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## **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

### **Sixty-seventh session**

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the ESCAP regional institutions.**

## **Report on the activities of the Commission 2010-2011**

**Note by the secretariat**

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This document has been issued without formal editing.

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***Building Shared Prosperity, Social Equity and Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific***

***By Noeleen Heyzer***

**INTRODUCTION**

In 2010 and 2011, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific continued to build on its role as the regional arm of the United Nations promoting regional cooperation and collective action to achieve economic and social progress for the people of Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP was created so that the people of Asia Pacific can meet together, seek consensus together and advance together to build a more inclusive, sustainable future – an agenda that is reflected in the results of this past year’s work and in ESCAP’s work to address the immediate challenges affecting the region:

*First*, ESCAP's economic policy work and analysis over the past year has proved vital to global and regional discussions of Asia Pacific's recovery and new economic growth following the global financial crisis of 2009. ESCAP has developed a coordinated voice for the Least Developed Countries of the region, identifying debt, decreased government revenues and food and fuel price shocks on the poor as pressing concerns for Asia Pacific LDCs. Most recently, just last month, ESCAP and the Government of Mongolia brought together the Landlocked Developing Countries of Asia, delivering a coordinated voice through the Ulan Bataar Declaration, raising the specific concerns of the people of the region’s 12 landlocked countries. We have continued our work to expand direct technical support to all countries with special needs within Asia and the Pacific, with critical results in SPECA countries, and elsewhere. It is important that the present economic rebound is sustained for all our region’s countries and all our people.

*Second*, The recovery from the 2009 global financial crisis, and the renewed challenges of food and fuel price inflation in the past six months in many countries of

the region, which have especially affected the lives of the most vulnerable people, has led to a stronger commitment to social development among governments in the ESCAP region. Across the region, as the people of Asia and the Pacific continue to suffer from the aftershocks of the crisis, ESCAP has promoted an agenda for social equity to ensure that governments invest in their people through social protection as the recovery takes hold. Inclusive and sustainable development requires a social foundation.

*Third*, Asia is resetting itself by reinvesting in itself. Greater regional integration depends on connectivity – not just the *hardware* of highways, ports and railroads, but also the *software* of connectivity: the exchanges of people, goods and ideas between our countries. ESCAP’s work on connectivity promotes regional integration through transportation, communications and economic development and is critical toward fostering equitable economic growth. Dry Ports and public-private partnerships can open up new investment potential in the region’s hidden pockets of potential wealth and economic growth. We hope that by linking the land-locked and the least developed countries to the web of Asia’s coastal development we will foster a shared prosperity and tap further the economic potential of Asia Pacific.

*Fourth*, ESCAP has been a pioneer in developing green growth and other environmentally sustainable economic agendas as specific paths for development in the region. Kazakhstan has established itself as a leader in Central Asia and as a link between Europe and the Asia Pacific region in promoting Green Growth and the Green Bridge Initiative. An increasing number of Member Countries are exploring how to green their development efforts. ESCAP’s work this past year is at the very forefront of Asia-Pacific’s green future.

*Fifth*, Closing the development gaps and achieving the Millennium Development Goals requires evidence-based advocacy and processes. We rely on statistics to track our progress. ESCAP has led the way for critical advances in data collection for our member States. The ESCAP Vulnerability Index, featured in our regional Millennium Development Goals report, is jointly produced with the Asia Development Bank and

UNDP. The Index has become a critical human development tool in tracking vulnerability. Without accurate data collection, too many people remain uncounted – and unprotected. ESCAP’s work is advancing the use of statistics to measure our human achievements and to chart our development journey forward.

Overall, in the last year we have made progress in transforming the secretariat into a powerful regional center for rigorous analysis, sharing development practices and innovative policies, and building regional and sub regional consensus, norms and standards on a range of economic, social and environmental issues.

While ESCAP has accomplished much over the past year, new priorities and challenges require our continued effort. Asia’s economic rebound and sustained recovery presents challenges and opportunities that can only be met by collective action: our work together to create a new sustainable paradigm for inclusive economic growth within the Asia Pacific region.

One challenge to the governments of the region: the ability to match the economic recovery underway in Asia and the Pacific with a renewed emphasis on the social dimension of development as well.

The region’s new economic growth, following the shock of the global financial crisis, our growing urbanization, and the continuing migration of people, within countries and across sub regions, require a new commitment by governments to institute social protections to secure the benefits of economic growth for all the people of the Asia Pacific region.

Instead of approaching specific development setbacks and challenges through limited, reactive interventions, governments are now prepared to seek and implement comprehensive, universal coverage solutions capable of strengthening coping capacities and resilience as part of their vision of inclusive development. The resumption of food

and fuel price inflation in many of the region's countries and continuing aftershocks of the global financial crisis has lent new urgency to their efforts.

