

Southeast Asia Subregion Challenges and Priorities for SDG Implementation





The shaded areas of the map indicate ESCAP members and associate members

ESCAP is the regional development arm of the United Nations and serves as the main economic and social development centre for the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific. Its mandate is to foster cooperation between its 53 members and 9 associate members. ESCAP provides the strategic link between global- and country-level programmes and issues. It supports Governments of countries in the region in consolidating regional positions and advocates regional approaches to meeting the region's unique socioeconomic challenges in a globalizing world. Headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand, ESCAP has established subregional offices in Fiji, Incheon, Almaty and New Delhi to serve the respective subregions.

Please visit the ESCAP website at www.unescap.org for further information.

United Nations publication
Copyright © United Nations 2017
All rights reserved
IST/ESCAP/ 2783

Southeast Asia Subregion Challenges and Priorities for SDG Implementation

Printed in Bangkok
ST/ESCAP/2783

Advance Unedited Copy for the seventy-third session of the Commission, the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok,
15-19 May 2017.

This material is also available online at:

<http://www.unescap.org/resources/southeast-asia-subregion-challenges-and-priorities-sdg-implementation>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Southeast Asia is a highly diverse region consisting of 11 countries that registered a total population of 624.6 million in 2014. Income and wealth are highly disparate as two of the wealthiest (Brunei and Singapore) and two of the poorest (Cambodia and East Timor) countries in the world are found in the subregion. The subregion's gross domestic product (GDP) has been growing fast and was placed at US\$2.5 trillion in 2014. The GDPs per capita wildly vary, ranging from US\$1,100 for Cambodia to US\$41,000 for Brunei and US\$56,300 for Singapore. There is much good news about the subregion but largely in the economic front. The social, environmental, political and other dimensions are not as dynamic and needing priority attention. The implementation of the global Sustainable Development Agenda up to year 2030 (2030 Agenda) provides the opportunity for getting this priority attention and responsive action.

Southeast Asia's performance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been mixed. Successes, which outnumbered failures, were in cutting extreme poverty; improving enrollment of children; eradicating tuberculosis and other diseases; protecting areas with high biodiversity; and providing safe drinking water. In many cases, the subregion attained the targets for these goals ahead of the 2015 deadline.

Persistent issues such as infant and maternal mortality, cohort survival, deforestation and carbon dioxide emissions continue to plague the subregion. In view thereof, the subregion continues to give priority to its unfinished agenda that include but are not limited to reducing poverty and inequality, engendering inclusive broad-based economic progress that creates decent jobs, promoting healthy lives, ensuring quality education for all, promoting environmental sustainability and resilience to climate impacts and natural disasters, gender equality and women empowerment, promoting peace and security, and strengthening governance and institutions. A major challenge bearing down on these priority areas have to do with capacity weaknesses, indicating that a sharp focus on capacity building is an imperative for the achievement of SDGs.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the subregion's mechanism that boosts the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). ASEAN has its own set of ambitious vision and road maps that identify a set of priorities that support and closely coincide with the SDGs. To help attain its ambitions and the SDGs, ASEAN has forged strategic partnerships, foremost of which is with the United Nations (UN).

Most countries in ASEAN have assimilated the SDGs in their respective development plans, assessed their indicators systems, and formulated their implementation plans for achieving the SDGs. The development plans are supposed to also support the achievement of the ASEAN Vision and objectives. National institutional frameworks for sustainable development were also put in place and have been

actively participating in discussions and initiatives related to the SDGs at all levels. Most mechanisms continue to be purely government; a few have deliberately provided for more meaningful participation of stakeholders. Through all these, Southeast Asian countries have established the foundations for achieving the SDGs. However, the national foundational elements vary in depth, quality, and operability, indicating the possibility of producing uneven outcomes. Fortunately, ASEAN has also established the foundations for implementing its own agenda that incorporates measures to support national implementation agenda and mechanisms.

The capacity gaps for implementing the 2030 Agenda in the subregion are vast, multi-level and multi-dimensional. Capacitation needs are highest in the various aspects of Means of Implementation (MoI), particularly in the areas of planning, financing and statistics. Specific measures for addressing implementation challenges were recommended to be the areas for capacity enhancements and the building blocks for the proposed establishment of a Southeast Asian Capacity Building Agenda.

The ASEAN-UN partnership is a bright spot for achieving the SDGs in the subregion because it maximizes the synergy and benefits of the implementation mechanisms for the global and subregional agenda, and it has put in place plans, programs and initiatives that are geared towards addressing the vast spectrum of implementation challenges. This paper calls on countries, dialogue partners and stakeholders to extend strong support to this partnership. It also calls on ASEAN and UN to provide the avenue and space for this support from others, especially from civil society, but in a partnership mode, i.e. where parties have joint rights and responsibilities in the cooperative relationship. It further recommends that this partnership be defined and agreed upon for everyone's guidance, periodically reviewed, and cascaded to the national level.

Through ASEAN and with the individual robust efforts of countries, there is confidence that the subregion would perform better in achieving the SDGs. This is indicated by the grit and commitment of countries as shown by the significant accomplishments in just one year, established operational and institutional foundations for implementation that are supported at both subregional and global levels, and the expansive and substantive cooperative and supporting programs and measures lined up and planned at all levels.



ABBREVIATIONS

ACSC/APF	ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum
ACSS	ASEAN Community Statistical System
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
APA	ASEAN People's Assembly
APFSD	Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development
APRCM	Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism
APSC	ASEAN Political Security Community
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEAN-BACC	ASEAN Business Advisory Council
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
AUMM	ASEAN-UN Ministerial Meeting
CBA	Capacity Building Agenda
CDD	Community-Driven Approach
CLMV	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GHG	Greenhouse gas
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGES	Institute for Global Environment Strategies



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	ii
Abbreviations	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	vii
 Introduction	 1
Chapter 1 – Sustainable Development Challenges	4
 Chapter 2 – Southeast Asian Priorities for Achieving the SDGs	 7
2.1 Poverty Alleviation	7
2.2 Inclusive, broad-based and sustainable economic progress	8
2.3 Creating productive jobs and honing skills	10
2.4 Ensuring quality education for all	12
2.5 Promoting food security and eradicating hunger and malnutrition	12
2.6 Ensuring healthy lives and minimizing new health threats	12
2.7 Gender equality and women empowerment	14
2.8 Rapid urbanization and attendant sustainability issues	15
2.9 Environmental sustainability	17
2.10 Climate impacts and natural disasters	18
2.11 Promoting peace and security	19
2.12 Enhancing social protection	19
2.13 Strengthening the Means of Implementation	20
 Chapter 3. Progress of Implementation for Achieving SDGs and Vision 2025	 21
3.1 SDG Mainstreaming in Plans and Strategies	21
3.2 National Targets, Indicators and M&E Systems	23
3.3 National SDG Institutional Frameworks	24
3.4 Stakeholder Participation in National Frameworks and Processes	25
3.5 Subregional and Regional Agenda and Institutional Mechanisms	26
The ASEAN	26
The ESCAP	27
Complementarity of SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025	28
The ASEAN-UN Partnership	30

Chapter 4 The ASEAN-UN Partnership	32
4.1 Financing	32
4.2 Technology	34
4.3 Trade	35
4.4 Systemic Issues	35
4.5 Data, Monitoring and Accountability	37
Chapter 5 Data, Monitoring and Accountability	38
5.1 Capacity Building Agenda	38
5.2 Global and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships	38
 Endnotes	 41
References	43

List of Tables

Table 1: Profile of Countries in Southeast Asia	2
Table 2: Achievement of MDGs in Southeast Asia Subregion	5
Table 3: Levels of Income Inequality in Southeast Asia	9
Table 4: Southeast Asia and Pacific Employment and Productivity Trends 2009–2019	11
Table 5: Share of Women in Managerial Positions in Southeast Asia	15
Table 6: Urban slum population at mid-year in Southeast Asia	16
Table 7: Forest Cover and Rate of Deforestation in Southeast Asia, 2005-2010	17
Table 8: Mainstreaming of SDGs in National Visions and Development Plans	22
Table 9: Status of SDG Indicators in Selected Southeast Asian Countries	23
Table 10: National Institutional Mechanisms for MDG, SD and SDG	25
Table 11: Alignment of 2030 Agenda and ASEAN Vision 2025	29
Table 12: Capacity Building Measures for Achieving the SDGs in Southeast Asia	39

List of Figures

Figure 1: GDP Growth Rates 2010-2015; in percent	3
Figure 2: Poverty Incidence in Southeast Asian Countries in 2012	8
Figure 3: Annual GDP Growth Rates, Asian Subregions and World, 2000-2016	8
Figure 4: Unemployment Rates in Southeast Asian Countries, 2009-2015	11
Figure 5: Infant Mortality and Maternal Care and Mortality Trends and Targets	13
Figure 6: Use of Improved Sanitation Facilities, in %	14
Figure 7: Profile of Urbanization in ASEAN	16
Figure 8: Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emission in 2011 (in metric tons/person)	18



INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the sustainable development challenges and priorities in Southeast Asia subregion at both the country and subregional levels. It covers all 11 countries of the subregion and reviews the subregion as a whole, mainly within the purview of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The review includes a quick look at the subregion's performance in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and determines from that the unfinished business, which must be considered in the pursuit of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) composing the 2030 Agenda. The paper also reviews the progress of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a year after it became effective. Specifically, it looks at the mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda in national plans and strategies, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and institutional SDG frameworks. Finally, the paper determines the capacity gaps relating to the means of implementation and recommends measures to close the gaps.

The Southeast Asian Subregion

Southeast Asia is a highly diverse region consisting of 11 countries that occupy roughly 4.5 million square kilometres of land. Its total population was estimated at 624.6 million in 2014. This translates to a high density of about 139 persons per square kilometre (Table 1) as compared to the world's population density of just 56 persons per square kilometre in

2014 (World Bank). The subregion includes Indonesia, which is one of the biggest countries in the world in terms of population (4th) and land area (15th), as well as Brunei, Singapore and Timor Leste, the three of the tiniest island states in terms of land area and population counts.

Income and wealth are highly disparate as two of the wealthiest and one of the poorest countries in the world are found in the subregion (Table 1). In 2015, Singapore ranked 3 and Brunei Darussalam ranked 4 among the wealthiest. On the other hand, Cambodia ranked 143 making it one of top 50 poorest countries in the world. Altogether, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the subregion in 2014 was placed at US\$2.5 trillion. However, GDPs per capita wildly vary, ranging from the US\$1,100 of Cambodia to US\$41,000 of Brunei and US\$56,300 of Singapore.

The human development index (HDI)¹, which combines social and economic dimensions, further shows the wide disparity in human development across countries. High-income countries (Brunei and Singapore) rank high while low-income countries (e.g. Cambodia, Myanmar, Timor Leste) rank low in HDI in 2014 (Table 1). Steady and robust income growths have characterized the subregion in the last several decades excepting episodes of global financial crises in 1998 and 2007/2008 when most economies went downhill.

TABLE 1: Profile of Countries in Southeast Asia

Country	Population	GDP (Current US\$B)		Per Capita GDP	GDP/PPP ² 2014	HDI Rank
	(Million)	2014	2015	(US\$000)	2014	2014
Brunei	0.4	17.1	12.9	41	4	31
Cambodia	15.3	16.8	18.1	1.1	143	143
Indonesia	254.5	888.5	861.9	3.5	103	110
Lao PDR	6.7	12	12.4	1.8	128	141
Malaysia	29.9	338.1	196.3	11.3	45	62
Myanmar	53.4	64.3	62.6	1.2	131	148
Philippines	99.1	284.8	292.5	2.9	118	115
Singapore	5.5	307.9	292.7	56.3	3	11
Thailand	67.7	404.8	395.2	6	80	93
Timor Leste	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.2	119	133
Vietnam	90.7	186.2	193.6	2.1	126	116
TOTAL	624.6	2,521.9	2,439.60			

Sources: World Bank Databank; UNDP - 2015 Human Development Report; Global Finance – “The World’s Richest and Poorest Countries”

The subregion has been very dynamic economically with national GDP growth running high for decades and averaging 4.8% in 2015. Though already considered remarkable, this average GDP growth rate is significantly lower than those recorded in earlier years such as 5.7% in 2012 and 7.7% in 2010 (Figure 1). The slower than usual growths in recent years were due to the substantial reduction in oil prices that affected oil-exporting Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia; internal political challenges in some countries, especially in Thailand; and low export demand that substantially cut incomes of export-oriented Brunei, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Fortunately, the eight other countries have been growing quite rapidly at 6.0 – 8.5%, with Cambodia and Lao PDR leading at over 7%.

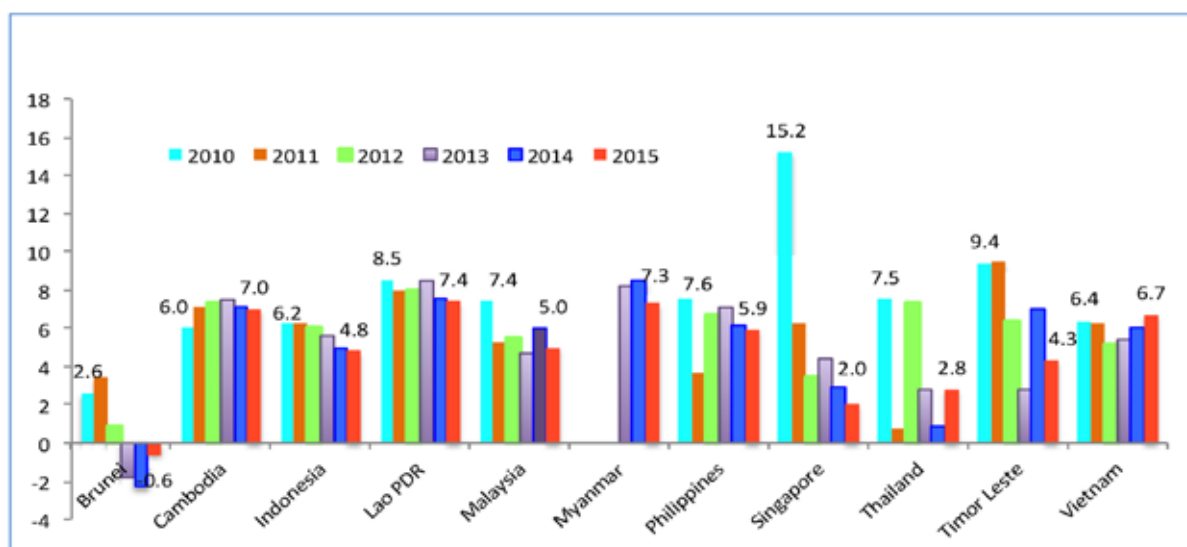
Ten of 11 countries in the subregion compose the ASEAN, which was established in 1967 to help bring about peace, freedom and prosperity for the peoples of Southeast Asia. The membership of Timor Leste in ASEAN is currently being considered. The economic community has been keeping a close watch at ASEAN in view of

its robust past and potential economic growth. Following are some notable highlights about ASEAN (ASEAN Secretariat website):

- The US\$2.6 trillion GDP in 2014 was the 3rd largest in Asia and 7th largest in the world.
- ASEAN attracted US\$136.2B in foreign direct investments (FDI) in 2014. This accounts for 11% of global FDI inflows, and translates to a 5% increase from 2007 level.
- Total trade was US\$2.4Tr in 2011, a 16.8% growth from 2010 and a 56.2% growth from 2007. Intra-ASEAN trade accounted for about 24% or US\$598 billion in 2014, signaling the rapid integration of the ASEAN market.
- Visitor arrivals increased from 62 million in 2007 to 105 million in 2014.

This economic dynamism, unfortunately, does not translate well into the social, environmental and political dimensions. The pursuit of the SDGs provides the opportunity for getting priority attention and responsive actions to non-economic dimensions.

