

A DECADE OF BUILDING *REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN* TRADE AND INVESTMENT

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BUILDING REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN
TRADE AND INVESTMENT**





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ESCAP envisions a resilient Asia and the Pacific, based on shared prosperity, social equity, and sustainability.

One of the most important focal areas of ESCAP's work, as the largest, most inclusive intergovernmental platform for the region, is to promote the deepening of economic cooperation and development amongst our member States.

A key driver of this regional cooperation agenda has been the expansion of trade and investment across Asia and the Pacific in recent years. It is also a vital engine for regional growth, integration, economic dynamism, and rising prosperity.

Participation in global networks of production, trade, and investment has created employment, raised incomes, and helped to spread knowledge and technology throughout the region. Trade-led growth has not, however, benefitted all people equally, and too many barriers to inclusion remain, especially for our poorest communities.

The Trade and Investment Division (TID) of ESCAP, and the two regional institutes which the Division backstops - the Asia Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) and the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) - have therefore focused their work over the last ten years on developing a number of innovative mechanisms and platforms to promote regional cooperation in the field of inclusive and sustainable trade and investment, and in related areas such as the promotion of science, technology and innovation.

The platforms and networks which are presented in this booklet, have played an instrumental role in bringing countries, communities, and people together - raising their capacity to effectively tackle the complex issues involving trade and investment, while providing insights and perspectives from a range of stakeholders, including the private sector.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the work being done by TID and our regional institutes, and to emphasize their achievements in promoting regional cooperation. We are committed to the continuation and acceleration of these important efforts in the area of trade and investment, towards the creation of a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noeleen Heyzer'.

Noeleen Heyzer
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

BUILDING REGIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT



ESCAP focuses on a number of areas of economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific. One of these is trade and investment – a vital engine for growth and integration. Recent decades have seen an enormous expansion in trade and investment flows in the Asia-Pacific region. Regional economies are increasingly part of global value chains. This has helped foster the economic dynamism that has lifted many from poverty and spread prosperity more widely. At the same time, however, too many individuals and communities remain excluded from the benefits of trade and investment.

ESCAP contributes to building a resilient, sustainable and inclusive region through its comprehensive multilateral platform for promoting co-operation and development among its member countries. Harnessing trade and investment policies to support inclusive growth and sustainable development is a key regional priority.

The objective of ESCAP's Trade and Investment Division is to promote trade, investment and transfer of technology for inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. This includes strengthening regional co-operation which can facilitate growth in trade and investment flows by building openness and transparency in trade and investment. We work with members to ensure that the benefits of trade and investment are extended to all countries, communities, and individuals.

This booklet reviews the key contributions of Trade and Investment Division to fostering regional co-operation over the past decade by examining the achievements of our primary cooperation platforms and mechanisms. The booklet is issued as a background document for the third session of the Committee on Trade and Investment.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Ravi Ratnayake
Director
Trade and Investment Division



RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

The ESCAP-initiated Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, the only region-wide preferential trade agreement, made further progress in inventorying non-tariff measures of APTA member states and in completing the ratification process of the framework agreements in trade facilitation, investment and services. APTA continues to expand with Mongolia becoming the newest member in 2013.

At the request of member States in ESCAP resolution 68/3, the Secretariat further expanded its work on trade facilitation and paperless trade, including a study on regional arrangements, expert group meetings and sub-regional consultations, setting the stage for the development of regional arrangements for cross-border paperless trade facilitation.

ESCAP Trade and Investment Division (TID) continued to focus on responsible business practices through its annual Asia-Pacific Business Forum and its Business Advisory Council. A key outcome was the launch of the Sustainable Business Network for Asia and the Pacific, which will address specific aspects of sustainable business including the greening of business, social enterprises and investment, and renewable energy.

ESCAP TID, together with the World Bank, launched a new global and multisectoral trade-cost database, providing unique insights on intraregional and interregional trade connectivity and highlighting the need for more inter-subregional trade facilitation reform in Asia and the Pacific.

ESCAP TID continued to assist member States through its policy advisory and capacity building roles with a focus on evidence-based policy making so as to use trade as engine of growth and as an instrument for overall development. This was achieved by contributing to countries' capacity to improve prospects for their integration into global trade and WTO accession and utilize preferential trade agreements and other trade opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth.