ESCAP seeks to assist all member states in providing a higher level of development for their people as befitting the surge of economic growth that Asia is experiencing. We can not have an economic transformation, without also bringing about social transformation.

Furthermore, the expected steady continuing growth in Asia and the Pacific's economies over the next decade presents an unprecedented opportunity for governments to take on and surmount the challenges of food security, water security and poverty reduction that burden our region – a renewed emphasis on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and closing the development gaps on all human development indicators.

Member States need not undertake these challenges alone. It is time to move from individual country strengths to collective regional strengths; to introduce balance back into our economic and social order; to develop common regional positions and solutions to global problems; to address the disparities in the region; to value the gifts of the earth.

We have to ask ourselves: How do we achieve the economic growth and social progress that the people of Asia and the Pacific deserve, taking into account the limits of the earth's carrying capacity?

With these challenges and opportunities before us, Asia and the Pacific need a strong regional platform to respond to these issues. In concert with its member States, ESCAP can facilitate the collective policy leadership the region requires. As *the* regional arm of the United Nations, ESCAP is a platform for each member State, and the Commission acts as a UN regional assembly for all.

At the sub regional level, the ESCAP Pacific Office supports a coordinated voice for the people and communities of our region's small island states, enhancing their representation at critical global and regional gatherings and steadily deepening capacities for sustainable development and regional integration.

The East and North East Asia sub regional office in Incheon Republic of Korea has increased our delivery of South-South technical cooperation programmes with officials of national and local governments. The North and Central Asia sub regional office in Almaty, Kazakhstan is now well on its way to becoming a hub for innovation and cooperation for the seven countries of the sub region. ESCAP seeks similar progress in this year and the future in improving our work at the sub regional level across Asia and the Pacific. These are positive steps forward in delivering the results that our vast region needs, bringing ESCAP closer to the people we serve.

That is the opportunity – and the challenge -- before us. Working together, Asia Pacific can shape the forces of the economic recovery by investing in its people, its human capital, by strengthening our social commitments and implementing social protections as a mainstay of national development. The opportunity is now for Asia Pacific to emerge as a leader: in the global economy, in the realm of social progress, and in safeguarding our global environment. Let us demonstrate that Asia Pacific's development can be balanced – with our focus on all three pillars working together, our economic wealth shared, our social gains secured, and the gifts of the earth protected.

ESCAP stands ready to support its member States. It is our work together that will bring an inclusive and sustainable future for Asia and the Pacific.

Noeleen Heyzer

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and  
Executive Secretary of ESCAP

***Changing Asia-Pacific:  
ESCAP's Agenda of Regional Co-operation for Inclusive  
and Sustainable Development***

**CHAPTER 1:**

The mandate of ESCAP is to promote regional co-operation for inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific – a dynamic region characterized by growing wealth, diversity and change, but also challenged with inequality, persistent poverty and insecurity. ESCAP supports its member states through its convening authority, economic and social analysis, statistical work, normative standard-setting and technical assistance so that countries can better respond to the development needs and priorities of the Asia-Pacific region and mutually benefit from its development opportunities.

Home to 4.1 billion people, more than 60 per cent of the world's population, Asia and the Pacific has distinguished itself as the fastest growing region in the world. Over the decades, it has made remarkable progress on a number of fronts such as dynamic trade and investment-led economic growth, sustained inroads into poverty reduction and technological advances. However, the fallout from the financial crisis, coming soon after the food and energy crises, has left many countries exposed to economic insecurity that threatens development and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Further, as ESCAP analysis underscores, social vulnerabilities and inequities both within countries and among countries are on the rise, exacerbated by rapid changes in family support structures, ageing populations, urbanization and migration. While the region is on the path to economic recovery, experience from previous crises suggests that social recovery takes longer to achieve.

Economic, social and environmental insecurities are occurring simultaneously with a mutually reinforcing convergence. How the region addresses these challenges will determine the nature, speed and sustainability of the region's future development for decades to come.

In the context of this evolving Asia-Pacific landscape, ESCAP supports member States with sound strategic analysis, policy options and technical cooperation to address key development challenges and to implement innovative solutions that can become drivers of change for region-wide economic prosperity, social progress and environmental sustainability. At the same time, ESCAP assists member States through its conference structure to forge a stronger coordinated regional voice on global issues by building capacities to dialogue, negotiate and shape development agendas in an age of globalization. A key modality for this strategy is to promote intraregional connectivity and regional integration.