Figure 1: GDP Growth Rates 2010-2015 (in percent)



Sources: World Bank Databank



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Rapid economic growth in Southeast Asia has barely moderated the host of challenges facing it. In certain instances, it even created new issues that slow down economic progress and weigh down on social development. In the recent past, some challenges have emerged and these exacerbated already complicated situations.

1.1 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Achievements

Southeast Asia is the most successful subregion in terms of MDG achievement (UNESCAP, 2015), notwithstanding its mixed performance (Table 2). Its successes (blue circles and triangles) outnumbered its failures (orange squares and triangles) but its pursuit of sustainable development remains a universal challenge.

There are still significant differences between countries, and between different groups within countries, pointing to specific groups of vulnerable people who have not partaken in the process of human development to the same extent as others.

Poverty eradication has been the priority of most countries; hence progress in achieving

this goal was rapid. In the last two decades, the region has transformed itself with its share of people living in extreme poverty (defined as those living on less than US\$ 1.25 per day) falling from one in two, to one in eight persons. Extreme poverty was halved years before the deadline dropping further since then to 7% in 2015 (UN, 2015). In contrast, the population living on less than US\$2.0 per day remained large. In absolute terms, about 160 million people in Lao PDR, Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia alone continue to be in this category (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). Myanmar is vulnerable in that 26.5% are living below the US\$2.00/day poverty line (Schmitt-Degenhardt, 2013). Within many countries, poverty reduction efforts have uneven results with rural populations and ethnic minorities tending to be left behind (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). Some of the major reasons for the sluggish reduction in line poverty are the weak expansion of employment against the rapidly growing labor force in most countries, and the adverse impacts of natural calamities that often take lives of breadwinners, destroy properties and displace families. In 1991, the employment to population ratio in Southeast Asia was 67% and this ratio has remained the same in the last 24 years (UN, 2015).

TABLE 2: Achievement of MDGs in Southeast Asia Subregion

Goal		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		\$1.25 per day poverty Country line poverty Underweight children	Primary enrolment Reaching last grade Primary completion	Gender primary Gender secondary Gender tertiary	Under-5 mortality Infant mortality	Maternal mortality Skilled birth attendance Antenatal care (≥ 1 visit)	HIV prevalence TB incidence TB prevalence	Forest cover Protected area CO ₂ emissions per GDP Safe drinking water Basic sanitation
Asia-Pacific		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
ASEAN	Brunei Darussalam	●	▲	●	●	●	●	▲
	Cambodia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Indonesia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Lao PDR	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Malaysia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Myanmar	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Philippines	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Singapore	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Thailand	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Viet Nam	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		● Early achiever	▶ On track	■ Slow	◀ Regressing/No progress			

Sources: Reproduced from the global table of the Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2014/15 produced by ESCAP, ADB and UNDP.

Rapid economic growth in most countries has helped attain some MDGs. The proportion of hungry or undernourished people has gone down by two-thirds long before 2015 because there was more money to purchase food and more food to eat. Despite this, only Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand attained the MDG target for underweight children. Malnutrition still affects one in three children in Lao PDR and Cambodia (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015).

The value placed on education has been a trademark of Southeast Asia and already in the early 2000s, a vast majority of children in primary school age attended school. By now, almost all children are able to finish primary education in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Brunei Darussalam. This has paid off in high levels of foundational skills (e.g., literacy, numeracy), and top ratings for Vietnam and Singapore in international assessments of student competencies. In 2015, about 94% of the total population of primary education was enrolled (UN, 2015). This level is already very close to the 97% enrollment threshold indicating that the enrollment challenge is already more formidable as this likely involves

more difficult situations. Furthermore, numbers show that girls and women have equal access to education compared to boys and men in most countries, and female literacy rates have improved. But then again, some specific groups, i.e. children from rural areas and lower socio-economic backgrounds, still remain at a disadvantage, especially at post-primary levels of education. These are usually belonging to families displaced by armed conflicts or disasters (e.g. Philippines) and are in extreme poverty (e.g. East Timor).

Gender parity or the ratio of the female gross enrollment ratio to male gross enrollment ratio, has been encouraging. Participation of girls in all education levels expanded and women enrollment has outpaced men enrollment in tertiary education (UN, 2015). Female literacy rates are also high in the region. However, parity in enrollment is not echoed in other aspects. Female political representation is disproportionate to male representation and there are fewer opportunities for women to get paid employment outside of the household and harness their full earning capacity. Meanwhile, women comprise almost 50% of international

migrants who largely work in insecure jobs, while one in eight migrant workers is a person 15-24 years old (ASCC Blueprint, 2016).

There are reduced health risks for the region's population, especially for women and children in low-income countries. Effective particularly in poorer nations are targeted prevention programs like vaccinations. Except for Brunei, which is reportedly off track in tuberculosis prevalence, all countries in the subregion have met the targets for both incidence and prevalence of tuberculosis. Four of seven countries with incidence of HIV/AIDS have also made great headways in combating the disease. New HIV infections in Asia Pacific have reportedly gone down by 31% from about 500,000 in 2000 to some 340,000 in 2014 (UNAIDS, 2015). Over 90% of the estimated 4.9 million afflicted in the region in 2011 were found in only 12 countries, seven of which are in Southeast Asia. India accounted for about 2.1 million of those with HIV. Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam were able to reduce new HIV infections by about 25% between 2001 and 2011. On the other hand, Indonesia and the Philippines registered increases of about 25% in new HIV infections over the same period (AIDS2014, 2014).

Protecting terrestrial and marine areas and cutting the proportion of population without access to safe drinking water by half are areas of great achievement since the countries (except for East Timor, which lagged in achieving the safe drinking water target) attained these targets way before 2015. About 14% of terrestrial areas were protected in 2014, a significant improvement from the 8.4% protection achieved in 1990. The proportion of population using an improved water source increased from 72% in 1990 to 90% in 2015, a level far better than the target of 86%. However, carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission per capita has been increasing due to rapid economic growth vis-à-vis deforestation, which has progressed rapidly in most countries except in the Philippines and Vietnam. While most countries

attained the sanitation target, the subregion as a whole missed the target by 2 percentage points (UN, 2015) due to the slowed progress in Indonesia, Philippines and Timor Leste.

1.2 Unfinished Business and New Development Challenges

All countries in the subregion, regardless of income level, continue to face challenges that hindered their attainment of the MDGs. After all, the MDG targets did not call for complete resolution or eradication of specific issues and did not totally cover all the dimensions of a specific goal. Thus, even if some targets were met, some issues and challenges continue to prevail and require further work. On top of the list of unfinished business are the following:

- a. Reduction of poverty and inequality
- b. Engendering inclusive, broad-based economic progress that creates decent jobs
- c. Eradicating hunger and malnutrition
- d. Promoting healthy lives
- e. Ensuring quality education for all
- f. Environmental sustainability
- g. Gender equality and women empowerment
- h. Strengthening means of governance and means of implementation

Meanwhile, there are development challenges that have emerged recently or have already existed for some time but have only become critical and significant to the subregion in recent years.

These have recently moved up the subregion's priority list and include the following:

- a. Climate impacts and natural disasters
- b. Rapid urbanization and megacities
- c. Financial crisis
- d. New health threats
- e. Peace and security

Addressing all these challenges is the new agenda for most countries and the subregion as a whole.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN PRIORITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE SDGs

Southeast Asia has fully committed to supporting and implementing the 2030 Agenda because the issues the Agenda is addressing are relevant and of high priority to its 11 countries. This chapter consolidates the unfinished business and new challenges into Southeast Asia's priority agenda for achieving the SDGs.

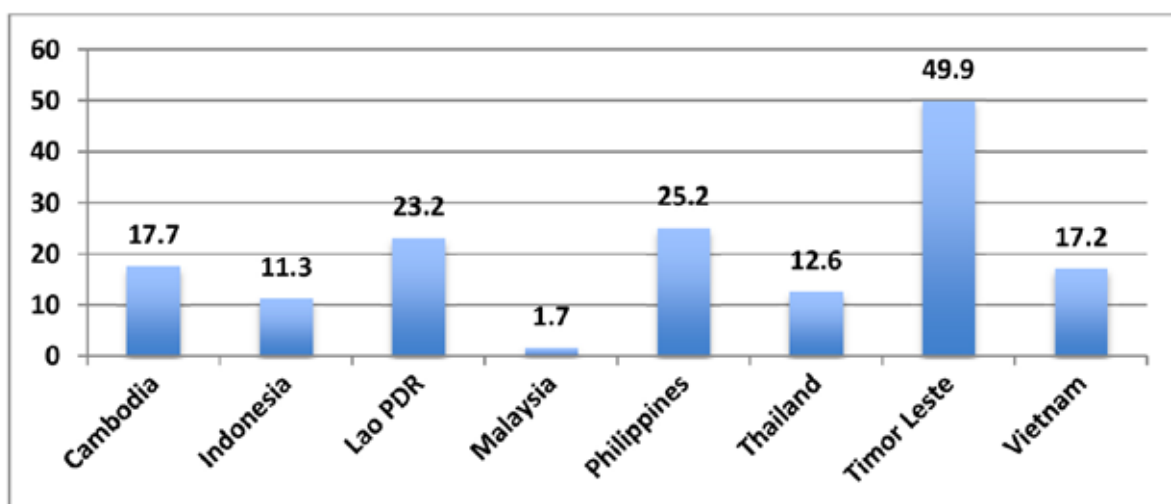
2.1 Poverty Alleviation

As the 2030 Agenda document stated, "...eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge." Indeed, poverty reduction is highest in the priority list and a major goal in development plans of most countries in the subregion. This is because despite their notable success in attaining the MDG poverty targets, a significant number of people remain poor. As earlier mentioned, the subregion was able to cut extreme poverty to

7%, dramatically surpassing the MDG target of 23% long before the 2015 deadline. While an impressive accomplishment, this 7% still translates to about 43 million individuals who barely eat three times a day. Meanwhile, a significant number of people are regularly added to the 43 million as armed conflicts and natural and man-induced disasters displace people and lose their jobs and livelihoods. Internally displaced people are high in the Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia.

In terms of overall poverty, the incidence in most countries was at double-digit level in 2012 (Figure 2). That of Myanmar was estimated at 22.7% in 2010 (Schmitt-Degenhardt, 2013). About half of the population of Timor Leste and a quarter of the population of Philippines lived below the poverty threshold. Altogether, there were about 83.3 million people living below national poverty thresholds in eight countries alone in 2012.

Figure 2: Poverty Incidence in Southeast Asian Countries in 2012



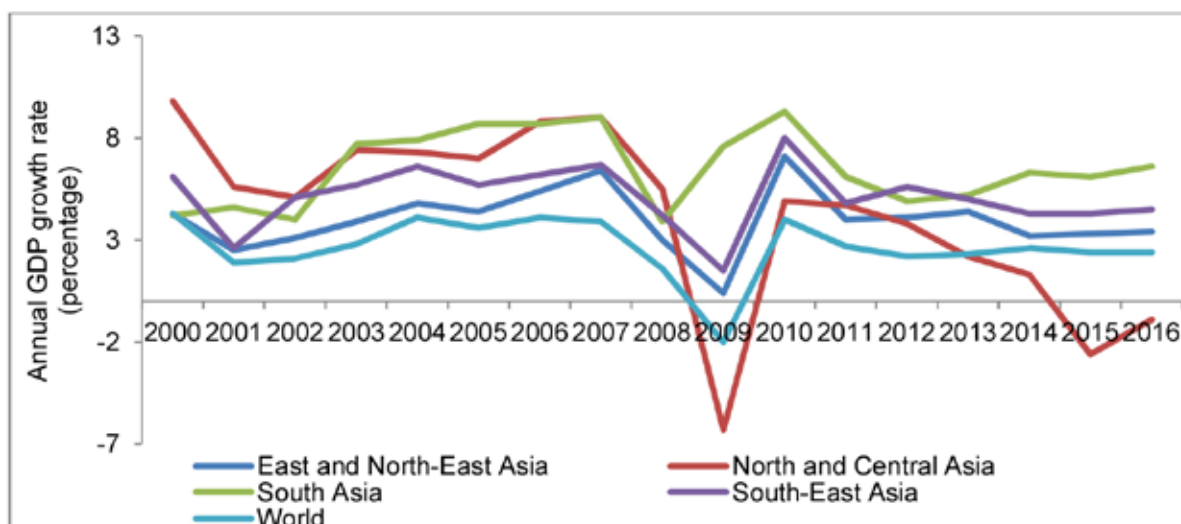
Source: World Bank Databank

2.2 Inclusive, broad-based and sustainable economic progress

Southeast Asia's economic growth has been one of the fastest in the world and second fastest in Asia (Figure 3). Referring back to Figure 1, GDP growth rates in most countries have been steady between 5.0% and 8.5% in the last six years. Economic forecasts for the subregion have in

fact been very optimistic due to expanding demand especially in Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand; robust GDP growth rates of more than 7% in lower income countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar); increasing investments in almost all but especially in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam; and the promise of an economic boost by the full integration of the subregion's economy under the ASEAN.

Figure 3: Annual GDP Growth Rates, Asian Subregions and World, 2000-2016



Sources: UNESCAP (2016a, 2016b) and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Development Policy and Analysis Division (2016). Note: Data for 2015 and 2016 are estimates and forecasts, respectively

Source: World Bank Databank

Unfortunately, this high economic growth has only benefited few in Southeast Asian societies, and it has mostly been the rich rather than the poor. Table 3 shows that richer countries (Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand) in the subregion have high income inequality. The lower-income countries, while having better income equality measures, still have wide gaps between the rich and the poor. As indicated in each of these countries respective national plans, they plan to address inequality by ensuring that economic growth is inclusive, broad-based, equitable and sustainable; reforming systems, policies and regulations (e.g. removing discriminating laws while adopting progressive and inclusive policies); and establishing policies (e.g. social protection) and mechanisms (e.g. representation and voice in decision-making) that close the gap between the rich and the poor. All these are in addition to sustaining efforts to reduce poverty.

TABLE 3: Levels of Income Inequality in Southeast Asia

Country	Year	Gini Coefficient ⁶	Quintile Ratio	Mean Log Deviation
Cambodia	2008	37.9	6.1	0.2
Indonesia*	2011	42.2	7.8	0.3
LaoPDR	2008	36.7	5.9	0.2
Malaysia	2009	46.2	11.3	0.4
Philippines	2009	43.0	8.3	0.3
Thailand	2009	40.0	7.1	-
Vietnam	2008	37.6	5.9	0.2

*Data cover urban area only

Source: A. Chongvilaivan, "Inequality in Southeast Asia"

Engendering inclusive growth means investing in (especially basic) education and healthcare, strengthening assistance for and protection of the vulnerable population, and strengthening the monitoring and analysis of poverty and vulnerability including the impact and effectiveness of policies and programs for the poor and the vulnerable. Policies for achieving inclusive growth are necessarily context specific, but should nonetheless highlight the importance of growth in agricultural productivity and production, connectivity between peripheral areas to the urban centres, decent and remunerative employment, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development.

The provision of basic education and health care is an important foundation for social mobility and human capital development. Social assistance and protection, particularly in the form of social insurance for the vulnerable, as well as an improved regulatory regime for migrant workers, could protect the bottom 40%

of the population who are more vulnerable to economic and natural disaster shocks than other groups.

Sustaining economic growth is high priority to Southeast Asia as all countries aim to improve their income classification and economic development status (see Table 3). The lower income countries (e.g. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar), would like to graduate from the least developing country status while the higher income countries (e.g. Malaysia, Thailand) are racing towards developed country status. Unfortunately, Southeast Asian economies have shown structural weaknesses that pushed them off-track during global financial crises.