In the least developed and landlocked countries, ESCAP has launched a series of capacity building activities, tailored to country needs and focusing on developing the skills and expertise to undertake effective trade and investment policy and business development. The "Bridging the Gap" series of publications outlines this work in several countries including Mongolia, Myanmar and Timor Leste.

The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology established a renewable energy transfer bank which promotes business partnerships and strengthens cross-border co-operation in the renewable energy sector.

The Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization made significant progress in advancing the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing Agricultural Machinery, which aims to promote sustainable agricultural mechanization through adoption of region wide standards, testing codes and procedures.







ESCAP TRADE AND INVESTMENT DIVISION

ABOUT TID AND HOW WE WORK

TID leads ESCAP's subprogramme on trade and investment which supports the efforts of ESCAP members and associate members to develop their capacity, institutions, and legal and regulatory frameworks and to participate more effectively and competitively in international trade and investment activities. The subprogramme aims to achieve:

- increased capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement more effective and coherent policies on trade, investment and enterprise development.
- strengthened regional cooperation and integration mechanisms in trade and investment;
- sustainable economic development and rural poverty reduction through agrotechnology transfer and agro-based enterprise development; and
- stronger national innovative systems and a more enabling environment for technology transfer to address regional and global development challenges.

The Trade and Investment Division works to make ESCAP's vision real for a resilient Asia and the Pacific founded on shared prosperity, social equity and sustainability via a focus on inclusive regional trade and investment. The division consists of the following units based at ESCAP headquarters in Bangkok: Trade Policy and Analysis, Trade Facilitation, the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, and Business and Development.

In addition, two regional institutions are also part of the Subprogramme on Trade and Investment: the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, in Beijing, and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology in New Delhi. We work through many channels to assist countries in strengthening trade and investment policy regimes. These include issue-specific and practical trade policy research and analysis, training, exchange of experiences, provision of information and toolkits, integrated regional programmes, targeted advice and regional consensus-building. We particularly focus efforts on least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, as well as Small Island Developing States, in the Asia and Pacific region.

ESCAP'S Vision

ESCAP is committed to a resilient Asia and the Pacific
founded on shared prosperity, social equity and sustainability.

Goals of Trade and Investment Division

Making Trade and Investment
work for all

Enhancing regional integration
and connectivity

Spreading knowledge and
technology

TID Workstreams

Research and Analysis

Capacity Building and
Technical Assistance

Regional Knowledge
Networks,
Co-operation and Dialogues

Regional Co-operation Platforms

ARTNet

Trade and Investment
Week

APTA

APTFF

Sustainable Business
Network

UNNEXT

APBF and EBAC

ANTAM

RET Bank

ASIA-PACIFIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT WEEK

The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week is the flagship event of ESCAP in the field of trade and investment. Every two years it brings together government officials and other stakeholders for discussions on issues of importance to trade and investment policy making in the region.

Drawing on the presence of senior policy makers from across the Asia-Pacific region, the week hosts a number of engaging events, covering areas from trade facilitation and trade agreements, to sustainable agriculture, science and technology capacity building, and responsible business practices.



The United Nations ESCAP Conference Centre in Bangkok

Against the backdrop of global economic turbulence, the first Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week in 2009 focused on the impact of the financial crisis on trade and investment in the region. Following this, the Second Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week was held in July 2011 and looked at trade and investment opportunities in the post-crisis world, including in services and climate smart trade and investment.

This year, the theme of the week is inclusive trade and investment. This is also the focus of the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2013, which highlights current regional trends, and discusses policies to ensure inclusive development outcomes from trade and investment.

Highlights of the week include:

- ◊ The ESCAP-OECD Conference on Regional Cooperation in Advancing Responsible Business Practices, 18 November 2013
- ◊ High-level Dialogue on “Reviving Multilateralism: The Road to Bali and Beyond”, 19 November 2013
- ◊ Global Trade Facilitation Conference, 18-19 November 2013

The week will culminate in the third session of the ESCAP Committee on Trade and Investment.

