strong>Identify/anticipate</strong> specific risks, <strong>plan and prepare pro-actively</strong>: &gt; Reduce vulnerability and/or reduce exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adaptive capacity</strong>&lt;br&gt;-How well do we learn? – and act on our learning?</td>
<td>• Ability to <strong>learn and adjust paths</strong>, and take <strong>deliberate</strong> action in response to a shock&lt;br&gt;• <strong>Effectively harness skills and resources</strong> to recover&lt;br&gt;• Diversity of paths/options available to maintain system function</td>
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</table>
| **Transformative Capacity**<br>- Are we equipped to make fundamental change? | • Ability to identify **trend/systems that create risk, vulnerability, inequality and unsustainability**<br>• Ability to **innovate**, identifying **opportunities** for transformation when there is a crisis<br>• Ability to understand, engage and empower people by **aligning values**
What resilience capacities need to be built?

- What institutional mechanisms are in place for societal/policy learning and adjusting?
- How can emerging risks be identified, tracked and planned for?
- What skills and resources (incl. institutions) need to be built to better cope?
- Which systems create risk & vulnerability; what opportunities do shocks/risks/crises present?
Resilience capacities are needed at every level:

- National > subregional > global
- Sub-national/province/district
- Human settlement – rural, urban, peri-urban
- Community & Household (farm)
- Individual > well-being, opportunity
Resilience of society depends on resilience of human systems.
A region at Risk

• Consider how a broad range of economic, environmental, social, and security shocks that have affected the region such as:
  
  • Commodity shocks: oil and food
  • Health shocks: SARS, Avian Flu
  • Weather related shocks: flooding and cyclones
  • Pollution related shocks: plastics, forest fires and haze

• Capture how countries and communities are responding to and building resilience to such risks in practice
### (How) do megatrends affect risk profiles of different human systems?

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Financial system</th>
<th>Social system</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demographic change</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>e.g. Pension system viability</td>
<td>Family structures</td>
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<td>Economic integration</td>
<td>e.g. Changing distribution of benefits</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand for resources</td>
<td>e.g. Scarcity</td>
<td>e.g. Asset/commodity price bubbles</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>Rural-urban transitions</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>e.g. Obsolete education system</td>
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Resilience and social protection

- Who is most in danger of being “left behind”?
- What social protection and other measures are needed?
Measuring inequality of outcome and opportunity – use disaggregated data

Target policy where impact can be the greatest

Reach those furthest behind first

Inequality matters for the three dimensions of sustainable development
Inequalities in access to clean fuel within countries

**Source:** Demographic and Health Surveys

Characteristics used to disaggregate the dataset: wealth, residence and education
Changes in access to clean fuel over time

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys

Characteristics used to disaggregate the dataset: wealth, residence and education
Social protection – leaving no-one behind

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Broad set of government transfers of income or services – such as health care, education or labour market programmes – designed to reduce vulnerability and build resilience
Change of government spending on social protection between 1996 and 2013

Source: ESCAP, based on ADB, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2014, Country Profiles.
Social protection for people, planet and prosperity

- Fosters inclusive growth
- Promotes social integration
- Contributes to positive environmental outcomes
Social protection and the 2030 Agenda

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
Social protection strengthens resilience

- Breaks inter-generational vulnerability, promotes social equity, inclusion, empowerment, rights
- Increases capacity to absorb shocks while still meeting basic needs
- Increases capacity to put in place systems that reduce vulnerability to shock
- Supports people in changing or diversifying their main livelihood activities

Adaptive
Anticipatory
Absorptive
Transformative
1) What are some of the significant megatrends (such as rural-urban transition, climate change, increasing demand for natural resources, demographic changes and technological changes) that will impact sustainable development in South and South-West Asia?

2) How does these megatrends affect the most important and emerging risks (such as risks related to health, weather, financial and economic shocks, commodity price fluctuations and conflicts) that South and South-West Asia faces?

3) Who is most in danger of being “left behind” because of the combined effect of these emerging megatrends and risks – which are the vulnerable groups/sectors?
Working groups
Part 1
Exploring risk and the development context

Part 2
Identifying responses to promote resilience
a. Social protection and other responses
b. Subregional cooperation to promote resilience
Part 1 - *Exploring risk and the development context*

Question 1 of 3

What are some of the most important trends that will potentially impact the achievement of the SDGs in South and South-West Asia, and what risks do these trends create for food, energy, financial, social and other important systems in the region?
(How) do megatrends affect risk profiles of different “subsystems”?

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Part 1 - *Exploring risk and the development context*

Question 2 of 3

How have economic / financial, environmental, social and security shocks affected the sub-region, your country or specific communities?

*(Examples of these shocks: Commodity shocks: oil and food; Health shocks: SARS, Avian Flu; Weather related shocks: flooding and cyclones; Pollution related shocks: plastics, forest fires and haze).*

What types of actions are being taken by governments, individuals and communities to respond and cope with these shocks? Which seem the most effective or interesting actions?
Part 1 - *Exploring risk and the development context*

Question 3 of 3

Which are the most important resilience “capacities” that should be built, in a context of increasingly complex risks (namely: adaptive, absorptive, anticipatory and transformative) – “vote” & discuss
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Part 2. *Identifying responses to promote resilience*

2.a **Social protection and resilience**

- Who is most in danger of being “left behind” because of the megatrends and emerging risks in South and South-West Asia? Which are the vulnerable groups/sectors?

- What are the priorities for social protection frameworks in South and South-West Asia? In addition to social protection, what are the other effective measures to strengthen resilience to shocks?
Follow up

• Indicate your interest in further contributing to the regional theme report (and other aspects of Sustainable Development processes) for the APFSD:

http://www.unescap.org/events/cso-engagement

• Directly share reports, case studies, other information:

escap-apfsd@un.org

• Look out for the regional thematic report at:

http://sdgasiapacific.net/about-us

• Promote national dialogue on the APFSD/HLPF theme in support of SDG implementation efforts

• Share good practices on social protection and look out for new tools:

http://www.socialprotection-toolbox.org

• Look out for the studies on inequality in access to opportunities:

http://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development
Thank you!

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