In the latest episode (2008-2009), export-oriented Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, were seriously affected showing the vulnerability of their economies to global financial debacles. The countries have been undergoing economic rebalancing (increasing dependence on domestic economy) and

diversifying their export markets. However, setting up safeguards to minimize vulnerability and improving resilience of economies are new economic challenges for Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia has prioritized infrastructure development in national plans, budgets and official development assistance (the biggest source of funding for lower income economies). New and climate-resilient infrastructure is needed to improve productivity, fuel and broaden economic growth, and enhance social service delivery. Specifically, infrastructure development in the areas of information, communication and transportation is needed to improve connectivity between peripheral and growth centres and among ASEAN countries; as well as in providing access to education and health services. The occurrences of extreme weather conditions that exposed the vulnerabilities of countries served as motivation to build better, stronger and climate resilient.

Infrastructure development financing is a big challenge for Southeast Asia. While Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines have adopted public-private partnership mechanisms to address this challenge, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam have yet to develop their public-private partnership systems (Zen and Regan, 2014). ASEAN's key weaknesses in this area include regulatory framework, institutional capacity, and intra-government coordination.

2.3 Creating productive jobs and honing skills

Achieving inclusive growth means the creation of decent and productive jobs that benefit the people. Southeast Asian economies have seen a transformation in the structure of production

and employment towards higher value added products and services. This transition towards higher productivity sources of income for individual workers and their families helps explain much of ASEAN's success in reducing poverty. However, by the same token, uneven access to good jobs remains a critical cause of poverty. Rural populations largely depend on an agricultural sector that is marred by limited labor productivity. Among low-income countries, majority of the population is not in secure wage employment but in informal sector jobs and/or self-employment. At the same time, young people are finding difficulties in completing the transition from school to work.

On the other hand, workers' opportunities for good jobs depend partly on the skills they have and how relevant these are for labor markets. Although lack of access to education is one problem, the share of unemployed with tertiary education is also on the rise in many countries. And although countries are increasingly providing strong foundational skills, more work is needed to build on these skills and adapt the skills sets – including technical, entrepreneurial, people and communications – to labor markets.

Unfortunately, all these have not been translating well enough in the aggregate employment picture. Since 2013, Table 4 shows that employment growth has been hovering at 1.5%, which is a tad better than the global rate of 1.4% but too slow for the rapid economic and population expansions. Over-all unemployment rate declined from 4.3% in 2015 to 4.2% in 2016, and expected to drop further to 4.1% in 2019. This rate is significantly lower than the world average of about 6%. The double-digit youth unemployment rate of 13.6% is a major concern.

TABLE 4: Southeast Asia and the Pacific Employment and Productivity Trends 2009–2019; in percent

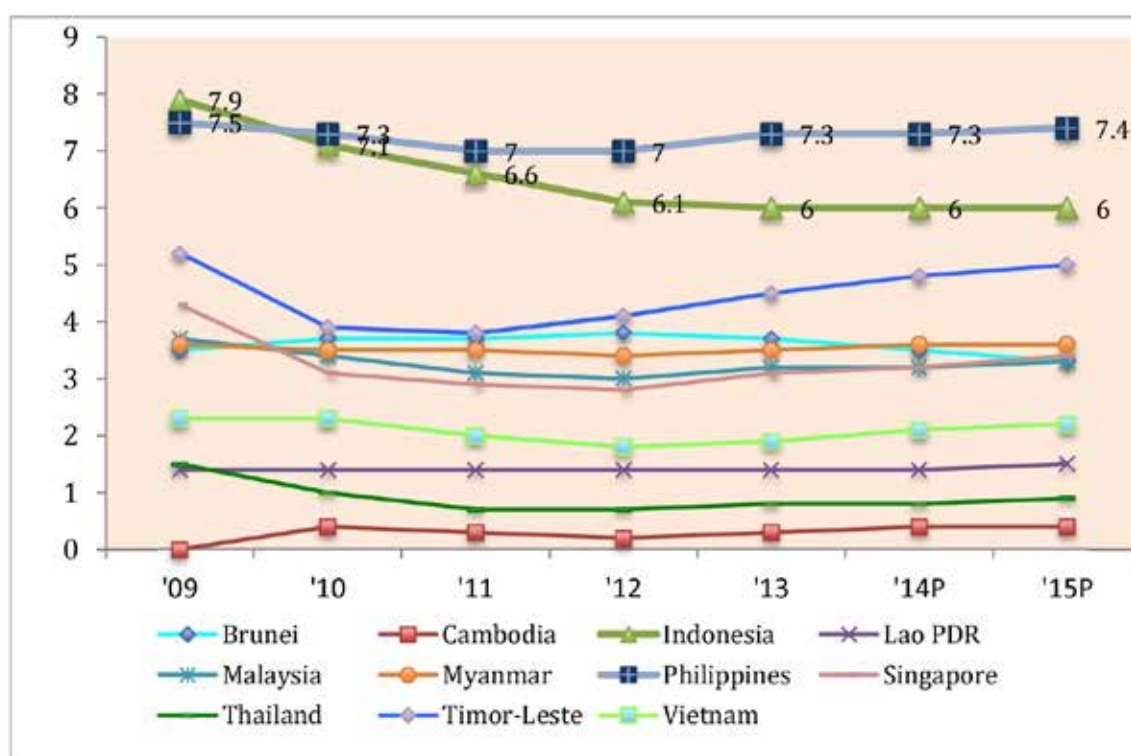
	2009	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2019
Labor force participation rate	70.3	70.4	70.4	70.4	70.4	70.3	70.0
Unemployment rate (total)	5.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.1
Youth unemployment rate	14	12.7	13.6	13.6	13.6	13.6	13.5
Employment growth	1.8	2.0	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.3
Youth employment growth	-0.2	0.6	-0.7	0.3	0.0	-9.1	-0.1
Productivity growth	-	4.0	3.4	2.8	3.7	3.7	4.0

*Data cover urban area only

Source: A. Chongvilaivan, "Inequality in Southeast Asia"

At the country level, unemployment rates in Philippines and Indonesia have been the highest (Figure 4) even as official estimates in October 2015 show that unemployment rates are down to 5.8% in Indonesia and 5.6% in the Philippines. The unemployment rate of Timor Leste is not as high but has been speeding up since 2011. Even as national unemployment rates are tapering off, unemployment remains a serious challenge particularly because a large proportion of the unemployed comprise the youth.

Figure 4: Unemployment Rates in Southeast Asian Countries, 2009-2015



Note: Unemployment rates may differ from official national rates due to differences in coverage and/or definitions. Rates for 2012 and 2013 are just ILO estimates since official data were not yet available at the time of publication

Source: ILO, Global Employment Trends, 2014

2.4 Ensuring quality education for all

Education is high priority in all countries, often making it the biggest recipient of national budgets and external assistance. All realize that the best way to attain the SDGs and their national objectives is to develop their human resources, mainly through education for all. Despite this, not all countries are able to effectively provide full access to education, especially quality education. The key factors are economic (e.g. no money to support education; children should help in farms or earn money) and cultural (e.g., boys have priority in education or girls should stay at home) in nature. In some countries, displacement of children and destruction of school buildings as a result of armed conflicts and natural calamities are major factors. UNICEF (undated) estimated that in the Philippines, 30,000-50,000 children are displaced every year due to armed conflicts. In addition, the country is visited by at least 20 typhoons a year, most of which are extremely destructive.

Typhoon Haiyan, the biggest and strongest typhoon that hit land in world history, displaced more than four million people in poor areas in the Philippines; at least 20% of these or about 800,000 are children.

The Department of Education figures showed that Typhoon Haiyan completely destroyed or damaged 3,171 school buildings; and the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Climate Change reported that some 66.5 million children are affected by disasters yearly (Rappler News, 2013). For largely the same reasons, there has also been little success in improving the completion rate until the last grade. Only Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam met this target in 2015. Improving the quality of education has also been an unfinished business to many countries. This involves improving the supply side of education such as quality of teachers, instruction materials, etc.

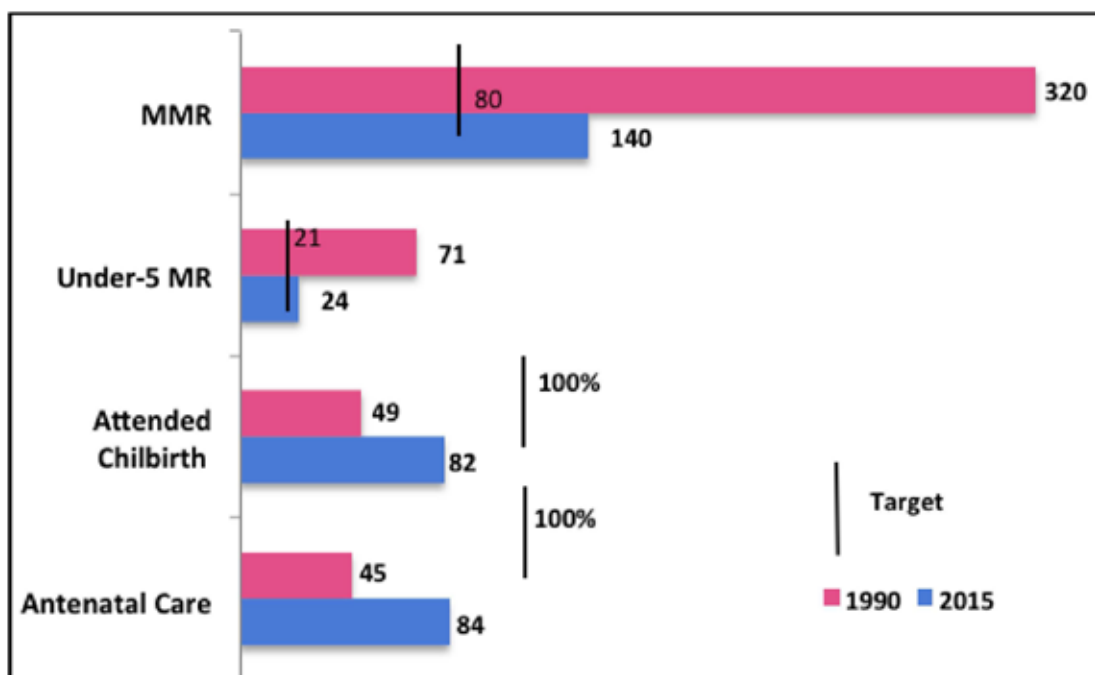
2.5 Promoting food security and eradicating hunger and malnutrition

Rapid economic growth and success in cutting extreme poverty made the subregion an early achiever in eradicating hunger. However, the rate of malnutrition has not caught up due to issues that include food security policies that increase food prices, thus limiting the poor's access to food; poor nutrition service delivery (e.g. pre-natal nutrition for pregnant women, support for breast feeding, and children's weight and height monitoring), and deteriorating food choices. Most countries were either off track or sliding backwards in the MDG target of reducing underweight children (Table 2). Malnutrition remains an area of immediate concern and close attention since it is a major cause of under-5 mortality, stunting (an irreversible phenomenon), and high dropouts in elementary education. Food security is at risk as agricultural productivity remains low, agricultural policies have been ineffective, agricultural lands are contracting due to urbanization, and climate impacts on food and agriculture have become severe.

2.6 Ensuring healthy lives and minimizing new health threats

The performance of the subregion in improving health and well-being has been unremarkable. It succeeded in containing AIDS epidemic, minimizing incidences of communicable diseases and lowering infant and maternal mortality rates. However, it failed to meet some targets foremost of which are the under-5 mortality and maternal mortality, even in high-income Brunei and Singapore. Under-5 mortality dropped by 62% to 27 deaths per 1,000 live births during the MDG period, missing the target of 24 deaths per 1,000 live births (Figure 5). This means that there are still about 27 deaths per 1,000 live births that must be prevented.

Figure 5: Infant Mortality and Maternal Care and Mortality Trends and Targets

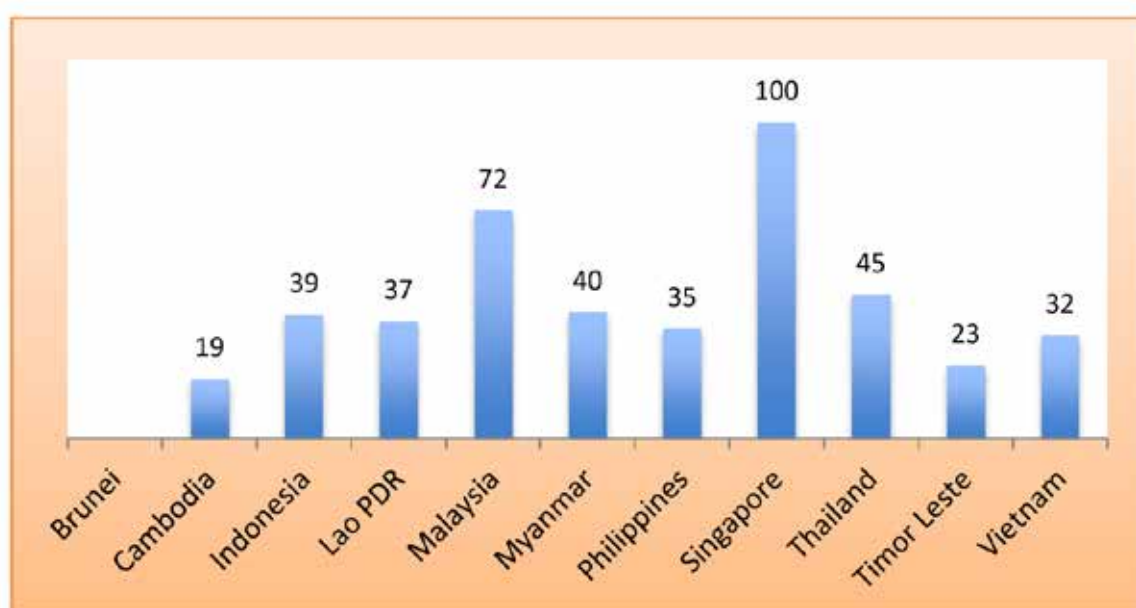


Source: ESCAP-ADB-UNDP, 2015

While maternal mortality declined by 57% during the MDG period, the target of 80 deaths per 1,000 live births was missed, thus still about 140 mothers die per 1,000 live births (UN, 2015). Continuing inadequacy in skilled attendance during childbirths and in antenatal and postnatal care; preventable childbirth complications; pregnant women not receiving the recommended amount of antenatal care; and teen-age pregnancy are the usual causes of maternal deaths.

Child mortality is also correlated with lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Except for Singapore, all countries need to strive harder in providing access to safe drinking water to 100% of their populations. Cambodia and Timor Leste must double their efforts in this regard. Similarly, with the exception of Singapore, all countries are highly deficient in sanitation facilities (Figure 6). Thus, the subregion missed its MDG target of reaching 74% of its population.

Figure 6: Use of Improved Sanitation Facilities, in %



Source: Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water, UNICEF and WHO, 2015

Meanwhile, changing climate patterns have caused the re-appearance of old diseases (e.g. Malaria, Chikungunya, Zika, Avian Flu) and emergence of new diseases (e.g. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). Intensified globalization has increased the threat of pandemics of these viral diseases. The rise in the incidence of non-communicable diseases (cancer, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes) due to unsustainable lifestyle has also become an increasingly significant source of premature deaths.

Drug abuse has also been worsening across the subregion. Opium production tripled in the Golden Triangle from 2006-2014 (UNODC, 2014); Methamphetamine abuse is rising especially among young people across South-East Asia (UNODC, 2014); and Thailand now ranks first in drug addiction in ASEAN as it recorded about 1.3 million drug addicts (2% of population) in 2014 (World Bulletin, 2014). The

smoking situation in all countries has been bad and continues to worsen.

2.7 Gender equality and women empowerment

Gender equality in education does not seem to be a major issue in the subregion, as shown in Table 2. However, it would take a lot more effort for countries like Timor Leste, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia to empower women and attain gender equality in positions of leadership, ownership of economic assets, and financial independence (Table 5). More women are economically empowered in Lao PDR.

Policies, culture and tradition are just some of the impediments to gender equality. At the same time, an estimated 61.3 million women entrepreneurs own and operate businesses in the ten ASEAN member countries, accounting for 9.8 per cent of the total ASEAN population (Xavier, Sidin, Guelich, & Nawangpalupi, 2016).