“*The week consisted of useful stakeholder events and activities...which allowed country delegations to exchange experiences and learn about best practices in the area of trade and investment.*”

Mongolian and Russian Delegations,
ESCAP Commission 2012

ASIA-PACIFIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT REPORT 2013: LINKING TRADE, INVESTMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report (APTIR) is the flagship annual publication of Trade and Investment Division. Released alongside the 2013 Trade and Investment Week, the Report provides a comprehensive overview of trade and investment trends in the region. The Report shows that the region continues to lead the world with robust growth supported by rising trade. The region, however, is not immune to sources of instability elsewhere in the world economy. This highlights the need for the Asia-Pacific to rebalance away from export-led growth strategies and to enhance domestic sources of demand through investments in education and productive capacity.

In addition, this year the Report studies the links between trade and inclusive growth, that is, growth which benefits all sections of society. To make trade and investment truly inclusive a number of complementary policies are needed. For instance, access to education, investment in IT and functioning labour markets can ensure that the benefits of trade are shared among more people.



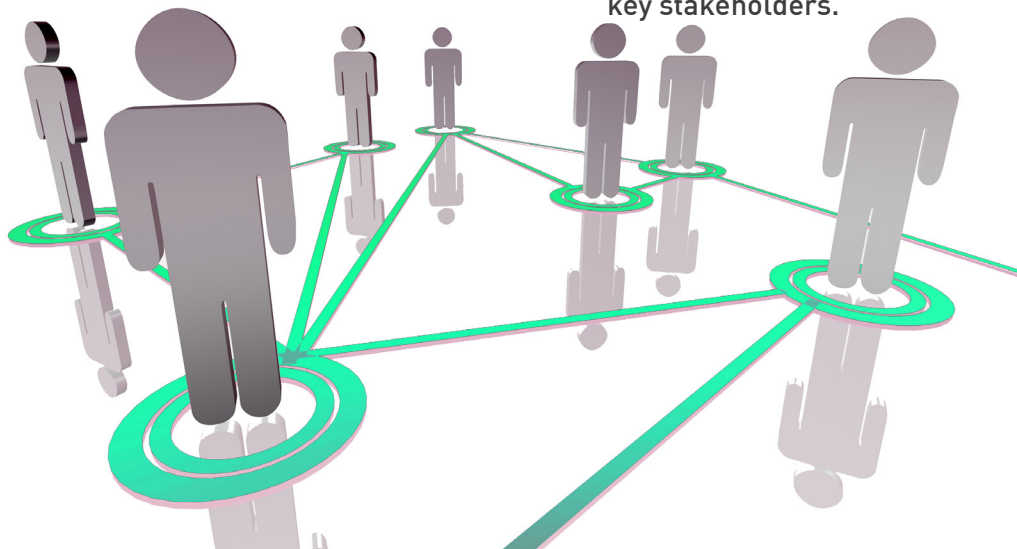
ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH AND TRAINING NETWORK ON TRADE ARTNeT

Effective trade policy can lead to better outcomes, including higher growth and improved standards of living. Policymakers need to determine many crucial elements of trade policy including: making decisions on market access; negotiating international trade agreements; and supporting companies and individuals take advantage of opportunities. But good decisions depend on the availability of high-quality research and analysis. ESCAP-led regional co-operation in research helps develop the research capacity on which effective decision-making depends.

The Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade, established in 2004 with support from the International Development Research Centre, is an open regional network of leading trade research institutions across the ESCAP region.

ARTNeT works to increase the amount of quality and relevant trade research in the region by harnessing the research capacity already available and developing additional capabilities. The activities of ARTNeT continue to be focused on three pillars, namely:

- ◈ the production of demand-driven and home-grown research from the region;
- ◈ the building of research capacity of the region, particularly that of LDCs; and
- ◈ the dissemination of knowledge and information to key stakeholders.



ARTNeT undertakes regional research projects and develops innovative research tools and databases. ARTNeT also helps researchers and research institutions conduct policy-relevant research work through capacity building workshops, with particular targeting of those from LDCs and other countries with special needs. Regional consultative meetings provide a venue for increased interactions between policymakers and researchers. The ARTNeT network continues to grow:

- At present count ARTNeT has 40 member institutions, 5 core partners and 20 associate partners. The network now reaches a community of over 1,000 individual researchers and attracts growing numbers of visitors to its website.
- Since its first publication in early 2005, ARTNeT has issued a total of 10 research-based books, 134 working papers, 37 policy briefs, and various other publications. Recent notable

studies have examined trade costs in the developing world, and how the gravity model of trade can be used by trade policy researchers.