ESCAP focuses its work on the key objectives shared by all of the regional commissions of the United Nations, namely, to (a) foster economic integration at the subregional and regional levels; (b) promote the regional implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals; and (c) support regional sustainable development by helping to bridge economic, social and environmental gaps among member States and subregions through, among other things, trade and transport. All of the regional commissions generate multilateral dialogue, knowledge sharing and networking and to work together to promote intraregional and interregional cooperation, both among themselves and through collaboration with other relevant organizations. ESCAP has adopted a more balanced multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach to development decision-making and agenda-setting. ESCAP advocates on behalf of, and assists member States in developing a common set of standards, norms, conventions and development approaches. ESCAP's evidence-based analysis seeks to capture differences and disparities among and within countries, including those between men and women, according priority to ensuring that the concerns of countries with special needs, particularly those of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, are addressed.

Together with our member states we work to address key development challenges and - through regional cooperation - to implement innovative solutions for economic prosperity, poverty reduction, social progress and environmental sustainability region-wide. We deliver results when one nation is willing to work with its neighbours in achieving a common goal, whether in preparing for disasters and investing in early warning systems, or in agreeing to common trade and tariff schedules in a particular subregion.

ESCAP's work is underpinned by a strategic framework comprised of an integrated set of eight mutually supportive and interconnected subprogramme areas, listed below, which are linked to the priorities of member States. The strategic framework reflects continuity in the direction of the work of ESCAP, the commitment of ESCAP to the development pillar of the United Nations, and ESCAP's continuing efforts to enhance organizational and development effectiveness.

### **Subprogramme**

1. Macroeconomic policy and inclusive development
2. Trade and investment
3. Transport
4. Environment and development
5. Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction
6. Social development
7. Statistics
8. Subregional activities for development

With the overall goal of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the subprogrammes aim to achieve ESCAP's three key development results:

(i) member state governments have more effective, inclusive and sustainable policies for addressing development from a multi-disciplinary perspective, to narrow development gaps and build resiliency;

(ii) global processes are shaped by a stronger coordinated regional voice and countries are supported in implementing international commitments; and

(iii) regional cooperation mechanisms and institutional frameworks are in place to promote regional integration and inclusive development.

Central to the strategy of the programme of work of ESCAP is the fostering of regional and subregional cooperation, including South-South cooperation. The subregional offices already established for East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, and in progress for South and South-West Asia, together with a strengthened office for the Pacific subregion, provide better targeted and in-depth technical assistance to address the priorities of member States in the respective subregions in a more balanced manner.

Partnerships with multilateral entities and subregional organizations have been strengthened in order to ensure an inclusive and coherent approach to addressing the concerns of the region and to avoid duplication of efforts, while building on the strengths and comparative advantages of ESCAP and complementarities with partners.

Overall, ESCAP uses its multidisciplinary capabilities, its strengthened regional and subregional presence, the extensive network it has developed with relevant subregional, regional and international organizations, and its position as the regional arm of the United Nations to provide leadership and solutions to the critical regional and global development challenges of the twenty-first century.

## *Drivers of Change: Substantive Results*

### **CHAPTER 2**

In 2010 ESCAP continued to reinforce its position as the key regional platform for promoting inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific through a more focused programme of work. ESCAP's substantive outputs, including its analytical and normative work, are performed through its seven policy divisions and the subregional offices, assisting member States to formulate a coordinated voice in global development dialogues, and raising normative standards within member States and across the region.

#### **A. SUBPROGRAMME WORK**

##### *Subprogramme 1: Macroeconomic policy and inclusive development*

###### **(i) Introduction**

Asia-Pacific region has emerged as the growth pole of the world economy with a strong recovery from the global financial crisis. However, it faces major challenges in its pursuit of poverty reduction, achieving MDGs and for sustaining its dynamism over the medium term. ESCAP promotes development of sound macroeconomic policy for growth and inclusive development. Through policy analysis, research and evidence-based advocacy, ESCAP encourages countries to create and implement policies for inclusive and sustainable development which support the achievement of internationally agreed development goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a special focus on countries with special needs.

###### **(ii) Programme focus in 2010**

ESCAP's work during the year focused on assisting the region's economies in their recovery through policy support. ESCAP warned the region's economies on emerging downside risks –initially arising from the volatile capital flows and subsequently from rising food and oil prices—and advised on the policy options. It also focused on the medium term development policy agenda for sustaining the dynamism through closing the development gaps and exploiting the potential of regional economic and financial cooperation. It assisted the region to articulate a coordinated regional voice on global forums such as the G20 Summit, the MDG Summit at the UNGA, the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries. It helped in building capacity especially in the least developed and landlocked countries in handling the macroeconomic and development policy challenges thrown by the financial crisis and in incorporating MDGs in the national development policies. It provided to the member countries a forum for dialogue on macroeconomic and development policy issues.