TABLE 5: Share of Women in Managerial Positions in Southeast Asia

Country	Share in All Managers	Survey Year
Brunei	36%	2015 ¹¹
Cambodia	18%	2010
Indonesia	23%	2013
Lao PDR	25%/52%	2012/2009*
Malaysia	22%	2013
Philippines	48%	2012
Singapore	25%	2013
Thailand	39%	2013
Timor Leste	14%	2010
Vietnam	24%	2013

Source: International Labour Organization

*Women in parliament / women who own enterprises

2.8 Rapid urbanization and attendant sustainability issues

The rate of urbanization in Southeast Asia has been on a high gear, reaching over 42% in 2010 and projected to be at 49.7% in 2025 (ISEAS, 2015). A big source of growth has been Malaysia whose urban population share to total population was registered at a high 72% in 2010, and Indonesia where the urban population share increased from 31% to 44% over the same period (Asian Century Institute, 2014). By 2013, nearly 300 million people in the subregion lived in urban agglomerations, of which more than 25% are in cities with over one million habitants.

Three Southeast Asian capitals landed in Demographia's top 20 megacities (areas with at least 10 million population) in the world in 2015 : Jakarta ranked 2 with 30.5 million people, Manila ranked 4 with 24.1 million and Bangkok ranked 19 with 15 million. In the next 15 years,

it is expected that ASEAN's urban areas would have to accommodate another 100 million people. Whereas this expansion represents the reality that economic opportunities have become concentrated in urban areas, it puts high pressure on urban planning for infrastructure and other public services, including municipal governments' finance capacity.

Currently, urban inequality is also increasing and urban development is not keeping up with the massive expansion.

While the proportion of the urban population residing in slums globally and across Asia today is lower than it was some two decades ago, the absolute number of slum dwellers continues to increase (see Table 6). Slum population has risen across Asia over the period 1990-2014, with a rise of 20 per cent in Southeast Asia (United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-Habitat, 2016).

TABLE 6: Urban slum population at mid-year in Southeast Asia

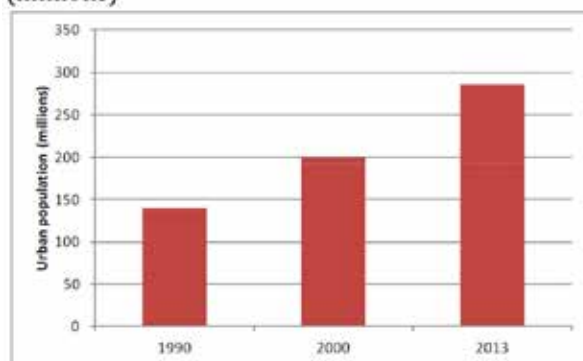
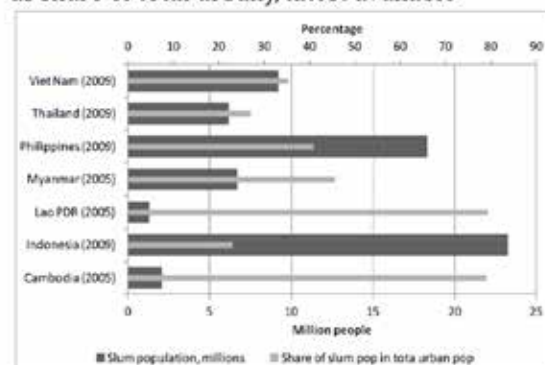
Year	Slum population (thousands)
1990	69.6
1995	75.6
2000	79.7
2005	80.3
2007	79.6
2010	84.1
2014	83.5

Source: UN-Habitat Global Observatory Urban Indicators Database 2015 in: United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-Habitat, 2016

The proportions of slum population to total urban population in Laos and Cambodia were close to 80% while those in the Philippines and Vietnam were over 40% in the same year (Figure 7). Thailand has been recognized by UN Habitat for its success in reducing slum dwelling through strong political commitment and tradition of strategic planning and monitoring. This experience could be a useful reference to other countries, especially Cambodia and Lao PDR. Meanwhile, housing that meets the needs and aspirations of its people is a priority for Singapore.

Attaining sustainability in megacities has become a significant and priority challenge to Southeast Asia. Urbanization stretches the carrying capacity of cities beyond their limits. In 2010, Indonesia's Ministry of Public Works estimated Jakarta's consumption ecological footprint at 13,552,967 global hectares and bio-capacity at 142,005 global hectares, indicating that Jakarta has stretched its carrying capacity by about 95 times.

The footprints of Manila and Bangkok have similarly gone way beyond their bio-capacities.

Figure 7: Profile of Urbanization in ASEAN**(a) Urban population in ASEAN, 1990, 2000, 2013 (millions)****(b) Urban population living in slums (millions and as share of total urban), latest available**

Source: Estimates based on UN Population Division, UN Habitat, 2013

2.9 Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability has been elusive in the subregion, largely due its rigorous quest for high economic growth while missing out on poverty reduction. Combatting ongoing deforestation is a challenge in the subregion. The Food and Agriculture Organization (2012) estimated the remaining forest cover in the subregion at about 104,891 hectares or just 49 per cent of the total forest area (Table 7).

TABLE 7: Forest Cover and Rate of Deforestation in Southeast Asia, 2005-2010

Country	Forest Area 2010 (000 ha)	% Share to Total SE Asia Forest Area	Forest Cover (%)	% Change in Forest Cover 2005-2010
Cambodia	10,094	4.7	57	-1.2
Indonesia	94,432	44.1	52	-0.7
Lao PDR	15,751	7.4	68	-0.5
Malaysia	20,456	9.6	62	-0.4
Myanmar	31,773	14.8	48	-0.9
Philippines	7,665	3.6	26	0.7
Thailand	18,972	8.9	37	0.1
Vietnam	13,797	6.4	42	1.1
Southeast Asia	214,064		49	-0.5

Source: FAO, 2012

Deforestation accelerated to 0.5 per cent per annum from 2005-2010 as a result of continuing land conversion for industrial production; encroachment due to growing population; and forest fires. Cambodia has the fastest deforestation rate followed by Myanmar and Indonesia, the two countries that have the largest forest areas in the subregion. Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam have the least forest cover, but have succeeded in reversing the trend through massive reforestation efforts.

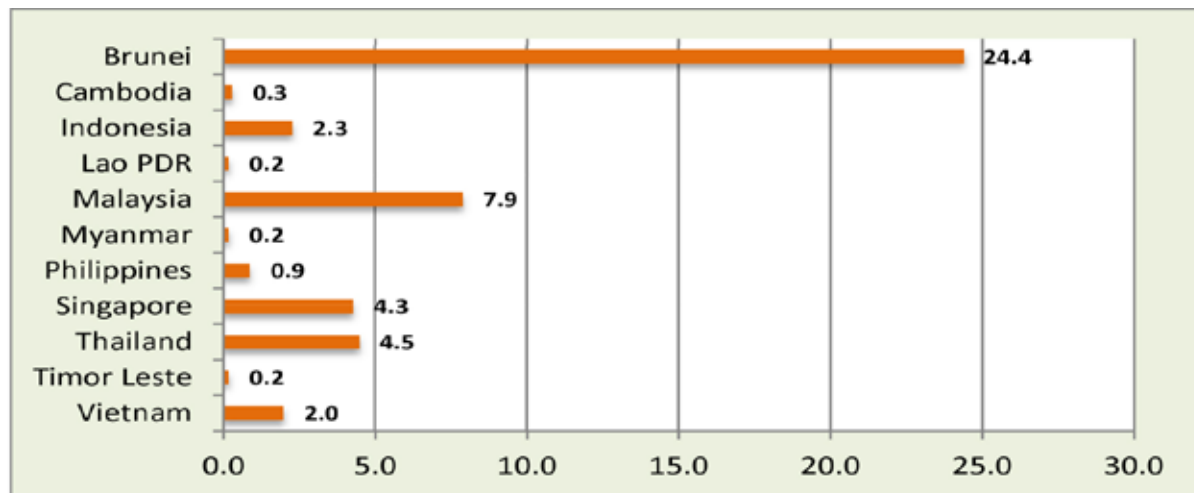
Three of the Megadiverse countries of the world are in Southeast Asia i.e. Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. However, it also has lost four of the world's 25 biodiversity hotspots as a result of deforestation.

Arresting biodiversity loss, especially by stopping deforestation is thus a priority. Deforestation is a direct consequence of natural resource-based economic growth, which is the case for all economies except Singapore. Hence,

decoupling economic growth from forest depletion is a challenge the subregion faces.

Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the growing adverse impacts of GHG emissions on the subregion as well as the need to fulfil their respective nationally-determined contributions (NDC) has made reducing GHG emissions a priority in Southeast Asia. The subregion's biggest emitters are those that produce and utilize substantial amounts of fossil-based products. Indonesia tops the list and Malaysia comes second in terms of weight. On per capita basis, Brunei ranks first because of its small population (Figure 8). Thailand and Singapore are also large emitters as they are big consumers of fossil-based products. Government policies (e.g. fossil fuel pricing and subsidy) that result in carefree and wasteful use of fossil-based products and services (e.g. transportation) contribute to increasing GHG emission. Meanwhile, deforestation has weakened the capacity of the subregion to sequester GHGs.

Figure 8: Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emission in 2011 (in metric tons/person)



Source: World Bank Databank

2.10 Climate impacts and natural disasters

Southeast Asia is particularly vulnerable to a range of climate change impacts from sea level rise to an increase of extreme weather events, changes in rainfall and drought patterns, and a heightened risk of heat waves. The majority of Southeast Asia's population is urban-based and concentrated along the coasts and is at likely risk of flooding in the coming decades. Sea levels have risen 1-3mm per year (Asian Development Bank, 2009) and are projected to rise about 10-15 per cent higher in Southeast Asia than the global mean by the end of the century, at up to 75 to 100cm by 2090 (World Bank, 2013). The adverse impacts of climate change are felt especially strongly in the island and archipelagic nations of the subregion where sea level rise has submerged some areas and salinized groundwater. By the 2040s, a 30cm sea level rise could result in the loss of approximately 12 per cent of cropping area of the Mekong Delta, reducing rice production in the by about 2.6 million tons per year, due to flooding (5 per cent) and salinity intrusion (7 per cent) (ibid). In the southern Philippines, marine fish capture could decrease by about half during the 2050s, and the maximum catch potential could decrease by 16 per cent in the waters of Vietnam, due to higher sea temperatures and ocean acidification (ibid).

Across the subregion, temperature has been increasing steadily at a rate of 0.14°C to 0.20°C per decade since the 1960s (Hijoka, et al., 2014) and is projected to see a strong increase in monthly heat extremes in the near term (World Bank, 2013). Roughly 40 per cent of the world's coral reefs are found in Asia and Southeast Asia in particular is home to the world's most diverse reef communities in the "coral triangle". Increases in sea surface temperature and ocean acidification threaten the coral reefs in the region and the millions of people who depend on them (Hijoka, et al., 2014). Increasing temperatures and rainfall also facilitate the rise in population of vector-borne pathogens, increasing transmission of diseases such as dengue. Both the frequency and magnitude of rainfall has increased over the past decades and the increase of extreme precipitation events is projected to rise rapidly with warming, while the maximum number of consecutive dry days indicative of drought will also increase (ibid). Recorded floods and storms have risen significantly, especially in the Philippines, from under 20 in 1960-1969 to nearly 120 by 2000-2008 (Asian Development Bank, 2009).

The rise in temperature, sea level, flooding and drought put the food security of this largely agricultural subregion at risk, lowering farm productivity and outputs. Biodiversity has also

been at risk as some tropical animal and plant species find it difficult to cope with high and dry temperatures, continuing deterioration of forests and marine ecosystems. Life and property are often lost due to extreme weather conditions and attendant issues such as flooding and landslides. Extreme weather conditions are seen as the new normal nowadays, which means that the subregion must strengthen disaster preparedness and climate resilience. The subregion faces threats to human security through impacts on water resources, agriculture, coastal areas, resource dependent livelihoods, urban settlements and infrastructure, coupled with implications for human health and well-being. Climate change can exacerbate current socioeconomic and political disparities and add to the vulnerability of Southeast Asia (Hijoka, et al., 2014).

Southeast Asian countries have already been aggressively and deliberately undertaking necessary actions for climate adaptation and mitigation, all in line with their respective National Adaptation Program of Action, national development plans and NDC, which they are committed to pursue and scale up if and when their internal contexts allow them to do so in the future.

At the subregional level, ASEAN has formed agreements, provided guidelines, undertaken initiatives and established institutional mechanisms to address its vulnerability to impacts of climate change. For instance, the “Declaration on Institutionalizing the Resilience of ASEAN and Its Communities and Peoples to Disasters and Climate Change” intensifies, accelerates and coordinates actions on the interlocking issues of climate change, disaster risk and sustainable development (IISD, 2015).

However, climate issues are wide-ranging and emerging consequential challenges (e.g. new diseases) such that current substantial efforts to combat climate change continue to be inadequate. Southeast Asia must address impediments to the adoption and diffusion of innovative climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

2.11 Promoting peace and security

Peace and security is a pre-condition to achieving community and sustainability. In recognition of this, ASEAN has prioritized the peace and security challenge and gave it prominence through the creation of the Political-Security Community. This challenge has become very significant in the recent years in view of the various internal and international (mainly territorial) conflicts that breed violence, insecurity and injustice. Specific examples are territorial disputes in China Sea that involve several ASEAN members; East Timor’s quest for the establishment of permanent maritime boundaries; territorial tension between Thailand and Cambodia; and internal conflicts in some countries like in the Philippines and Thailand. The subregion also has several post-conflict countries (e.g. East Timor, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar) that must be supported to attain lasting peace and security. Interestingly, Lao PDR has added an 18th SDG — the clearing up of unexploded ordnance — to emphasize its importance and priority.

Other prevailing issues that further make this challenge a priority include transnational crimes (e.g. drug trafficking, terrorism, human trafficking, piracy, weapon smuggling, smuggling), graft and corruption, inadequate representation and participation in decision-making, etc.

2.12 Enhancing social protection

The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, adopted in 2013, emphasizes that social protection is a human right and that nobody in need should be excluded from essential services (ASEAN, 2013).

Social assistance and protection for the vulnerable population is the third pathway for achieving inclusive growth. In substance, social protection entails safeguarding the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable groups in the form of social insurance, such as pension systems, or of social protection programmes, such as healthcare and severance payments.

Pension systems should be in place to ensure the elderly are able to obtain services that are adequate, affordable, and accessible. The pension systems in place in ASEAN vary significantly amongst member states. Additionally, social protection should be given especially to the vulnerable population such as the poor, women, children, and migrant workers. In 2013, there were around six million migrant workers in ASEAN, many of whom are low-skilled, illegal, and/or work in informal sectors (Hatsukano, 2015). These groups must be covered by the social protection floor initiative, which involves a nationally defined set of basic social security guarantees that ensure access to essential healthcare and basic income security, foster poverty reduction and strengthen inclusiveness.

Social protection has been implemented in various ways in Southeast Asia and they usually differ in terms of legal and effective coverage and program design. According to each country definition of social protection, universal coverage for healthcare has been achieved in Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, and Thailand. Indonesia is progressively working towards achieving universal healthcare as mandated by its law. The Philippines claims 85 per cent healthcare coverage of its population, while Vietnam is struggling to expand beyond the 50 per cent of population coverage. Out-of-pocket payment is an issue as it is still high in several countries such as in Indonesia and Philippines. Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar have to work hard to achieve universal healthcare.

Income security, especially for vulnerable groups, lags behind the implementation of healthcare programs. Employment insurance including pension programs are not portable across the region while national pension programs are incompatible among nations. National insurance programs are implemented on voluntary basis, hence reaching out to informal workers and undocumented migrants is a big challenge that needs a good database and enough funds to include social pension (non-contributory pension system for the poor) into national social security system.