- Since ARTNeT's launch it has held more than 60 workshops and dissemination events. Over 1000 researchers have been trained at ARTNeT capacity building workshops. 2012 and 2013 have seen an active programme of capacity building workshops, seminars and lectures. Events have been held across the region including in Fiji, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, to list a few.

“*I learned a lot, that's the reason why I always want to be a part of ARTNeT events.*”

Rafaelita M. Albada, Senior Research Fellow, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Manila, and ARTNeT workshop participant, 2012.



ARTNeT IN THE REGION

ARTNeT's active presence in the region has contributed to well-balanced evidence based policy making. In Mongolia, ARTNeT's outputs have been used to build more effective trade facilitation strategies and to increase coherence in its accession policy to the Asia-Pacific Free Trade Agreement. ARTNeT also delivered a series of studies on trade and investment policy for the Indonesian Planning Commission Bappenas. These were an important factor in the adoption of a coherent plan for the preparation of a national strategy. In India, ARTNeT studies have given justification for the Government to undertake policies for cutting trade transactions costs and for the simplification of documentation in trade transactions. ARTNeT's results also helped India successfully adopt extended market access to least developed countries worldwide, alongside a global conference on least developed countries' market access in 2011. ARTNeT studies were used in Sri Lanka to improve customs procedures and policies.



SUPPORTING TRADE POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY FOR INCLUSIVE TRADE

ESCAP is engaged in building capacity and skills for those involved in trade policymaking, negotiation and implementation of trade policy changes. This work places the principles of inclusivity and sustainability of development at the centre of trade policy formulation and is intended to improve the prospects of developing countries using trade as an instrument to reduce poverty.

Trade policy advice and capacity building covers varied topics including liberalisation at the multilateral, bilateral and plurilateral levels. Simultaneously we provide policy insights on how to realize the available opportunities for trade and investment, especially in the context of the recent global economic recession. In all cases the focus is on securing benefits for the least developed, landlocked and other countries with special needs. Special attention is given to marginalized and excluded countries and efforts are directed towards designing and evaluating the impact of regional integration agreements on these countries.



Our activities are demand-driven and responsive to the individual needs of members. The work programme on trade policy includes the provision of expert advice, technical assistance and capacity building for policymakers, negotiators and other relevant officials of member States on:

- ◻ Preparation and coordination of trade policy reforms; including negotiation, implementation and impact evaluation.
- ◻ Issues relating to the World Trade Organisation, including: agriculture, industrial goods, services and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, as well as linkages between trade and competition, gender, labour standards, and employment.
- ◻ Trade policy issues related to reciprocal as well as non-reciprocal preferential treatment for developing and least developed countries.
- ◻ Opportunities and potential for enhancing intraregional trade and subregional and regional integration through identifying measures to increase the competitiveness of Asia-Pacific economies and their participation in intraregional and global supply chains.
- ◻ Resilience to shocks and promotion of inclusion through development oriented trade and trade-related policies.



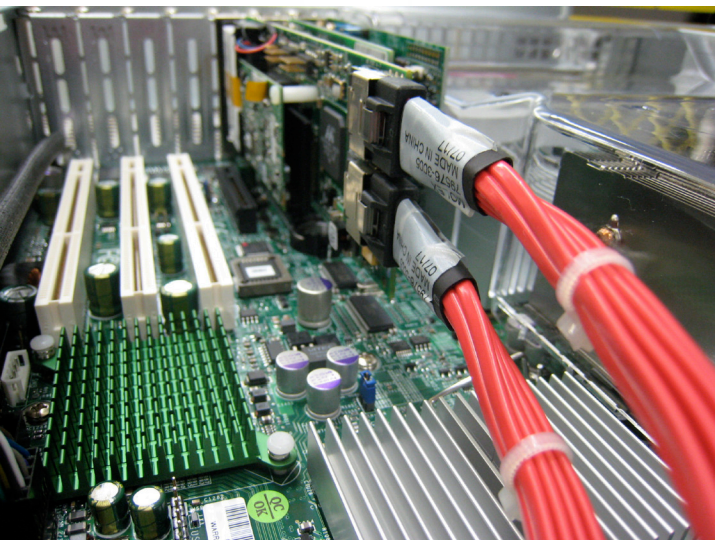
THE UNITED NATIONS NETWORK OF EXPERTS FOR PAPERLESS TRADE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC -UNNExT