The agricultural sector plays an important role in most developing countries in the region and sustains the bulk of poor. ESCAP's Bogor (Indonesia)-based Centre for

Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA) worked on the impact of climate change on food security in Southeast Asian countries, among other issues.

**(iii) Key accomplishments**

- **Macroeconomic policy support to member states in dealing with the economic crises**
  - ***Economic outlook, risks and key policy challenges:*** ESCAP monitored the macroeconomic trends throughout the period and provided to the governments recommendations on possible policy responses. The *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2010* presented and discussed on 6 May 2010 in about 25 capitals of the region and beyond, while observing a strong recovery of the region's economies cautioned against the downside risks arising from a deluge of volatile short-term capital inflows and recommended the governments to consider imposing capital controls as appropriate. Subsequently, Republic of Korea, Indonesia and Thailand implemented capital controls. The *Survey 2010* received a very widespread coverage and comment in the media and a favourable feedback from the member delegations at the 66<sup>th</sup> Commission Session held in Incheon in May 2010. ESCAP also contributed to the Asia-Pacific regional analysis in the *World Economic and Social Prospects 2011* produced by UN-DESA jointly with the regional commissions. A policy brief was also prepared on the impact of the European debt crisis on the Asia-Pacific.
  - ***Capacity building in responding to the financial crisis:*** ESCAP has been assisting the member governments especially of the least developed countries in macroeconomic capacity building in responding to the financial crisis of 2008/09. Building on the successes of capacity building workshops organized in the previous year in Dhaka and Thimphu (Bhutan), a High Level Workshop on Strengthening the Response to the Global Financial Crisis in Asia-Pacific in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) on 22-24 June 2010 at the invitation of the Cambodian government. Attended by experts from Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, India, Republic of Korea, UNDP, IMF, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and ministers and over 50 senior officials of the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the central bank and other economic agencies of the government of Cambodia.
  - ***Rising food prices, their poverty impacts and policy responses:*** The *Year-end Update* of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2010* issued in December 2010 warned about the rising inflationary trends especially of food and energy prices as the recovery consolidated in the second half of the year. As rising food and energy prices became a major trend, ESCAP engaged noted experts and policy makers of the region into a further analysis and discussion on understanding the factors responsible for rising prices, their poverty impacts and short- and medium-term policy responses at a policy dialogue organized in December 2010 and issued further studies and publication in the ESCAP's *Asia-Pacific Development Journal*. A high-level panel discussion with governors of central banks of Bangladesh and Nepal and senior academics from Sri Lanka and

India was organized at the South Asia Economic Summit held in Kathmandu in December 2010, as the issue of food prices became a major challenge in the South Asia subregion.

- **Global and regional policy reforms for sustaining Asia-Pacific's dynamism**
  - ***Regional coordinated voice on the G20 Summit Agenda:*** The G20 Summits have become major forums in the aftermath of the crisis for a discussion on reform of the international financial system. As directed by the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission, a High-level Consultation on the G20 Seoul Summit was organized in Bangkok in October 2010 to assist Asia-Pacific countries to articulate a regional perspective on key issues on the agenda of the Summit especially those affecting the region's growth prospects. The consultation attended by senior officials of finance ministries and central banks of 25 Asia-Pacific countries was co-chaired by the Governors of the central banks of Nepal and Bhutan and the Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister of Mongolia. The consultation was supported by Secretariat papers and a number of resource persons including the G20 Sherpa of the UN and the outcome of the consultation were fed into the Summit discussions through the G20 Chair.
  - ***Policy dialogues on sustaining Asia-Pacific's dynamism in a post-crisis world:*** ESCAP continued to articulate the critical importance of rebalancing of the region's economies in favour of itself through inclusive policies and deepening regional cooperation for sustaining its dynamism in the medium term. These issues were discussed at a policy roundtable organized jointly with the Club the Madrid in Bangkok in August 2010. Besides senior economists from the region, the roundtable had the participation of distinguished former Heads of State/Government in the region including Mr. Hong Koo Lee, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Anand Panyarachun, former Prime Minister of Thailand, and Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga, former President of Sri Lanka and the President of the Club de Madrid Mr. Wim Kok, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands. In addition, during the 2010/11, nine Development Policy Seminars were delivered by senior experts besides two distinguished persons lectures delivered by Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen and Mr. Haurhiko Kuroda, President of Asian Development Bank.
  - ***Strengthening a Regional Financial Architecture:*** ESCAP has argued that a stronger regional financial architecture could help to direct regional savings to regional infrastructure needs, thereby contributing to growth and balanced regional development. Therefore, 66<sup>th</sup> Commission Session adopted a resolution mandating the secretariat to elaborate further the elements of a regional financial architecture that could facilitate financing of infrastructure investments in the region. As per the mandate, the ESCAP secretariat started further work on the subject. A presentation on the subject was made and commented by the finance ministers of the South Asian countries at a regional conference held in New Delhi on 24 February 2011. More detailed work is currently in progress.