2.13 Strengthening the Means of Implementation

Financing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has been a nagging issue for most countries especially the poorer ones that remain dependent on ODA (e.g. Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Timor Leste). Even if developed countries would fulfil their commitment to set aside 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for ODA, it would still be prudent and sustainable for Southeast Asian countries to mobilize domestic resources and find other viable and long-term sources. To achieve the finance targets, an extensive and comprehensive capacity building program would be needed.

Individually and collectively, technology cooperation has been proceeding in the subregion through foreign direct investments and knowledge and innovation exchanges. ASEAN's economic integration has facilitated these exchanges and sharing. However some issues remain such as the limited access to technologies from countries beyond the subregion, and difficult terms of technology development, transfer and dissemination.

The levels of preparedness and capability to achieve the SDGs vary widely in the subregion. Systemic issues beset all countries albeit in various degrees.

More developed countries generally have more experience and capability in achieving policy and institutional coherence, generating data and statistics, and in undertaking monitoring. Less developed countries could benefit from handholding in surmounting the various challenges facing them.

Over-all, Southeast Asian countries need capacity building support in order to achieve the SDGs. The magnitude and difficulty of the tasks at hand would require large-scale capacity building programs, both in terms of institutional strengthening and skills development, as well as the intensification of Triangular, South-South and North-South cooperation to support these programs.



PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR ACHIEVING SDGs AND VISION 2025

Southeast Asia has done an incredible job setting the stage for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. While the countries are in various levels of preparedness, significant accomplishments are noted in mapping the SDG targets against existing national priorities as spelled out in development plans; mainstreaming the SDGs in national plans and strategies; setting up national coordination and monitoring institutional mechanisms; determining and categorizing indicators and data needs; and in developing the SDG plans of implementation.

3.1 SDG Mainstreaming in Plans and Strategies

The 2030 Agenda document (UN, 2015) urges countries to incorporate and mainstream the 17 SDGs and 169 targets in national planning processes, policies and strategies, and achieve these taking into account national realities, capacities and levels of development. It recognizes that prior to the adoption of the SDGs, countries have had policy objectives and commitments that were articulated in respective national, sub-national and sectoral strategies and plans, and that were being implemented in some cases as part of commitments to international agreements. Countries are thus enjoined to set respective national targets using the global targets as guide but respecting national policies and priorities.

Mainstreaming of sustainable development agenda into national (local) agenda seems smoother than expected in Southeast Asia for a number of reasons. First, it has undertaken mainstreaming at least twice before: for Agenda

21 and its subsequent agenda (e.g., The Future We Want); and the MDGs along with other international social agenda (e.g. Beijing Platform of Action on Women). Second, countries in the subregion started the review of their respective development plans as early as 2014 as part of the assessment of implementation of MDGs that ended in 2015; preparations for the formulation of successor medium-term development plans (7 of 11 plans were about to conclude then); and the intensive process and discussions towards the formulation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, now known as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Third, some developing countries received assistance in undertaking the review and mainstreaming processes from the United Nations and other development institutions (e.g. Asia-Europe Foundation and Hans Seidel Foundation for CLMV). Finally, previous national plans already incorporated the MDGs, thus making it easier to mainstream the SDGs. Table 8 shows the robustness of SDG mainstreaming in national plans and strategies.

Table 8 shows that the subregion has been busy planning in the last two years. Lao PDR, Philippines, and Thailand produced their long-term visions or plans. In the same period, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam completed the preparation of their respective successor medium-term development plans. Singapore updated and recalibrated its 2009 Sustainable Development Blueprint based on the 2030 Agenda in 2015. The Philippine Development Plan for 2017-2022 was officially approved in February 2017. Last year, the Philippines focused on the completion of its long-term vision, the “AmBisyon 2040”.

TABLE 8: Mainstreaming of SDGs in National Visions and Development Plans

Country	National Plan/Strategy/Blueprint Vision
Brunei Darussalam	Wawasan (Vision) Brunei 2035 Educated, highly skilled and accomplished people. A high quality of life. A dynamic sustainable economy. 10th National Development Plan, 2012-2017 Accelerated economic growth. Enhanced knowledge, innovation & productivity.
Cambodia	National Strategic Development Plan, 2014-2018 Peaceful, politically stable and secure society. On path of sustainable and equitable development.
Lao PDR	Ten-year Development Strategy, 2016-2025 An upper-middle income country by 2030. 8th Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2016-2020 Graduate from Least Developing Country Status in 2020. 8th NSEDP Monitoring & Evaluation Framework
Indonesia	National Long-Term Development Plan, 2005-2025 Developed & self-reliant, just & democratic, and peaceful & united Indonesia National Medium-Term Development Plan, 2015-2019 Inclusive and sustainable growth
Malaysia	Vision 2020: New Economic Model, 2010-2020 High Income Nation Eleventh Malaysia Development Plan, 2016-2022 Anchoring Growth on People.
Myanmar	National Comprehensive Development Plan, 2011-2031 Prosperous nation integrated into global community. \$3,000 GDP per capita Second Five-Year Plan, 2016-2021 Boosting economic growth through higher investments and local productivity.
Philippines	Ambisyon Natin 2040 A strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life. Philippine Development Plan, 2017-2022 Inclusive growth; high-trust society; globally competitive knowledge economy
Singapore	Sustainable Singapore Blueprint 2015 A Liveable and Endearing Home. A Vibrant and Sustainable City. An Active and Gracious Community.
Thailand	The 20-Year National Strategies, 2017-2036 Value-based economy through creativity, innovation and technology 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2017-2021 Efficiency, quality of life, and sustainability
Timor Leste	Strategic Development Plan, 2011-2030 (Undergoing updating) A prosperous and strong nation. An upper-middle-income economy by 2030.
Vietnam	Socio-Economic Strategy, 2011-2020 An industrial country with socialist orientation Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2016-2020 Fostering more inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth.

Source: Country vision, plan and strategy documents and websites; plan document translations by development institutions; consultations with stakeholders in some countries; speeches of national leaders.

Cambodia and Timor Leste are still mid-way the periods of their prevailing plans but they have already been actively preparing for the actual mainstreaming of SDGs in their successor plans. Timor Leste is updating its Strategic Long-Term Plan in close consideration of the New Deal Principles that bind the members of the g7+ for which it is the host and secretariat. The two countries have been preparing and undertaking activities, e.g. mapping priority SDG targets against existing national priorities, and coming

up with SDG achievement plans.

Table 8 also indicates that the visions, goals, thrusts and key strategies of the countries are largely oriented towards economic growth and development as the major means to eradicate poverty. Lower income countries are aiming to improve national and per-capita incomes (e.g. Myanmar) to catch up with their neighbours and join the higher income brackets (Lao PDR, Cambodia).

Higher income countries are aiming for inclusive and sustainable economic growth through innovation, technology and productivity improvement.

All intend to achieve economic growth in an equitable manner, mainly through human development and social protection; and in an environmentally sustainable way through, among others, adding value to natural resources. It is evident that all countries are pursuing Agenda 2030 with vigour but the effectiveness by which they are doing this would depend on how well they will implement their respective plans and resulting programmes.

3.2 National Targets, Indicators and M&E Systems

Key to understanding how well the SDGs are being pursued is a well-developed monitoring

and evaluation (M&E) system, i.e. one that has the appropriate set of indicators, has reliable and timely data to use, and are undertaken by skilled monitors.

National M&E systems currently fall short of meeting the requirements of the 2030 Agenda.

The results of the review of available indicators and data at the country level are provided for selected countries in Table 9.

On average, feasible indicators, or those for which data are regularly collected and methodology and standards are established, are only available for about half of 2030 Agenda indicators. This indicates the large statistical gap that must be filled in order to effectively track progress of 2030 Agenda implementation.

TABLE 9: Status of SDG Indicators in Selected Southeast Asian Countries

<p>Cambodia (Bunnak, 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 110 of 169 targets are considered relevant. Of these, 84 are covered in development plan while the remaining 26 are either partially or not covered. • Among the assessed 151 indicators, only 46 (39 per cent) represent the current statistical capacity.
<p>Lao PDR (Didaravong, 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted 212 of 230 indicators. Of the 212 indicators, 119 (56 per cent) are conceptually clear, have established methodology and available standards, and data are regularly produced; 55 (26 per cent) do not have regularly generated data; and 38 (18 per cent) do not have methodology and standards. • Of the 160 indicators in the M&E framework of NSEDP, 92 are SDG indicators.
<p>Philippines (Guillen, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 241 indicators, 100(41 per cent) are conceptually clear, have established methodology and available standards, and data are regularly produced; 50 (21 per cent) do not have regularly generated data; 72 (30 per cent) do not have established methodology and standards; 17 (7 per cent) are not applicable and 2 (1 per cent) are for verification.
<p>Thailand (Kumpa, 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 241 indicators, 119 exist, 14 need revision, 103 need checking; 5 are not relevant
<p>Vietnam (Nguyen, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 230 indicators, 129 (56 per cent) are feasible. Of these 124 indicators, 89 (72 per cent) have available data • 30 SDG indicators are integrated in the 2015 Statistics Law

Source: Country government presentations and reports.

3.3 National SDG Institutional Frameworks

To ensure that national sustainable development agendas are implemented and closely monitored, institutional mechanisms must be in place. These institutional mechanisms must have coordinating, integrating and M&E functions and must be inter-sector in form and multi-stakeholder in composition. Fortunately, the institutional mechanisms in the subregion have already transitioned from the development-oriented MDG mechanisms and environment-oriented SD mechanisms into multi-sector SDG mechanisms (Table 10).

The national development and planning ministries largely comprised the MDG institutional mechanisms, while environment ministries dominated the SD mechanisms. The new mechanisms for SDG achievement are mostly inter-ministerial in nature and lodged within ministries that have coordinating and integrating functions such as the planning and development ministries. This is a welcome development as experience with the MDGs has shown that planning ministries were effective support bodies for implementation as their oversight functions made coordination easier (Antonio, 2014). Malaysia (Economic Planning Unit), Philippines (National Economic Development Authority), and Vietnam (Ministry of Planning and Investments) have consistently and successfully used their planning agencies for the technical and coordination support to the MDG and SD agenda.

To the extent possible, the chairperson of the coordinating body must be the supreme leader (i.e. President or Prime Minister) since he or she has the authority and *primus inter pares* status that are needed to address sectoral conflicts (e.g. economic growth and environmental sustainability) and ensure that everybody in government are on the same page and working in concert (Antonio, 2014). The Prime Ministers of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, and Thailand chair their respective SDG mechanisms. Brunei and Myanmar have kept a one-agency mechanism for SDG achievement.

The Singapore mechanism is rather unique as it is a monitoring rather than a planning or implementing body. The inter-ministerial Sustainable Development Policy Group was created to monitor the implementation of Singapore's national sustainable development strategy, which was completed in 2009. It is co-chaired by the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources and Ministry of National Development. Another interesting case is Cambodia where the Ministry of Planning was designated as the SDG coordinator. However, there exists the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) for which the honorary chairperson is the Prime Minister and the operational chairperson is the Minister of Environment. The NCSD is responsible for environment-related SDGs only. Since it is always ideal to have just one coordinating and integrating mechanism, the Cambodia case could be a work in progress.

TABLE 10: National Institutional Mechanisms for MDG, SD and SDG

Country	MDG (2000-2015)	SD (1992-2015)	SDG (2015-2030)
Brunei Darussalam	Ministry of Development	National Committee on the Environment	Ministry of Development
Cambodia	Ministry of Planning	National Council of Sustainable Development (MOE)	National Team 2030 Agenda/ National Council for Sustainable Development (MOE)
LaoPDR	Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	National Steering Committee for SDG (MOFA and MPI)
Indonesia	Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS)	Ministry of Environment	National SDG Coordinating Team 4 Working Groups (BAPPENAS)
Malaysia	Prime Minister's Office (Economic Planning Unit)	Prime Minister's Office (Economic Planning Unit)	National SDG Council SDG National Steering Committee 5 Multi-Stakeholder Working Committees (Economic Planning Unit)
Myanmar	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development	National Commission for Environmental Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Philippines	Multi-Stakeholder Committee on International Human Development Commitments (NEDA)	Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (NEDA)	Committee on SDGs proposed to be placed under the NEDA Board (Executive Order is for signature)
Singapore	Ministry of National Development	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development	Sustainable Development Policy Group (MEWR and MND)
Thailand	National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) Office	National Environment Board (MOE)	National Committee on Sustainable Development 3 Sub-Committees (NESDB)
Timor Leste	MDGs Secretariat led by the Minister of Finance	Ministry of Economy and Development	SDG Task Force Ministry of Economy & Development
Vietnam	Ministry of Planning and Investments	National Council for Sustainable Development	National Council for Sustainable Development

Source: Country government websites, presentations, and reports; information from stakeholders.

3.4 Stakeholder Participation in National Frameworks and Processes

Mainstreaming is also best achieved through direct participation of stakeholders and sector groups from outside government. Participation is a major prescription of the 2030 Agenda and countries do their utmost to incorporate this in their processes but not quite in their institutional structures. The experience with MDG implementation shows that the most effective mode of participation for ongoing sustainable development work may be membership in policy- and decision- making bodies. In general, national SDG mechanisms in the subregion do not have representation from non-state actors. The exception is Thailand NCSD, which

has a defined non-government component under the Prime Minister. This component is composed of business associations (2), experts (4), and non-profit organizations (4) and sits at the same level as the government component representing 16 government agencies. Vietnam NCSD also has representatives from major groups organizations (e.g. business, labour) that are created and supported by the government. In other countries (e.g. Malaysia), membership of non-state actors in the SDG mechanism is at the working group or committee level. This might be the case in Indonesia and the Philippines when their respective Presidents sign the Executive fiats for the creation of their national mechanisms as indicated in initial pronouncements. In the rest of the countries,

the participation of non-state actors is limited to the consultation process.

There is no clear indication from established structures that these would have analogs at the local or sub-national level and if stakeholders would be strongly represented therein. There is strong indication from the MDG experience, however, that local mechanisms in some form would be established (e.g. planned establishment of an SDG Secretariat in Riau Province of Indonesia) and stakeholders would be engaged. Since a large part of the 2030 Agenda can only be effectively pursued at the local level, it imperative that strong local multi-stakeholder mechanisms be established and enabled to operate effectively. The establishment and effectiveness of national and local mechanisms should be included in the M&E indicators.

3.5 Subregional and Regional Agenda and Institutional Mechanisms

A number of subregional agenda and institutions that are contributing to the achievement of the SDGs exist in Southeast Asia. Examples are the ASEAN, Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation Program, Mekong River Commission and Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area. Each of these institutions has specific agenda that are relevant to and support the 2030 Agenda. However, the ASEAN is the governing institution in the subregion while the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the encompassing coordinating mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region. Most other bodies or mechanisms are either subsumed under these two or are influenced by them.

The ASEAN

ASEAN comprises all but one country (Timor Leste) in Southeast Asia and covers overarching concerns that span practically all dimensions of life, living and development. After 50 years of existence, its organizational structure has developed into a web of hierarchical and sectoral

structures and satellite bodies, including the Summit, Coordinating and Community Councils, Sectoral Ministerial Bodies, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as well as National Secretariats. The Secretary General and ASEAN Secretariat facilitate and monitor progress of implementation of Summit agreements and decisions and provide administrative support to the different organs of ASEAN.

Stakeholder participation is one of the avowed principles of ASEAN. The business community participates through the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC), which was created in 2001 upon the approval of the Leaders to “provide feedback on the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Cooperation and identify priority areas for consideration of the Leaders”. To date, business is still not an active participant in regular ASEAN meetings but its influence has been getting stronger as ASEAN integration proceeds.

In contrast, civil society engagement with ASEAN has not been as easy and stable. There have been various attempts on both sides to improve this engagement or create the environment for a meaningful interface but the process remains constrained. One initiative is the accreditation of civil society organizations (CSO) to have the legitimacy to engage an ASEAN entity. It involves going through an accreditation process and abiding by the accreditation guidelines. Unfortunately, CSOs find the accreditation guidelines and process limiting and imposing.