Complicated and slow customs procedures can increase the costs of trade and discourage economic activity. Trade facilitation measures help simplify procedures, thereby saving time and money for governments and businesses alike. Electronic and paperless trade systems, including single window systems where traders can submit regulatory documents to a single entity, produce substantial benefits.

The United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific is a community of knowledge and practice for experts from developing countries and transition economies from Asia and the Pacific involved in the implementation of electronic trade systems and trade facilitation. Established by ESCAP in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Europe in 2009, it supports national, sub-regional and transcontinental Single Window, paperless trade and other trade facilitation initiatives.

Activities of the network may be classified under five categories: tools and guides, capacity building activities, knowledge sharing activities, regional advisory services, and research and analysis. The work programme of UNNExT focuses on the following areas: Trade Process Analysis; Document Simplification and Data Harmonization; Legal Framework Development; Single Window Planning and Implementation; Agricultural Trade Facilitation; SME Trade Facilitation; and Transit Trade Facilitation. Activities in each of these areas are supported by an Advisory Group of core UNNExT experts. Importantly, UNNExT is also supporting the implementation of ESCAP resolution 68/3 on facilitating paperless trade.



RESULTS

- More than 150 experts in the Asia-Pacific region are now registered in the expert database.
- About 500 officials and private sector stakeholders from ESCAP developing member countries, particularly from LDCs and LLDCs, benefited from UNNExT capacity building activities.
- The work done by UNNExT also led to the adoption of ESCAP resolution 68/3 on Enabling Paperless Trade in May 2012 by ESCAP member States, providing in particular for the development of regional arrangements on cross-border electronic exchange and recognition of trade-related data and documents for trade facilitation.
- Results of the Business Process Analysis and related workshops conducted in Cambodia were directly incorporated in the Rice Export Policy initiative.

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your kind cooperation in the implementation of the Mongolian National Single Window with capacity building. With the continuous support of ESCAP, Mongolia is making steady progress in implementation.”
Sambuu Demberel, Chairman & CEO, Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011.



MONGOLIA'S SINGLE WINDOW MASTERPLAN

ESCAP and UNNExT provided support to Mongolia in its successful delivery of the National Single Window Implementation Master Plan. ESCAP provided a series of capacity building workshops on implementing a Single Window in 2009. Once Mongolia decided to develop its Master Plan, ESCAP provided hands-on consultation to the Mongolian team with drafting the master plan in the first half of 2010. After preparing the draft master Plan, ESCAP organized a UNNExT Peer-review meeting for the draft Master Plan. Integrating the valuable feedback from the regional experts, the final draft of the Master Plan was delivered in January 2011 and subsequently endorsed by the Mongolian Government. With ESCAP support, the Mongolian Government organized a development partners' consultation meeting in April 2011 and secured funding for implementing its National Single Window.



ASIA-PACIFIC TRADE FACILITATION FORUM APTFF

The Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum has been organized by ESCAP jointly with ADB and a growing number of partner organizations since 2009. Hosted by a different country every year, it has become the main annual open regional platform to: exchange information; experiences and practices for trade facilitation; identify priority areas for regional cooperation and integration; and learn about new tools and services which can increase the efficiency of cross-border transactions. The Forum also intends to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination of Aid for Trade and related technical assistance and capacity building in trade facilitation.

In addition to regular panels and breakout sessions, the the Forum features an exhibition on trade facilitation held in parallel to maximize information sharing on the works, practices, case studies and findings of trade facilitation service providers, researchers, as well as development/donor agencies, international organizations and governments.



A number of other side events on trade facilitation are generally held back-to-back with the Forum, typically in partnership with the host country as well as other relevant organizations, including the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, the World Customs Organization and the World Bank. This approach has been found not only to be both cost effective and helpful in strengthening inter-agency collaboration.