- **Policy Support for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia-Pacific:** ESCAP has a comprehensive work programme on assisting the achievement of MDGs by the Asia-Pacific countries through analytical work, policy advocacy and capacity building. In 2010/11 these activities included:
  - ***Financing the MDGs Gaps:*** An ESCAP study estimated the costs of closing the MDG gaps in the region and then explored into the conventional and innovative means of financing these gaps and also the capacity of countries especially least developed countries to finance them. The study also looked into the best practices in financial inclusion in the region. The main findings of the study were reported in the theme study for 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission and a couple of policy briefs.
  - ***Asia-Pacific MDG Reports:*** The latest in the series of regional MDG reports viz. *Paths to 2015 - MDG Priorities in Asia and the Pacific* was issued in September 2010. Prepared by ESCAP/ADB/UNDP partnership, the report examines the status of achievement for 21 indicators of MDGs across sub-regions and countries and highlights the gaps. It then goes into an analysis of key factors and priorities for expediting the achievement in the remaining five years. The MDG related work of ESCAP has also fed into the Thematic Working Group on Poverty and Hunger of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) that is co-chaired by FAO, ESCAP and UNDP.
  - ***Asia-Pacific coordinated voice at the MDG Summit:*** ESCAP/ADB/UNDP substantively supported the Special Ministerial Meeting hosted by the Government of Indonesia in Jakarta on 2-3 August 2010 as a regional preparatory for the 2010 MDG Summit at the UNGA. ESCAP/ADB/UNDP partnership then organized a high-level special event during the MDG Summit in September 2010 in New York which was addressed by the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, the State Minister of Planning of Indonesia, the Finance Minister of Bangladesh, and the Director-General of National Economic Development Authority of the Philippines besides the heads of ESCAP, ADB and UNDP/APB. ESCAP also supported the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on 'Education for all' held in Chon Buri Thailand in March 2011.
  - ***Policy Advocacy and capacity-building on MDG-based national development strategies:*** At the invitation of the Government of Cambodia, ESCAP organized a Partnership Dialogue on Developing and Implementing MDG-based National Development Strategies in Asia-Pacific Countries in Phnom Penh in December 2010, as a part of the Development Account project. Participants included experts from different Asia-Pacific countries, regional development organizations and senior officials of the Cambodian government. ESCAP/ADB/UNDP regional MDG partnership also organized a sub-regional workshop on MDGs in Shanghai in July 2010 for participants of Southeast and East Asian countries and international and regional agencies involved in MDGs.

- **Policy support to the Countries with Special Needs**

Despite the impressive progress and dynamism of the region, the Asian and Pacific countries with special needs, including the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), continue to face tremendous development challenges. ESCAP pays a special attention to these countries in its work. The work in 2010/11 in this regard includes as follows:

- ***Almaty Programme of Action and the development gaps faced by LLDCs:*** ESCAP organized the High-level Policy Dialogue on the Almaty Programme of Action and other Development Gaps faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries in Ulaanbaatar on 12-14 April 2011 in collaboration with the Government of Mongolia. Attended by ministers and senior officials of all the Asia-Pacific LLDCs, the meeting reviewed the progress in the implementing the Almaty Programme of Action (APA), formulated a coordinated voice for promoting regional cooperation for enhanced transit transport connectivity, trade facilitation and market access, and strategies to foster South-South cooperation for their benefit. The Ulaanbaatar Declaration issued by the participants to the policy dialogue will be presented at the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission.
- ***Coordinated Regional Voice of Asia-Pacific LDCs:*** The 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission endorsed the Dhaka Outcome Document resulting from the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs held in Dhaka in January 2010. It was transmitted to the preparatory process of the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs scheduled to be held in Istanbul from 9-13 May 2011. ESCAP continued further analytical work on the problems faced by the Asia-Pacific LDCs and a special study was conducted on challenges for building productive capacity. The study would serve as the background paper for the ESCAP special event planned for the LDC IV Conference.
- ***Promoting Regional and Economic Cooperation in North-East Asia with particular focus on DPRK:*** The project implemented by ESCAP with the support of Republic of Korea, moved forward by establishing partnerships with leading institutions in China, India, Philippines and Thailand and by successfully implementing capacity building programmes for DPRK Government personnel in the areas of energy, environment protection and transport since May 2010. Additional training courses and two demonstration projects on watershed treatment and bio gas generation using animal waste will be conducted during 2011.
- **Food security and poverty Alleviation through sustainable agriculture**
  - ***Climate change and food security in Southeast Asia:*** CAPSA continued to provide research-based policy advice on sustainable agriculture, poverty reduction and food security to policy-makers and practitioners in the region. During 2010 CAPSA made substantial progress towards its revitalization, and its Governing Council at its meeting held in March 2011 endorsed the Centre's Strategic Plan.