The holding of civil society forums coinciding with ASEAN Summits and reading the statement of that forum to the Summit has been the farthest this engagement has gone. Unfortunately, the environment and rules for such engagement changes from year to year as it is dictated by the state of mind and conditions in the host country and the ASEAN itself. The forums for discussion between ASEAN and civil society that have come about in the last two decades include the ASEAN People’s Assembly (APA), the Regional Consultation on ASEAN and Human Rights, and the ASEAN Civil Society

Conference (ACSC)/ASEAN Peoples Forum (APF) that currently serves as the main civil society interface with ASEAN and whose convenor changes annually as this is designated by the host government.

ASEAN 2025

Southeast Asia is rather unique as unlike the other subregions, it is getting guidance and motivation to move towards the sustainable development path by two sets of closely related visions and agenda, namely: the 2030 Agenda and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (Vision 2025), both of which were ratified just two months apart in 2015. Both agendas seek to attain a level of well-being that every person ought to be provided and guaranteed throughout his/her lifetime. ASEAN and ESCAP, along with the countries that compose them, have been moving rather quickly ahead in implementing the two agendas.

On the other hand, Vision 2025 builds an ASEAN Community with three main pillars—the APSC, AEC and ASCC. Each community has its own blueprint and all three blueprints work together to achieve the ASEAN vision by 2025 of “a peaceful, stable, and resilient Community with enhanced capacity to respond to challenges”; “an outward-looking region within a global community of nations, while maintaining ASEAN centrality”; “vibrant, sustainable, and highly integrated economies, enhanced ASEAN Connectivity as well as strengthened efforts in narrowing the development gap”; “an ASEAN empowered with capabilities to seize opportunities and address challenges in the coming decade”. Vision 2025 hopes to be achieved through the goals and strategies of each of the three communities.

ASEAN’s people-centered goals are largely expressed in the ASCC Blueprint, which spells out the ASCC 2025 vision of “a community that engages and benefits the peoples and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic.”

The APSC Blueprint shall create the foundation and the environment for strengthening the

ASCC and AEC. The 2025 vision of the APSC is to “build a community that is united, inclusive, and resilient” by (a) maintaining tolerance and moderation, respect for religious beliefs and cultures, and upholding common values; (b) respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) addressing security challenges; (d) enhancing maritime security and cooperation; and (e) keeping the subregion free of nuclear and weapons of mass destruction, and contributing to global efforts on disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The ESCAP

ESCAP promotes regional cooperation towards the achievement of inclusive and sustainable economic and social development by providing the platform for dialogue and exchange, as well as normative work and technical and administrative support to make that dialogue meaningful and substantive .

For the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, ESCAP has assumed the roles of promoting the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; supporting the development of a regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda ; strengthening support to member States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda; and providing capacity-building opportunities to member States. ESCAP’s main platforms for these roles include the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) for follow up and review, the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism for regional coordination; and the Sustainable Development Knowledge Hub for knowledge and capacity building .

Stakeholder participation in the follow up and review process is through the APFSD where the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) actively participates. APRCEM is a civil society platform that was established under the auspices of ESCAP but initiated, designed, owned and driven by CSOs in Asia Pacific. APRCEM has actively participated and inputted into the APFSD, High Level Political Forum and other intergovernmental forums.

Complementarity of SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025

The ASEAN Vision 2025 document emphasizes complementarity of its goals to the SDGs. This complementarity is quite evident and comes in various forms. The first is in their respective overall people-centric goals, which were founded on the desire to end poverty and all forms of inequalities and translated in their respective battle cries. The 2030 Agenda sums up its bottom line into “No one will be left behind” while Vision 2025 pledges to create a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN of “One Vision, One Identity, One Community.” Both refer to unity or oneness, i.e. taking each person, each country, and each community (sub-national or international) to the journey towards sustainable development and quest for better quality of life in a liveable world.

The second is the clear alignment at the sectoral outcome level as all the elements in ASEAN Community blueprints respond to or support the SDGs (Table 11). Conversely, all the SDGs have equivalent goals in the three Community blueprints. The ASCC blueprint covers all SDGs except clean energy (SDG 7); the AEC blueprint focuses on 11 SDGs, leaving the environment-related SDGs to ASCC; the APSC blueprint naturally takes care of peace, justice,

institutions and means of implementation even as the two other blueprints also do so for their specific areas of responsibility. Altogether, the agendas cover the whole spectrum of people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

The complementarity is made stronger by the distinct differences between Vision 2025 and 2030 Agenda. It is important to appreciate these differences to maximize their complementarity and facilitate the harmonization of their implementation and monitoring. One key difference lies in the thrusts of the two. Vision 2025 is a framework of aspirational goals that drive the process of regional community and nation building. It is directed towards strengthening cohesion and cooperation among 10 neighbouring countries to create a community of nations that is politically stable, socially harmonized and economically viable over the long term. The SDGs are indivisible aspirational goals that can strengthen and transform nations and peoples so that these may contribute to the betterment of the global community and the planet. Vision 2025 focuses on the regional community of states while the 2030 Agenda focuses on the global community and its states indicating that the clear intersect between the two is the state because both provide the responsibility of leading the achievement of the goals to the governments.

TABLE 11: Alignment of 2030 Agenda and ASEAN Vision 2025

ASEAN Community Pillar Blueprint Elements	Aligned/ Supported SDGs
ASEAN Political Security Blueprint Elements	
A: Rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred community	16
B: Resilient community in a peaceful, secure, and stable region	16, 17
C: ASEAN Centrality in a dynamic and outward looking region	17
D: Strengthened ASEAN Institutional Capacity and Presence	17
ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint Elements	
A: A highly integrated and cohesive economy	8, 9, 17
B: A competitive, innovative, and dynamic ASEAN	9, 12, 17
C: Enhanced Connectivity and Sectoral Cooperation	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 17
D: A resilient, inclusive, people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN	1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 17
E: A Global ASEAN	16, 17
ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint Elements	
A: A Committed, participative, and socially-responsible community (engages and benefits the people)	1, 2, 16, 17
B: An inclusive community that promotes high quality of life, equitable access to opportunities for all and promotes and protects human rights	4, 5, 10, 16
C: A sustainable community that promotes social development and environmental protection	6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
D: A resilient community with enhanced capacity and capability to adapt and respond to social and economic vulnerabilities, disasters, and climate change	3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17
E: A dynamic and harmonious community that is aware and proud of its identity, culture, and heritage	4, 8, 16, 17

The difference in focus stems from the distinguishing contexts within which the two were developed and being applied. Vision 2025 emerged out of five decades of attempts to unify highly diverse neighbouring nations, which have to unite and cooperate with each other despite their wide differences and in some cases, conflict with each other. These attempts led to agreements, declarations and other legally binding instruments starting with the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia that was forged in 1976 and solidified by the ASEAN Charter in 2007, which among others, defined the rights, obligations and conduct of the members. Vision 2025 was developed and will be implemented in the context of a club that contends with very real issues among and between members. It operates on agreed upon rules and procedures that are binding to members and on decision by consensus. The 2030 Agenda developed out of almost five decades of pursuing global and national sustainability in all its forms and expressed as a firm resolve to undertake a set of actions to attain a set of goals and targets. While it also covers highly diverse nations where conflicts also exist, the attainment of SDGs is a

moral commitment where action is encouraged and inspired.

The differences borne out of the distinguishing contexts should not be seen as areas of concern but opportunities for cooperation. It would be useful to find synergies among these differences to maximize their benefits in the implementation and harmonization of Vision 2025 and 2030 Agenda, which are already underway. The following must be considered:

- The 17 Goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda are universally applicable and each government is responsible for translating and adapting these goals into local contexts. Vision 2025 has 14 goals (Characteristics), 59 sub-goals (Elements), 51 clusters (subordinate sub-goals), and 561 strategic measures. Many of these are unique to the ASEAN community's institutional and sectoral development requirements, e.g. effective operationalization of the ASEAN Charter, free movement of skilled labor in the subregion, and regional economic integration. Their implementation has high level of certainty because it is binding to all members and there are

already clear implementation programs, procedures and institutional mechanisms.

- The 2030 Agenda has clear numerical targets that make tracking easier. Vision 2025 does not have numerical targets; its strategic measures for attaining the goals and objectives are expressed verbally and qualitatively. This difference could have implications on the yearly or multi-year targets and indicators to be established and monitored by ASEAN and its member countries. This might also require countries to establish separate sets of indicators and two monitoring systems. Therefore, harmonization is imperative in this regard.
- The timeframes of the targets differ even as the target outcomes are the same. The difference in timeframes might have implications on national and regional resource allocations. Alignment of timeframes, investment programming and budgeting, whichever is applicable is must be undertaken.
- The means of implementation and lines of decision-making in Vision 2025 are well defined (e.g. see Section 5 above). Each community blueprint elaborates on the implementation mechanism and procedures, even as these are already provided in ASEAN rules of procedures. Each blueprint also has provisions on resources, which requires multi-year and annual budgets; communication as laid out in the ASEAN Communication Master Plan; and review, which involves an M&E system consisting of an M&E work plan and a scorecard. Also, 11 of 14 Vision 2025 Goals are aligned with SDG 17. The 2030 Agenda, which merely provides guidance on Mol and leaves the decision to countries, can benefit from the structured Mol of Vision 2025 for its implementation.

All these underscore the unique opportunity for synergetic implementation and platform for partnerships between ASEAN and the UN. The range and depth of this partnership has already been laid out in its plan of action (PoA).

The ASEAN-UN Partnership

ASEAN-UN partnership has been well underway

in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Vision 2025. The Partnership was formally adopted in 2011 through the UN General Assembly Resolution 69/110 and driven by the ASEAN-UN Ministerial Meeting (AUMM), which annually reviews the progress of the Comprehensive Partnership. Currently, ASEAN and UN (primarily through ESCAP) are already implementing the partnership for 2016-2020 (ASEAN, 2016), which provides a comprehensive list of ASEAN-UN areas of cooperation. The PoA includes the following:

- Strengthen implementation coordination and complementation between the 2030 Agenda and Vision 2025 through joint and shared activities and mechanisms;
- Promote exchange of best practices, technical cooperation and capacity building in monitoring and reporting on SDGs;
- Explore new partnerships to harness private sector's financial and non-financial resources, science, technology and innovation needed to implement the 2030 Agenda;
- Enhance cooperation to strengthen ASEAN statistical system;
- Support the implementation of the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020, which can contribute to facilitating exchange of knowledge and best practices, technical cooperation, and capacity-building programmes;
- Continue mainstreaming gender equality principles across the areas of cooperation;
- Strengthen Secretariat-to-Secretariat Cooperation through exchange of information; research collaboration; utilization of the UN presence in Jakarta to enhance coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat, Member States, Dialogue Partners, and other External Partners; and cooperation to support the strengthening of the ASEAN Secretariat.

Accordingly, the PoA will be implemented with resources available or mobilized by ASEAN and/or the UN System and through regular Secretariat-to-Secretariat Dialogues, meetings of AUMM (and senior officials as necessary), and Summits; reports to the AUMM and ASEAN-UN Summit; and intensified interaction between

ASEAN and the UN system, including through holding senior-level dialogue meetings.

Surely, ASEAN-UN Partnership has already reached an encouraging level of stability and preparedness that provides optimism for a successful implementation of both the 2030 Agenda and Vision 2025 in close regional cooperation with UN ESCAP.



CAPACITY GAPS FOR THE 2030 AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

Consultations and discussions with members of ASEAN governments in six fora and through various media indicate that the capacity gaps for implementing the 2030 Agenda in the subregion are enormous, multi-level and multi-dimensional. The key gaps related to Goal 17 or MoI are discussed in this chapter.

4.1 Financing

First and foremost is how to finance the achievement of the SDGs. The concern is a valid: estimates indicate that the total investment needs in developing countries over the lifetime of the SDGs are between US\$3.3 to \$4.5 trillion per year (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development UNCTAD, 2014). These additional investments are needed to improve health care, education, clean drinking water and sanitation; reduce air pollution; and to support job creation in a more inclusive society. South Asian countries have expressed the desire to develop and mobilize all possible sources of funding but there is also a realization that the capability to do so is limited. Below the traditional and non-traditional sources of funding and the areas where capacity building may be useful are highlighted.

National Budget

The general tendency of many countries is to rely on the national budget for financing. This seems justified since the commitment to achieve the SDGs is reflected in the budgets. However, budgets are almost always limited and stretched beyond limits by many

competing priorities such that financing the 2030 Agenda implementation must be viewed against existing allocations for priority and recurrent budget items such as health and education services. Fortunately, these priority budget items are usually the objects of SDGs so there is likelihood that their budget allocations already represent financing for SDG attainment and the level of needed financing might not be as high as expected. There are also leakages or inefficiencies in the budget that, when addressed, could free up funds for achieving SDGs. These are just some of the issues that call for capacity building in financial and budget reforms (e.g. policies or technology that can plug leaks and remove unnecessary or overlapping expenditure items) and making national budgets responsive to the pursuit of SDGs.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

ODA remains at a significant level (US\$10 billion in 2013) and a major source of supplementary financing especially for CLMV and Timor Leste. The cited capacity gap in this area is directed towards accessing ODA for SDG implementation, specifically, preparing project proposals that meet international donor standards. While this is a valid concern, project development merely addresses access but not the many other challenges faced by countries on ODA financing, e.g. counterpart budget, efficient implementation, program/project administration and sustainability, M&E. Altogether, these issues comprise absorptive capacity, the major ODA challenge in Southeast

Asia. Capacity building therefore should focus on improving both access and capacity to absorb ODA, and must prioritize low-income and ODA-dependent countries, i.e. CLMV and East Timor.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Total FDI is an effective means to expand the economy, access green technologies, and create jobs. Fortunately, ASEAN is a major recipient of FDI, which flowed at increasing rates for three consecutive years to reach \$136.2 billion in 2014. The strong inflow was driven by the 26 per cent increase in intraregional investment, which benefitted the CLMV to a large extent. Unfortunately, the impacts of the global financial crisis (e.g. Singapore) and political unrest in some countries (e.g., Thailand) led to the contraction of FDI flow in ASEAN by about 7 per cent in 2015. This trend is expected to reverse soon due to continuing high economic growth rates in most countries, recovery of those affected by the financial crisis and ASEAN's full economic integration, which establishes a single market and production base. The key to maximizing FDI for SDG financing is to make the investment climate in the countries conducive to investments through, among others, strengthening the economic, social and political stability. Improving investment climate is a major objective of the AEC blueprint, thus capacity gaps in this area need to be filled. Capacity building would be useful in making economies stable and resilient to shocks, developing climate smart infrastructure, and creating attractive and appropriate sets of incentives. For the latter, the capacity need could be in terms of packaging investment incentives that would not undermine SDG financing solutions (e.g. taxation) and not adversely affect the achievement of other SDGs (e.g. cause unsustainable use of natural resources).

Domestic Resource Mobilization

Domestic resource mobilization is key to implementing the 2030 Agenda but low tax-to-GDP ratios, low capitalization of markets

and inadequate financial inclusion are critical challenges for the region. Domestic resources are the largest untapped source of financing for sustainable development. Targeted and progressive taxation, combined with the right blend of public spending on social and environmental benefits, are essential to delivering economic, social and environmental sustainability. Payment for environmental services (PES), which if done well would raise funds while making the use of natural resources sustainable is another source of financing. There are already many successful PES cases and practices in the subregion but the PES milieu could be enhanced through sharing of experiences, translating and adapting successful practices in own local contexts, developing innovative methods and practices, and in setting appropriate value and price for an environmental service. Integration of financial markets requires greater harmonization of the regulatory architecture governing financial markets and services across the region. Financial inclusion can be strengthened through a well-designed regulatory framework that strikes the right balance between increased financial inclusion, improved SME credit access and maintaining financial stability.