“*I had a great opportunity to listen to the speakers from various professional background on a wide range of subjects and experiences which has enhanced my knowledge.*”

Participant from Bhutan, at APTFF 2013, Beijing

RESULTS

- Up to 300 participants from over 30 countries, including least developed and landlocked countries, benefit every year from the Forum's technical and capacity building sessions.
- Over the last few years, 90% or more of the participants reported that their knowledge on trade facilitation and paperless trade increased as a result of their attendance to the Forum.
- About the same proportion of participants indicated that they would be able to share the acquired knowledge in their home countries to improve trade facilitation.



REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CO-OPERATION MECHANISM ON TRADE FACILITATION

The Regional Organizations Co-operation Mechanism, or ROC-TF, was established as a follow-up to the recommendation of the ESCAP member States in July 2011 that ESCAP supports the creation of a region-wide coordination mechanism bringing together representatives of key regional organizations active in trade facilitation. The overall goal of the mechanism is to facilitate exchange of information, identify synergies and enhance collaboration for effective implementation of Trade Facilitation initiatives. Major regional and international organizations, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Customs Organization (Regional Bureau), as well as UN agencies members of the Chief Executive Board Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity are participants in this mechanism. The second annual meeting was held in October 2012 in Colombo. The third annual meeting was held in September 2013 in Beijing.





ASIA-PACIFIC BUSINESS FORUM APBF

Started in 2004, the APBF provides a platform for region-wide public-private sector dialogue, and facilitates opportunities for cooperation and partnerships among stakeholders.

The Forum brings together governments, business leaders, academia, civil society and other stakeholders to share good practices in the area of economic integration, with a particular focus on realizing the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. APBF is organized under the overall guidance and leadership of the ESCAP Business Advisory Council.

APBF is structured to address business aspects of sustainable socioeconomic development including responsible business practices and corporate sustainability, the green economy, renewable energy; and to promote trade and investment in least developed countries and landlocked countries.

Since its launch, APBF has attracted over 2,000 participants from business, government, academia and civil society throughout the region, always in pursuit of its mission to provide the best platform for region-wide public-private sector dialogue on the role and needs of business in achieving inclusive, resilient and sustainable development.

Over the course of almost one decade, APBF was hosted in diverse cities such as Bangkok, Jakarta, Almaty, and Kuala Lumpur. APBF 2012 was held in Kuala Lumpur on 15 and 16 October 2012 under the theme of “Advancing Regional Economic Integration: Connecting Business, Strengthening Partnerships”. The event was organized in collaboration with the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, the OECD, and UNDP. APBF 2013 will be held in Bangkok under the theme “Connecting the Pacific with Asia”.

The driving force behind APBF is ESCAP Business Advisory Council. Consisting of executives and representatives of leading businesses in a wide range of industries from across the Asia-Pacific region, EBAC was established at the first APBF in Shanghai in 2004. In 2011, EBAC adopted revised terms of reference and renewed its focus on providing guidance and support to ESCAP’s programme of work in general and the organization of APBF in particular. It has grown to close to 50 members and is still expanding to be truly representative of the business sector in the region. It specifically aims to provide business perspectives on development issues to governments as represented in the legislative bodies of ESCAP, in particular the Committee on Trade and Investment and the Commission, and to provide advice to the ESCAP

secretariat on its programmes and projects. EBAC members conform to and promote ethical and responsible business practices and strive towards full implementation of the principles of the Global Compact and towards Global Compact membership.

“*Forging a regional business community linking Asia and the Pacific is a priority in the APBF 2013 Programme.*”

Asif Ibrahim, Vice Chairman,
Newage Group of Industries,
Bangladesh.

The private sector plays a central role in driving economic growth and innovation through trade and investment. ESCAP targets its efforts on helping small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) as they represent the overwhelming majority of firms in Asian and Pacific economies and play an essential role in employment generation and entrepreneurship development. We recognize in particular the need for supporting the development of women and young entrepreneurs in the region and assist SMEs in becoming part of regional and global value chains. The Asia-Pacific FDI network for LDCs and LLDCs and the Business for Development capacity building programme are essential elements in this strategy.



SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS NETWORK

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) was set up by the ESCAP Business Advisory Council to promote the active engagement of the business sector in addressing the issues of sustainable and inclusive development in the context of environmental sustainability and social inclusiveness in the Asia and Pacific region. A key focus area of the SBN includes highlighting the need for businesses to:

- adopt responsible and sustainable business practices based on existing global CSR instruments such as UN Global Compact, Global Reporting Initiative, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and ISO 26000;
- adopt monitoring and evaluation procedures for implementing these practices and duly report on progress; and
- engage actively in social and impact investments or, at a minimum, consider the environmental and social impacts of their investment decisions.

In addition, the SBN acts as a dialogue partner with governments in representing the voice of the business sector on inclusive and sustainable development issues, in particular, the requirements for an enabling policy environment for the adoption, practice and implementation of corporate sustainability. Further, it aims to promote cooperation among businesses and facilitate exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences. It seeks to identify best practices for responsible and sustainable business. The SBN also assists in resolving issues and challenges related to the development of micro, small and medium sized enterprises in the Asia-Pacific region. Task forces of the SBN work towards enhancing specific aspects of inclusive and sustainable business, such as the greening of business, development of micro, small and medium sized enterprises and entrepreneurship, promoting trade and investment in support of productive job creation and mobilisation of financial resources.



ASIA-PACIFIC TRADE AGREEMENT APTA

Trade agreements promote economic development by lowering barriers and encouraging an expansion in trade. The Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement is the oldest preferential trade agreement between developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It furthers international economic cooperation through the adoption of mutually beneficial trade liberalization measures. ESCAP serves as the secretariat for the agreement.



Current members of APTA include Bangladesh, China, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka. Open for accession by all developing member countries of ESCAP, APTA is the only truly region-wide trading arrangement spanning East, South-East and South Asia, with the potential to extend to other subregions.

In the early 2000s the secretariat restructured the agreement and changed the name from the Bangkok Agreement to the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement. Other major changes included the establishment of a Ministerial Council to provide political leadership and expanding the coverage of the agreement to other areas of cooperation including services, investment and non-tariff measures.

APTA is also the only operational trade agreement linking China and India, two of the fastest growing markets of the world with a consumer base of 2.4 billion people, as well other major markets such as the Republic of Korea.

Simple, common Rules of Origin with minimum local value content requirement of 45 per cent f.o.b. (35 per cent for least developed countries), compare favourably to other Regional Trade Agreements. A set of operational procedures for the certification and verification of the origin of goods was adopted in October 2007, the first time such a common agreement was reached among developing countries in the region. APTA provides special and differential treatment for countries with special needs, especially least developed countries.



APTA RESULTS

- Rapidly growing intraregional trade between the Participating States of APTA. Between 2001 and 2006, the APTA intraregional trade share increased by almost 50 percent.
- Mongolia became the newest APTA member in October 2013.
- The Fourth Round of negotiations launched in October 2007, led to tariff concessions over 10,000 items, compared to 4,270 items under the Third Round.
- Aiming to comprehensively deepen trade cooperation and integration, the Fourth Round of negotiations extended into areas beyond traditional tariff concessions for the first time in the history of the Agreement. These areas included: non-tariff measures; trade facilitation; trade in services; and investment.





RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY BANK - RET-BANK

Renewable energy is critical for supporting sustainable development. Technology transfer co-operation has a major role to play in increasing the availability and deployment of promising renewable energy sources. The Asian and Pacific Centre for the Transfer of Technology has established an institutional cooperation mechanism known as the Renewable Energy Cooperation-Network for the Asia-Pacific that has been set up in accordance with ESCAP resolution 64/3 of 30 April 2008 on promoting renewables for energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

To date, 15 member countries; Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam have joined the RECAP network.

The primary objective of the RECAP network is to facilitate technology transfer cooperation among countries in the Asia-Pacific region in the area of renewable energy. To this end, APCTT has developed a “Renewable Energy Technology Bank” of tested and proven renewable energy technologies initially in the areas of solar, biomass, wind, mini-hydro power and geothermal energies.