CAPSA also completed a study that found climate change to be affecting South-East Asia's weather patterns and rice productivity, and forecast the impact of climate change on rice production in Malaysia, Viet Nam and Indonesia, based on advanced crop modeling. The results highlight the urgent need of further work on how the use of traditional crops, improved agronomic practices, crop breeding and new technologies can enhance the resilience of agricultural systems.

**Box 1: Return of the Food and Fuel Crisis: Policy-oriented analysis helping the region to overcome development threats**

ESCAP's analysis of contemporary macroeconomic challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region has continued to generate forward-looking discussion among policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders, helping to build a regional consensus on the needed policy actions.

Since early 2010, global food and oil prices increased on a sustained and synchronized trend. ESCAP estimates that oil price increases will reduce growth by up to one percentage point in some developing Asia-Pacific economies as well as put pressure on inflation and adversely affect current accounts. Food prices have increased in various countries by up to 35 percent.

ESCAP estimates show that high food and oil prices in 2010 kept an additional 19.4 million people in poverty in Asia and the Pacific; they prevented 15.6 million people in the region from emerging from poverty and have pushed another 3.8 million below the poverty line. Persisting rise of food and oil prices could lead to up to 42 million additional people in poverty in 2011. In a worst-case scenario with food prices in 2011 rising above the CPI inflation at twice the 2010 rate and average oil prices at US\$130 per barrel, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for poverty could be postponed by half a decade in the region.

ESCAP has also proposed a policy agenda for dealing with the food-fuel crisis. Governments may also lower prices by lowering tariffs and/or taxes. Second, vulnerable sections of the population should be protected through public food distribution systems, food vouchers or targeted income transfer schemes. Third, price volatility for food grains should be addressed through the countercyclical use of buffer stocks. At the regional level, price shocks can be managed cooperatively by establishing regional food stocks such as the Rice Reserve Initiative of ASEAN+3 and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Food Bank. Fourth, international cooperation through the United Nations and the G20 should be stepped up to curb financial speculation in food commodities and to regulate the diversion of food for biofuels. In the medium term, efforts should be made to deliver a supply response by reversing the neglect of agriculture in public policy by enhancing support for agricultural research, development and extension and providing easier access to credit and other inputs in order to foster a new, knowledge-intensive green revolution that would make agriculture more environmentally resilient while enhancing agricultural productivity. The G20 may expedite the implementation of the L'Aquila Initiative on Food Security which includes a provision of financing to developing countries for food security. In the area of oil price volatility, the G20, being the group of all major consumers, can match the power exercised over the oil markets by the cartel of producers viz. the OPEC. The two groups may demarcate a benchmark "fair" price of oil and agree to restrict the oil price movement within a band around it. An additional measure to moderate the volatility in the oil market is for the G20 to create a global strategic reserve that would release the oil countercyclically.



## *Subprogramme 2: Trade and Investment*

### **(iv) Introduction**

ESCAP, fulfilling its role in promoting regional cooperation, provides analytical support and technical assistance in trade and investment policy making, negotiation and implementation of regional and multilateral trade agreements, and transfer of technology. This support includes assistance to effectively formulate and implement trade and investment reforms; building capacity to reduce procedural barriers to trade and increase regional connectivity; development of policy research capacity on trade and investment policy analysis; the promotion of SMES; and capacity building for innovation management and technology transfer, with a special focus on agro-technologies.

### **(v) Programme focus**

ESCAP's continued work in designing and implementing policies, and putting in place the institutional infrastructure for trade facilitation moved forward with a renewed vigor in 2010. Most importantly, ESCAP played a crucial role in promoting regional cooperation by offering a clearing house for best practices and lessons in trade, investment and technology transfer; through promoting regional/sub-regional initiatives; and providing a platform for regional policy dialogues including through Asia Pacific Business Forum. ESCAP's nascent programme on private sector development focused on building capacity of SMEs to connect to global value chains, design environmentally sustainable business models, and foster private-public partnerships.