These processes may be facilitated by filling capacity gaps in key areas such as in determining optimum or acceptable tax structure, improving tax administration, and establishing innovative tax policies and programs, by providing an inclusive platform to develop legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks, and by sharing best practices.

Public-Private Partnerships

Infrastructure development is crucial in the achievement of most SDGs but it requires substantial financing, which could not be readily provided by governments. Public-private partnership (PPP) is a mechanism developed to fill the financing gap through partnership with the private sector, which has the capacity to finance and competence to undertake infrastructure development. PPP is practiced more extensively in Indonesia,

Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. CLMV are slowly getting into PPP while Brunei and Singapore do not find the need for it since their governments could finance their infrastructure development (Zen, 2013). The main capacity challenges in PPP are defining a workable and equitable regulatory framework that provides legal certainty and attractive incentives while protecting government interests; and strengthening capabilities in project identification and prioritization, proposal design and development, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Regional and international cooperation on sustainable financing

The AEC and ASCC Blueprints serve as the operating framework for regional and international cooperation in sustainable financing in ASEAN. The AEC Blueprint calls for financial integration, inclusion, and stability; strengthened role of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME); and enhanced financing ecosystem, through PPP, to benefit MSME and encourage innovative use of the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund to enhance its catalytic role. On the other hand, the ASCC Blueprint seeks to promote sustainable financing mechanism for social protection (universal health coverage, early childhood care and development, financial risk protection for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, social pension) through strategic partnerships with private sector and relevant stakeholders. It also aims to enhance and optimize financing systems to make resources more available, accessible, affordable and sustainable during times of crises. These goals and measures are directed towards addressing ASEAN's persistent challenges in sustainable financing despite the ASEAN Development Fund, which is the sole cross-sectoral endowment fund in the subregion, and the 20 Trust Funds established with contributions from ASEAN's Dialogue Partners.

Capacity building could be useful in Trust Fund administration; development of procedural guidelines including the clear definition of

roles and responsibilities of ASEAN Secretariat and Dialogue Partners; and the alignment of priorities of the Funds, which were developed with guidance from Dialogue Partners, and ASEAN priorities as identified by the ASEAN sectoral bodies.

4.2 Technology

Innovation capability and technological development levels vary widely in ASEAN. Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar are in the initial conditions stage; Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam are in the learning phase; Malaysia is in the catch-up phase; and Singapore is in the frontier phase (SciDevNet, 2016). ASEAN has been strongly reinforcing national efforts to improve innovation and upgrade technology levels mainly through the AEC Blueprint, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and the Master Plan on ICT. These plans provide the frameworks for closing the economic and technological gaps; supporting economic integration; and bringing peoples, goods, services and capital closely together. These plans are supported by other measures such as the formulation of a Regional Action Plan on Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement, the ASEAN University Network for Higher Education and the possible establishment of an ASEAN technology commercialization platform. Among others, these measures aim to improve innovation, facilitate sharing of resources and knowhow, provide opportunities for advanced learning, and boost technology transfer and commercialization.

All ASEAN countries, except Singapore, continue to struggle in raising innovation and technological development capabilities. Their need for capacity development in this regard is vast and wanting. One cited example is maximizing access and use of environmentally sound technologies and information and communication technologies, especially by SMEs. While there was agreement to strengthening South-South cooperation and triangular international cooperation arrangements in technology development, it would be useful to first have a system

and standards for determining scientifically accepted technologies and procedures for accessing these. ASEAN already has science and technology cooperation arrangements with dialogue partners but it must still explore similar arrangements with other countries to facilitate diffusion of appropriate technologies at favourable, concessional and preferential terms.

4.3 Trade

ASEAN became largely compliant with targets under the trade sub-goal of Mol when it fully implemented its rules-based economic integration. Intra-regional free trade is already in place and currently being deepened and widened. Ssubregional exports are high and increasing, a big part of which is coming from lower income countries. Despite all these, most countries need to build individual capacities to enhance competitiveness, balance trade flows, diversify products, and expand and diversify markets in order to reduce vulnerabilities and improve resilience to shocks such as the global financial crisis and drastic oil price movements. A narrow market and low product diversity (e.g. Brunei's dependence on exports of fossil fuel) could hurt badly when demands and prices of exported products in traditional markets fall. This happened recently and caused the large drops in export receipts and GDPs of Brunei, Singapore and Thailand.

There are also national trade policies that inadvertently impact negatively on sustainability. An example is the restrictive rice trade policy in the Philippines, which was found to have strongly contributed to the country's high malnutrition level (Brain Trust, Inc., 2017). The policy increased domestic rice prices up to two times those in ASEAN, making access and consumption of the staple difficult for the poor. Rice is the biggest expenditure item (33 per cent) and the single biggest source of energy and protein (34 per cent) for the bottom quintile in the Philippines. Similar cases of policy incoherence may exist in other countries. Thus, it is important to build capability in

formulating coherent policies; analyzing policy impacts regularly and comprehensively; and undertaking appropriate policy reforms.

4.4 Systemic Issues

This goal set received the most number of indicated capacity building areas. Many of these areas ranked high in priority. Of all the elements in this sub-goal, the most number of identified capacity building areas are in planning.

Sustainable Development Planning

The strongest clamour for capacity building in the various elements of the planning cycle came from CLMV, which are fairly new in integrated and multi-stakeholder planning. CLMV expressed interest in learning how to prepare planning guidelines including the initiation of the planning process; generating consensus and articulating long-term vision, goals and objectives; and undertaking an interactive top-down and bottom-up processes. Synthesis and prioritization of inputs from consultations were also identified as areas for skills upgrading by planners in CLMV. The challenge is in the integration of oftentimes wide-ranging and costly inputs while keeping the plan internally consistent and doable plan within its timeframe and budget limitations.

More experienced countries specifically highlighted the need for tools, knowledge and skills enhancement for ensuring policy coherence and internal consistency as the SDGs are mainstreamed in the plans. At times, critical sector strategies and policies contradict or neutralize each other such as in the cases of trade policy against food security and nutrition policy; taxation and incentives for SDG financing; and industrialization versus natural resource protection. Finding the best policy option or combination that would lead to co-benefit rather than contradiction has always been a great challenge. Down the line, the lack of policy coherence affects program development and budgeting. Enhancing coherence would need analytical tools that could help determine and weigh policy options; support for research and

scientific analysis to help insulate policymaking and policy assessments from political influence; and skills enhancement especially in sector analysis, inter-sectoral prioritization, programming and budgeting, harnessing co-benefits, and managing conflicts or trade-offs.

Translation of the 2030 Agenda requires getting into long-term strategic planning, which is a complex process. The long-term future is not easy to predict, thus drawing up a plan for it requires full consideration of risks and uncertainties. Making sense of the future and achieving coherence among varying sectoral concerns and risks require a full set of competencies, tools and stakeholder participation. One useful tool is scenario building/planning because it could promote active participation of stakeholders and develop futures thinking skills among the subregion's planners.

Effective plan implementation is a big challenge for almost all countries. In general, plan implementation is anchored on appropriate and adequate budget allocation, an effective implementing and coordinating mechanism and a good monitoring and feedback system. Unfortunately, plans are never fully budgeted since resources are almost always limited or inefficiently allocated, and the authorized institutional mechanisms in some countries lack the capability to effectively undertake their roles.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a vital component of the planning cycle, but most M&E systems in the subregion are not yet at par with the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda implementation. For instance, only about half of the indicators identified for the SDGs have data and established methodology in the countries. The inadequacies limit national capability to properly inform the next planning cycle, guide the policy-making process, and generate enough energy to move people to action. Areas for capacity building include generation, processing and analysis of statistics and data; enhancing the indicators system; acquisition of software and hardware; and

improving competencies of national and local M&E institutional mechanisms.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are a vital element in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To a certain extent, the subregion has already put in place, even before the advent of the 2030 Agenda, a number of responsive initiatives such as the PPP and joint programs with dialogue partners. However, many studies have established that most countries in the subregion are averse to partnering with stakeholders, in particular with civil society organizations. Partnership is a relationship involving close cooperation between parties that have specified and joint rights and responsibilities. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda has led to more meaningful participation of stakeholders in various processes and some institutional mechanisms (see Chapter 3). However, greater efforts need to be exerted to achieve cooperation and joint rights and responsibilities among stakeholders in achieving the SDGs. These include building trust and confidence through a friendly space for genuine dialogue; and building capacity and creating a platform for finding synergy and solutions from the respective contexts and experiences of government (e.g. in policy-making) and stakeholders (e.g. grass roots work). Said platform must also be used to undertake joint activities and share resources (financial, human, technology, etc.).

A key platform is the institutional mechanism for the 2030 Agenda implementation, which must have stakeholder representation and also established at local levels. It must be clothed with authority and assisted in establishing protocols, defining agency and stakeholder responsibilities, clarifying SDG implementation arrangements, and setting clear agenda and action plans, and in other areas that would make it function effectively.

Capacitating local governments is seen as a key driver to the successful attainment of the

SDGs. Similarly, capacity building in all M&E elements (e.g. indicators setting; statistical survey techniques, instruments and capacities; data generation and analysis) was mentioned as high priority.

4.5 Data, Monitoring and Accountability

This Mol area is of high priority to the countries but also one of the weakest links in the 2030 Agenda implementation. The enormous statistical demands of the 2030 Agenda implementation and M&E heightened the clamour for quality, timely, and disaggregated data and statistics in useable formats. The ASEAN has started addressing this clamour earlier in response to the massive statistical requirements of the ASEAN Community and economic integration.

It created the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) that consists of ASEAN stats, the ACSS Committee and the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate. The ACSS Committee was created to strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems, improve statistical comparability, enhance communication between data users and producers, and support evidence-based and informed decision making in the ASEAN Community. While ASEAN was focusing on own statistical needs then, it has recently broadened its statistical framework to

incorporate the SDG requirements starting with the development of the ASEAN SDG Indicators. In support of this framework, ASEAN's statistical system could benefit from building capacity within ASEANstats, particularly in improving collection and comparability of statistics; data quality assessment and monitoring; and development of a regional statistical framework, guidelines and standards.

Meanwhile countries have assessed their abilities to produce the statistics for nationally applicable SDG indicators and found that on average, only half of the SDG indicators are supported by regular data collection and have established methodology and standards. In view of this, some countries have initiated efforts to provide the data, methodology and standards needed by the other 50 per cent of SDG indicators.

As mentioned in the previous section, capacity enhancement at the national level is needed in the generation, processing and analysis of statistics and data; improvement of the indicators system; acquisition of software and hardware; and competencies of national statistical agencies and M&E institutional mechanisms. Beyond data and statistics, the countries identified the strengthening of transparency and accountability as their top choice for capacity building.

Southeast Asia can move ahead faster in implementing the 2030 Agenda and do better than it did during the MDG era. This is stated with confidence considering the following:

- The subregion has already established better operational and institutional foundations for implementation at the national level, and these are reinforced by the sub-regional foundations for implementing Vision 2025, and supported at the global level through the UN mechanisms;
- Accomplishments in the countries in just one year are significant (see Chapter 3), indicating grit and commitment; and
- Cooperative and supporting mechanisms, programs and measures lined up and planned at the national, subregional (within ASEAN) and global (e.g. partnerships with UN and dialogue partners and other bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation) levels are expansive and substantive.

The attainment of goals that have been adapted to national and ASEAN contexts, however, remains a strong challenge and would depend on a number of factors, foremost of which are the speed and significance by which current weaknesses and challenges to implementation may be addressed, and the breadth and quality of partnerships that may be forged and executed to financially, technically, institutionally and technologically support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These two mutually reinforcing factors could be summed up into (a) capacity building and (b) partnerships.

The recommendations to be discussed in this chapter focus on these two factors. It should be noted, however, that previous chapters also highlighted other sector-specific recommendations.

5.1 Capacity Building Agenda

Previous chapters identified priority challenges, some of the factors that hinder countries from surmounting them, and capacity building areas around Mol that could help address the priority challenges. These capacity building areas (Table 12) include knowledge development and sharing; skills enhancements; tools, software and hardware improvement and application; methodology or approach adjustments; partnerships; and institutional upgrading.

Table 12 recommends a set of measures for addressing multiple Mol challenges for which capacity building are greatly needed. In response to the regional roadmap, it is recommended that a Southeast Asian Capacity Building Agenda (CBA) be formulated using the recommended measures as building blocks. The CBA will be useful in guiding and coordinating the development, implementation and financing of programs and initiatives of countries, stakeholders and partners, including ESCAP.

5.2 Global and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

The Mol highlights the importance of

partnership in achieving the SDGs. Looking back at the earlier definition of partnership, the ASEAN-UN partnership is deemed genuine and meaningful. It is a cooperative relationship wherein the ASEAN and the UN have joint rights and responsibilities. This partnership is truly a bright spot in achieving the SDGs in the subregion because it maximizes the synergy and benefits from the 2030 Agenda and Vision 2025 complementation, and its PoA, which is already in place and being implemented, is geared towards addressing the vast spectrum of implementation challenges, including many of those listed in Table 12.

TABLE 12: Capacity Building Measures for Achieving the SDGs in Southeast Asia

Mobilize Financing for SDG Achievement	
1.	Determine and undertake needed reforms that can improve the efficiency and SDG responsiveness of budgets and financial systems.
2.	Improve access and capacity to absorb ODA especially in CLMV and East Timor
3.	Accelerate investments inflow: enhance national economic stability and resilience; establish attractive set of incentives; etc.
4.	Develop innovative and widely acceptable tax measures and progressive tax structure; improve tax administration (especially tax collection efficiency)
5.	Promote PES: develop formula for valuing and pricing environmental services, mechanisms for exchange and adaptation of successful practices, and new and innovative PES methods.
6.	Enhance PPP: define workable and equitable national regulatory frameworks; provide legal certainty and incentives to private sector while protecting government interests; improve skills in all aspects of the project cycle
7.	Improve LGU capacity to boost local economic development and mobilize local resources
Enhance Innovation and Technological Capacity	
8.	Strengthen South-South cooperation and triangular international cooperation arrangements for technology access, exchange and financing
9.	Promote FDI (see #3 above) to facilitate access and diffusion of appropriate technologies
10.	Maximize access and use of environmentally sound technologies and ICT, especially by SMEs.
Increase and Diversify Exports	
11.	Further increase exports but shield economies from global shocks by building individual capacity to enhance competitiveness, diversify products, and expand and diversify markets.
12.	Strengthen trade regulatory framework and institution.
Improve Planning and Policy Coherence	
13.	Effectively assimilate the SDGs and disaster and climate risks in plans.
14.	Develop planning skills: specifically in sector analysis, inter-sectoral prioritization, investment programming and budgeting; managing conflicts or trade-offs; preparing planning guidelines; synthesizing and prioritizing inputs; ensuring internal consistency; producing a doable plan within a given timeframe and budget ceilings, etc.
15.	Develop competence in various forms of planning: long-term strategic planning, scenario planning, ecosystem-based regional planning; etc.
16.	Ensure policy coherence including alignment with SDGs and targets. Develop and weigh policy options and harness co-benefits using scientific analysis of policy implications
17.	Implement plan and coordinate plan implementation effectively.
18.	Establish mechanisms for coordination among sector ministries and with non-state actors
19.	Build LGU capacity in strategic planning, policy-making, SDG achievement, plan implementation and monitoring.
Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback	
20.	Upgrade the M&E system: improve data quality, timeliness and statistical validity; enhance the national SDG indicators system; acquire necessary software and hardware; improve competencies of national and local M&E institutional mechanisms.
21.	Strengthen the feedback loop: improve analysis of monitoring results, understandability and timeliness of M&E report, and generation and assimilation of feedback on report.
22.	Support the ACSS statistical framework and programs on improving collection and comparability of statistics; data quality assessment and monitoring; development of a regional statistical framework, guidelines and standards; etc.
Promote Genuine Partnership with Stakeholders	
23.	Forge meaningful partnerships: build trust and confidence; provide spaces for genuine dialogue; and create a platform (e.g. joint project execution) for engendering synergy and solutions.
24.	Promote Community-Driven Development

It is recommended that countries, dialogue partners and stakeholders support the ASEAN-UN partnership and help ensure the effective execution of its PoA. In response, the ESCAP, the broader UN and ASEAN must provide the avenue and space for this support from others, especially from civil society. It is strongly recommended that said avenue and space be provided in the character of a partnership where parties have joint rights and responsibilities in the cooperative relationship.