It is envisaged that this technology bank will act as a repository of information on renewable energy technologies that are readily available for transfer and deployment. APCTT has developed this Renewable Energy Technology Bank as online technology database freely available for public access through its RECAP website (<http://recap.apctt.org>). Today, the RET-Bank has nearly 60 renewable energy technologies with pro-poor applications ready for commercial transfer elsewhere.

I sincerely believe that RET- Bank will become a gateway of information and renewable energy technology transfer for countries in the Pacific. Fiji Islands and other countries in the Pacific in particular have a lot to gain from RET-Bank and APCTT's Renewable Energy Cooperation-Network for the Asia Pacific. ☺

Naveendra Krishna Reddy, Fiji Department of Energy, Ministry of Works, Transport and Public Utilities, Fiji Islands, 2012.



“It is a wonderful proposal to build a Renewable Energy Technology Bank with pro-poor applications. Countries like Nepal can not only get access to renewable energy technologies from other countries, but also can contribute to the RET-Bank with the indigenous technologies developed and tested in Nepal. RET-Bank is an ideal vehicle for South-South Cooperation.”

Prof. Krishna Raj Shrestha, Act. Executive Director, Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal, 2011.



STRENGTHENING R&D IN NANOTECHNOLOGY

Nanotechnology is an exciting growth sector in the Asia-Pacific. To improve co-operation amongst research networks APCTT has initiated a regional network to strengthen capacity in research and development management, with an initial focus on the nanotechnology industry. Following an experts meeting in 2011 that brought together senior researchers from leading R&D institutions of eight member countries (China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand), APCTT initiated work to develop the “Manual on Critical Issues in Nanotechnology R&D Management: An Asia-Pacific Perspective.” This will be used as training material for capacity building activities for strengthening R&D management in the participating member countries through 2013. The Manual covers critical R&D management aspects that were identified at the EGM:

- Nano safety, standardization, and certification;
- Protection and valuation of intellectual property;
- The commercialization of R&D results; and
- Case studies on the development and commercialization of nanotechnology-based value added products from the Asia-Pacific region.

APCTT is also designing and developing a regional information website for R&D management with relevant databases focusing on nanotechnology. In 2013, APCTT has organized three national workshops to strengthen R&D management capacity of researchers and research managers in the area of nanotechnology.





ASIAN AND PACIFIC NETWORK FOR TESTING OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY - ANTAM

Agriculture remains a vital sector for jobs and livelihoods. Regional co-operation can help ensure that farmers have improved access to the machinery needed to increase production. Led by the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing Agricultural Machinery is an open regional network composed of national testing stations of agricultural machinery of participating countries, research institutes, associations of agricultural machinery manufacturers and farmers organizations across the Asia-Pacific region.

ANTAM aims at promoting the harmonization and adoption of region-wide testing codes and procedures for agricultural machinery, and hence facilitates mutual recognition of testing results to address quality, performance, occupational safety and environmental sustainability of agricultural machinery, thereby contributing to sustainable agricultural mechanization in the region.



To be officially launched in November 2013, ANTAM's primary functions will be to:

- ◻ Conduct capacity-building activities through technical training programmes;
- ◻ Promote technology transfer and innovation, information dissemination and exchange of best practices;
- ◻ Develop regional standard testing codes and procedures;
- ◻ Develop databases, conduct research, issue publications and offer policy recommendations on sustainable agricultural mechanization and agricultural machinery testing.

“ANTAM would help to improve the communication and cooperation amongst the testing centers/stations so to enhance integration and trigger intraregional trade in Asia and the Pacific eventually. CAMTC is willing to get involved and contribute to this initiative.”

Liu Min, Director-General, China Agricultural Machinery Testing Centre (CAMTC), Ministry of Agriculture, China, 2013.



ANTAM UPDATE

- 14 countries including Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines and Viet Nam have joined the Technical Working Group, and five TWGs have been held to address the technical challenges associated with the establishment and operation of ANTAM and to develop a detailed action plan.
- A Steering Committee to guide the direction of ANTAM consisting of CSAM as the executing agency, and representatives of the Italian Agency for Agricultural Mechanization (ENAMA)/European Network for Testing Agricultural Machinery, FAO, OECD and UNIDO has been established.
- Research reports detailing the priority areas of ANTAM once established have been presented by responsible participating countries and a draft Terms of Reference and a phased outline action plan have been prepared.



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