### **(vi) Key results and accomplishments**

The Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), has been recognised as the most comprehensive and highly successful trade-related network covering the entire Asia-Pacific region with a highly effective research capacity building programme. ARTNeT now includes 30 leading research institutions and spans a community of several hundred individual researchers. The Network supported by regional global agencies including IDRC and WTO continued to focus on three pillars: (i) demand-driven and applied research, (ii) building research capacity of the region, particularly that of LDCs, and (iii) the dissemination of knowledge and information to key stakeholders. ARTNeT over the years produced numerous analytical studies, research papers and policy briefs and built capacity of many junior researchers, in particular, in LDCs.

Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report (APTIR) carried out an independent analysis of the region's trade and investment short- and longer term developments and presented policy options on various timely and pressing trade-related concerns including the recovery from the financial and economic crisis. . The report aims to enhance the understanding of policy makers and other stakeholders of the trade and investment developments in the region, and their capacity to formulate and implement sound policies.

UNNEExT emerged as an effective and highly successful mechanism for regional cooperation and capacity building on trade facilitation in 2010. The Network continued to

develop tools and implementation guides; provide capacity building and knowledge sharing opportunities; provide regional advisory services; and undertake research and analysis on strengthening regional connectivity. ESCAP under the UNNExT achieved 4 major results during the year.

- The Business Process Analysis (BPA) Guide for Simplification of Trade Procedures prepared under the auspices of UNNExT was widely disseminated and used for diagnosing procedural bottlenecks for key export and import products in 14 countries of the region. For example, the results of the BPA training conducted in Cambodia helped the design and implementation of the Cambodia Rice Export Policy initiative launched this year. It is being used for developing Cambodia's export strategy for cashew nuts and cassava.
- Another achievement of ESCAP's trade facilitation programme and the UNNExT is the development and the implementation of the Mongolia Single Window Master Plan. An effort by a multi-Agency group of experts and private sector stakeholders, guided by ESCAP, the Master Plan was reviewed by a regional team of UNNExT experts, endorsed by the Mongolian government, and presented to donors and secured full-funding in April 2011.
- The Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum and Exhibition emerged as a major platform for knowledge sharing and regional policy dialogue.
- About 320 officials and trade facilitation stakeholders benefited from the capacity building activities during 2010. ESCAP places special emphasis on assisting least developed and land locked countries to improve their trade competitiveness through the implementation of trade facilitation measures. In 2010 alone, ESCAP provided capacity building in trade facilitation to 13 LDCs and LLDCs.

Mongolia applied for membership in the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) relying on direct technical and logistical support provided by ESCAP. Member countries of APTA negotiated and concluded 3 framework agreements on trade in services, investment and trade facilitation. Throughout 2010, ESCAP continued to assist APTA members in the finalization of the Fourth Round of tariff concessions and in the adoption and ratification of the Framework Agreements.

In 2010, 446 people were trained by ESCAP on trade and investment issues, of which about 25 percent were women. In cooperation with key partners and other UN agencies including the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), ESCAP conducted a number of events in 2010, including high-level consultations on the Doha Development Agenda. In its efforts to assist LDC members to implement their commitments or to accede to the WTO, ESCAP and its partners organized supplementary capacity building programmes for such countries.

ESCAP provided real-time data to policy makers and researchers through its Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database (APTIAD), an online database of trade and investment agreements of the ESCAP region started in 2005. APTIAD fulfills

the request of member states for the need for tracking and analyzing the features and performance of trade and investment agreements in the region. As of April 2011, the database covered over 170 agreements, and contained over 20 trade indicators, including interactive indices and pre-calculated sets of indicators assisting analysts and policymakers in assessing the impacts of these arrangements.

ESCAP helped to increase the participation of SMEs in regional and global value chains. Working closely with countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion, as well as in South Asia, ESCAP has been implementing a series of technical assistance activities for private sector development since the early 2000s. For example, to promote SMEs' participation in regional and global value chains, a "Joint Programme Steering Committee on Private Sector Development along East-West Economic Corridor" was set up to ensure increased coordination of donor activities in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

The Asia-Pacific Business Forum of 2010 was held for the seventh time in May, entitled "Business Opportunities and Low-Carbon Economy", attracting 163 participants. APBF aims to promote public-private dialogues on issues of mutual interest, such as business enabling environment and the role of business in contributing to a low-carbon economy. This year's APBF is planned to be held in Bangkok on 25 and 26 July 2011, with the theme "Capturing Post-Crisis Business Opportunities in Asia and the Pacific."