After all, each one has strengths and weaknesses from the combination of which synergies may be drawn, and each one has a stake and the stakes are high that everybody must work as a team.

Finally, it is recommended that this proposed partnership arrangement be defined and agreed upon for everyone's guidance, periodically reviewed, and cascaded and observed at the national level.



ENDNOTES

- ¹ Human Development Index is a geometric mean of normalized indices for each of the three human development dimensions: a long and health life, being knowledgeable, and have a decent standard of living. It was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. (UNDP, Human Development Reports; <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>).
- ² Purchasing Power Parity
- ³ ASEAN 2025 Vision Forging Ahead Together
- ⁴ Includes all types of poverty, i.e. absolute, transitory, relative and chronic poverty
- ⁵ Excludes Brunei, Myanmar and Singapore
- ⁶ No reported poverty in Brunei and Singapore and no available figure for Myanmar.
- ⁷ Data for 2015 and 2016 are estimates and forecasts, respectively.
- ⁸ The Gini coefficient captures dispersion of income distribution and ranges from 0 to 1 (adjusted here to range from 0 to 100). The 0 value represents perfect equality when all individuals have the same level of income, while the value of 1 implies perfect inequality when only one person takes up all income. The quintile ratio is the ratio of total income of the richest 20% to that of the poorest 20%. Therefore, a higher value means more uneven income distribution. Mean Log Deviation is the mean of the log of the population mean income divided by individual income. A higher value of MLD implies greater income inequality.
- ⁹ Include the 11 Southeast Asian countries plus Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.
- ¹⁰ Statistics Indonesia as reported by Trading Economics.
<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/indonesia/unemployment-rate>
- ¹¹ Philippine Statistics Authority. <https://psa.gov.ph/>.
- ¹² Unemployment rates may differ from official national rates due to differences in coverage and/or definitions. Rates for 2012 and 2013 are just ILO estimates since official data were not yet available at the time of publication.
- ¹³ This is an area that straddles parts of Thailand, Lao PDR and Myanmar
- ¹⁴ Survey year unclear. <http://www.bt.com.bn/frontpage-news-national/2015/10/22/%E2%80%98are-we-doing-enough-empower-women-%E2%80%99>.
- ¹⁵ <http://www.demographia.com/db-megacity.pdf>.

- ¹⁶ Ecological footprint is the use of resources by the population in a region in order to fulfill daily needs. Biocapacity is the ability of the environment to supply natural resources. The sustainability of an area is determined by comparing the ecological footprint value with the biocapacity level.
- ¹⁷ There are three broad dimensions to coverage, namely: the number of participants, the types of risks covered, and the adequacy of benefits. The first refers to the number of people or retirees that are enrolled in a programme that provides some form of insurance against various risks during old age. The second refers to the range of risks covered. In pensions these usually include the risks related to longevity, survivors, and disability. In healthcare programs these also related to the types of illness and long care needs. The third refers to the adequacy of pension benefits in providing a replacement rate that not only covers inflation risks and mitigating old-age income poverty but also smoothens their consumption. In ASEAN countries, coverage is mostly focused on increasing the number of individuals that are 'covered' under a statutory programme and the range of risks covered, or can be referred as legal coverage.
- ¹⁸ The New Deal seeks to be more context-sensitive and country-led than traditional approaches to development, and aims to ensure mutual accountability between governments, civil society, donors and other international actors. <http://www.g7plus.org/en/our-work/new-deal-implementation>.
- ¹⁹ The g7+ is an international, inter-governmental organization that exists to provide a collective voice for countries affected by conflict, to forge pathways out of fragility and conflict, and to enable peer learning on achieving resilience and support among its 20 member countries. <http://www.g7plus.org/en/organization>.
- ²⁰ MEWR website. <http://www.mewr.gov.sg/ssb/>.
- ²¹ Information gathered from H.E. Paris Chuop, Deputy Secretary-General, Cambodia NCSD.
- ²² ASEAN BAC website, <http://www.asean-bac.org/asean-bac.html>.
- ²³ ASEAN Guidelines on Civil Society Organization Accreditation - http://www.asean.org/storage/images/pdf/2014_upload/ANNEX%20B%20-%20Guidelines%20on%20Accreditation%20of%20CSOs%202012.pdf.
- ²⁴ Adopted by the 70th UN General Assembly on September 25, 2015 through the outcome document, "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- ²⁵ Adopted in the 27th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur on November 21, 2015.
- ²⁶ <http://www.unescap.org/about>.
- ²⁷ [http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/FSD\(4\)_3_Report_E.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/FSD(4)_3_Report_E.pdf).
- ²⁸ <http://www.unescap.org/2030-agenda>.
- ²⁹ <http://asean.org/treaty-amity-cooperation-southeast-asia-indonesia-24-february-1976/>.
- ³⁰ Sustainable Development Transition Workshops organized by UNOSD in 2014, 2015 and 2016 in Incheon, Korea; International Conference on Delivery Options for the 2030 Agenda organized by ASEF Environment Forum in October 2016 in Stockholm; and CLMV Conferences on SDGs organized by ASEF Environment Forum in May 2015 and February 2017, both conducted in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
- ³¹ Face-to-face discussions, quick survey, email exchanges, and literature mining.
- ³² Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam.
- ³³ Adapted from Merriam-Webster dictionary. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/partnership.
- ³⁴ <http://www.aseanstats.org/about-us/>.



REFERENCES

- _____. (n.d.). From <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2014/11/05-south-east-asia-drm-petz/strengthening-regional-and-national-capacity-for-drm-case-of-asean-november-5-2014.pdf>.
- _____. (n.d.). From http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_334882.pdf.
- Adaptation Partnership c/o International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2011 йил November). Review of Planned and Current Adaptation Action: East and Southeast Asia. Retrieved 2015 йил 20-December from https://www.iisd.org/pdf/2011/East_SouthEastAsia_Adaptation_Action.pdf.
- AIDS 2014. (2014 йил July). Factsheet HIV and AIDS in Asia and the Pacific. From http://www.aids2014.org/webcontent/file/AIDS2014_Fact_sheet_Asia_Pacific.pdf.
- Antonio, E. S. (2014). Governance and Institutional Challenges for SDG Implementation. Conference on Sustainable Development Goals for Asia and Europe: Means of Implementation for Post-2015 Agenda. Brussels, Belgium.
- Antonio, E. S., Ofei-Manu, P., & Olsen, S. H. (2014 йил April). Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Through Transformative Governance Practices and Vertical Collaboration at the National and Subnational Levels in Asia Pacific. (International Institute for Sustainable Development) From <http://www.sdplannet-ap.org>.
- ASEAN Economic Community. (n.d.). From <http://www.asean.org/asean-economic-community/>.
- (2015). ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. Jakarta, Indonesia.
- ASEAN Marine Water Quality Management Guidelines and Monitoring Manual. (2008). From <http://environment.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ASEAN-MarineWaterQualityManagementGuidelinesandMonitoringManual.pdf>.
- ASEAN Secretariat. (2015). Report of the ASEAN Regional Assessment of MDG Achievements and Post-2015 Development Priorities. Jakarta, Indonesia: ASEAN.

Asia-Europe Environment Forum. (2015). CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam) Workshop on SDGs. Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar: Asia-Europe Environment Forum.

(2012). Asia-Europe Strategies for the “Rio+20 Earth Summit 2012: Global Architectures for Sustainable Development Delivery. Singapore.

Asian Century Institute. (2014). Urbanization and Slums in Asia. Singapore: Asia-Europe Foundation.

Asian Century Institute. (2014 йил 26-March). Urbanization and Slums in Asia. Retrieved 2015 йил 28-December from <http://asiancenturyinstitute.com/development/224-urbanization-and-slums-in-asia>.

Asian Development Bank. (2009). The Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review. Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

Asian Development Bank. (n.d.). Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-The Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). Retrieved 2015 йил 30-December from <http://www.adb.org/countries/subregional-programs/bimp-eaga>.

Chong, T., & Elies, S. (Eds.). (2011). An ASEAN Community for All: Exploring the Scope for Civil Society Engagement. (O. f. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Producer) Retrieved 2015 йил 27-December from http://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/04/CSO-Mapping_2011_Publication.pdf.

Chongvilaivan, A. (2014). Inequality in the Asia Pacific. From Inequality in Southeast Asia: <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/41630/inequality-asia-and-pacific.pdf>.

Council, E. (2000). NCSD Report, 1999-2000, “A Progress Report on National Councils for Sustainable Development and Similar Entities”. Costa Rica.

ESCAP. (2010). Striving Together: ASEAN and the UN. Retrieved 2016 йил 09-January from <http://www.unescap.org/publications/detail.asp?id=1410>.

ESCAP, A. U. (2014). Making it Happen: Technology, Finance and Statistics for SD in Asia-Pacific. Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2014/15.

Food and Agriculture Organization. (2010). Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010 Main Report. From www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1757e/i1757e.pdf.

Global Finance. (2015 йил 01-November). The World’s Richest and Poorest Countries. Retrieved 2016 from <https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/economic-data/worlds-richest-and-poorest-countries>.

Hijoka, Y., Lin, E., Pereira, J., Corlett, R., Cui, X., Insarov, G., . . . Surjan, A. (2014). Asia. In V. C. Barros, Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part B: Regional Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (pp. 1327-1370). Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Human Rights in ASEAN Online Platform. (n.d.). From <http://humanrightsinasean.info/engagement-asean-human-rights/cso-engagement-asean.html>.

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. (2012). *Urbanization in Southeast Asia: Issues and Impacts*. Singapore.

International Energy Agency. (2015). *Southeast Asia Energy Outlook 2015*. World Energy Outlook Special Report. From https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2015_SouthEastAsia.pdf.

International Institute for Sustainable Development. (n.d.). ASEAN Summit Adopts Declaration on Climate Change and Resilience. From <http://climate-iiisd.org/news/asean-summit-adopts-declaration-on-climate-change-and-resilience/>.

International Labor Organization. (n.d.). From http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_379571.pdf.

Ministry of Economy and Development (Timor Leste). (2012 йил February). *Sustainable Development in Timor Leste*. Retrieved 2015 йил 15-December from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/978timor.pdf>.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Lao PDR). (2012 йил June). *National Rio+20 Report for Lao PDR*. Retrieved 2015 йил 14-December from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1017laonationalreport.pdf>.

Ministry of Public Works (Indonesia). (2010). *Ecological Footprint of Indonesia, 2010*. From http://www.footprintnetwork.org/images/uploads/Indonesia_Footprint_Review.pdf.

Muqbil, I. (2015 йил 26-January). ASEAN secretariat under strain, overwhelmed by workload, inadequate resources, tourism ministers told. From Travel Impact Newswire: <https://www.travel-impact-newswire.com/2015/01/asean-secretariat-under-strain-overwhelmed-by-workload-inadequate-resources-tourism-ministers-told/>.

Nations, A. o. (2015). *ASEAN 2025 Forging Ahead Together*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Olsen, S. H., Teoh, S., & Miyazawa, I. (2015). *ASEAN Community and the Sustainable Development Goals: Positioning Sustainability at the Heart of Regional Integration*. Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. From https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282567476_ASEAN_Community_and_the_Sustainable_Development_Goals_Positioning_Sustainability_at_the_Heart_of_Regional_Integration.

Organization, Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission and Food and Agriculture. (2011). *Southeast Asia Sub-Regional Report: Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study II*. Bangkok, Thailand. From <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1964e/i1964e00.pdf>.

Philippine Council for Sustainable Development. (n.d.). Philippine Council for Sustainable Development. Retrieved 2015 йил 29-December from <http://pcsd.neda.gov.ph/>.

Pinter, L., Almassy, D., Antonio, E., Niestroy, I., Olsen, S., & Pulawska, G. (2013). *Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators for a Small Planet*. Singapore: Asia-Europe Foundation.

Program, U. N. (n.d.). 2015 Human Development Report. From <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

Royal Thai Government. (2015 йил 07-October). PM chairs 1/2015 meeting of National Committee for Sustainable Development. Retrieved 2015 йил 26-December from <http://www.thaigov.go.th/index.php/en/government-en1/item/96255-96255.html>.

Schmitt-Degenhardt, S. (2013). A Regional Perspective on Poverty in Myanmar. UNDP Myanmar.

UN Office on Drugs and Crimes. (n.d.). Rise in Methamphetamine abuse among youth in SE Asia. From <http://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/2012/02/incb-annual-report-launch/story.html>.

UNEP Regional Office for Asia Pacific. (n.d.). Southeast Asia Network of Climate Change. Retrieved 2015 йил 29-December from <http://www.unep.org/roap/Default.aspx?tabid=6845>.

UNEP, F. U. (n.d.). The Vital Forest Graphics. From <http://www.unep.org/vitalforest/Report/VFG-15-The-forests-of-southeast-asia.pdf>.

UNICEF and World Health Organization. (2015). Progress on Water and Sanitation. From http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/177752/1/9789241509145_eng.pdf?ua=1.

UNICEF. (n.d.). Philippines: Child Protection Issue. From <http://www.unicef.org/philippines/protection.html#VoPBPIIpFU>

United Nations. (2015). The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015. From [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG per cent202015%20rev%20%28July%201%29.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%20per%20cent%202015%20rev%20%28July%201%29.pdf).

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development UNCTAD. (2014). World Investment Report 2014. Investing in the SDGs: An Action Plan. New York and Geneva: UNCTAD.

United Nations Development Program – Cambodia. (2015). Job description, Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisor. Retrieved 2015 йил 28-December from https://jobs.undp.org/cj_view_job.cfm?cur_job_id=59126.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). Brunei Internally Determined National Contribution, 2015. From http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Brunei/1/Brunei%20Darussalam%20INDC_FINAL_30%20November%202015.pdf.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). Singapore Internally Determined National Contribution, 2015. From <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Singapore/1/Singapore%20INDC.pdf>.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-Habitat. (2016). Urbanization and Development: Emerging Futures. World Cities Report 2016. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

World Bank. (2013). Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts, and the Case for Resilience. A report for the World Bank by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analytics. Washington DC: World Bank.

World Bank Databank. (2015). World Development Indicators, 2015. From http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SP.POP.TOTL,AG.SRF.TOTL.K2,EN.POP.DNST,NY.GNP.ATLS.CD,NY.GNP.PCAP.CD,NY.GNP.MKTP.PP.CD,NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD,NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG,NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG#selectedDimension_WDI_Series.

World Bulletin. (2014 йил 19-December). Drug Abuse in Thailand Highest in Southeast Asia. Retrieved 2015 йил 19-December from <http://www.worldbulletin.net/haber/151185/drug-abuse-in-thailand-highest-in-southeast-asia>.

World Employment and Social Outlook. Trends 2015. (2015). From http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_337069.pdf.

World Health Organization. (2010). Fact Sheet: Road Safety, 2010. From http://gamapserver.who.int/gho/interactive_charts/road_safety/road_traffic_deaths/atlas.html.

Xavier, S., Sidin, S., Guelich, U., & Nawangpalupi, C. (2016). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor ASEAN Regional Entrepreneurship Report 2015/2016. ASEAN Entrepreneurship: The Context, Impact and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs and Startups; Key Pivots for Growth and Sustainability. Kuala Lumpur: International Development Research Centre.

Yolanda damaged 3171 schools – Deped. (2013 йил 21-November). From Rappler: <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/typhoon-yolanda/44259-nov21-deped-yolanda-update>.