ESCAP, under its Investors for Development project (I4D), was successful in promoting a more effective implementation of the UN Global Compact principles in Asia and the Pacific by enhancing the capacity of and cooperation between Global Compact Local Networks (GCLNs) in the region. A total of 130 participants from 40 Global Compact companies alongside with 10 regional and 20 local trainers took part in the I4D project's Global Compact training programme in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

ESCAP conducted analyses of climate-smart trade and investment opportunities in the Asia Pacific region as part of its trade policy programme. The forthcoming ESCAP publication on Trade, Investment, and Climate Change will shed light on the complexities of the current debate on trade and climate change, identify win-win opportunities for developing countries in the region, and showcase best practices in this area. Also, a recent Regional Symposium on Low carbon Economy: Trade, Investment and Climate Change, that brought together policy makers and environmental experts explored the linkages between trade, investment and climate change and the associated challenges and opportunities the region faces in generating a low-carbon development and growth path.

**Box 2: UNNExT - Connecting Asia and the Pacific through paperless trade**

In the aftermath of global economic crisis, there is a renewed need to increase intra-regional trade so as to lessen the dependence of the region's economies on trade with developed country markets. Increasing trade within the region depends on lowering significant barriers and costs. ESCAP research shows that, on average, costs of trade outside the region, with North America and the European Union, are 20 percent less than trade inside. Trade facilitation programmes in developing countries have inherently focused on facilitating trade with often far away developed countries, not with the neighbor next door. Further, ESCAP's estimates that the hidden cost of red tape can amount to as much as US\$ 300 billion a year in the developing Asia-Pacific region.

UNNExT, United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade, was launched in 2009 to tackle the pervasive red tape in trade and promote Single Window and paperless trading in the region. It is a community of knowledge and practice where peer-learning and knowledge sharing is the overarching goal so that developing countries can catch up with the region's most advanced implementers of Single Window and paperless trade. UNNExT has a 4-pronged approach to helping countries: capacity building, developing implementation methodologies and tools, analytical and advocacy work, providing advisory services, and a knowledge sharing platform. The Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum, the only regional trade facilitation networking and capacity building event, provides a comprehensive platform for knowledge sharing and regional policy dialogue.

The young network has achieved commendable results. The first UNNExT tool, the Business Process Analysis Guide for Simplification of Trade Procedures (BPA), was well received, with over 14 countries applying the methodology to identify procedural barriers to trade for key export products. Cambodia, for example, used the findings to push forward its rice export strategy by cutting red tape in rice trade. Similarly, there is a great demand for UNNExT to help Single Window and paperless trade initiatives across the region. With the help of UNNExT, Mongolia recently secured full funding for implementing the its national Single Window Plan. UNNExT is currently finalizing implementation guides on data harmonization, master planning for single window, and establishing legal framework for paperless trade. Together with the BPA, they will form a complete suite of capacity building materials for implementing paperless trading environment. With considerable backing from Asia-Pacific's least developed countries, and the landlocked states, UNNExT is committed to build on its success in regional trade policy networking in the coming years.

### *Subprogramme 3:Transport*

**(i) Introduction**

ESCAP promotes regional cooperation and integration in transport for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia-Pacific, assisting member States in realising a vision of an efficient international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

**(ii) Programme focus**

ESCAP continued to concentrate its attention on the further development of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, as well as the promotion of inter regional transport linkages between Europe and Asia. Continued attention has been given to assisting member countries in identifying transport investment requirements and priorities and addressing non-physical bottlenecks, including those at border crossings. Focus has also been placed on the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports that link road, rail and inland waterway transport infrastructure to seaports and airports. In the area of road safety, ESCAP continued to assist member countries to

develop their national road safety strategies and action plans with measureable road safety goals and targets to be achieved by the year 2020. Emphasis continued to be given to networking among national and subregional organizations, as well as following up on requests to regional commissions originating in global mandates.

**(iii) Key results and accomplishments**

Regional governments demonstrated their capacity for developing and implementing transport policies and programmes, in particular through the adoption of the following resolutions on 19 May 2010: 66/4 on the Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, 66/5 on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, and 66/6 on improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific.

In 2010, Indonesia, Nepal and Turkey ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, bringing the total number of parties to the Agreement to 28 with one signatory that has yet to become a party. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Lao People's Democratic Republic ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network in 2010/2011, bringing the total number of parties to 16 and signatories to 22 countries.

ESCAP continued to contribute substantially towards improving the capability of governments and international financial institutions in using the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and other ESCAP-promoted initiatives to realize the long-term vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system in Asia and the Pacific. The Asian Highway network now connects all landlocked countries of the region.

Focus of attention has been given to explore financing opportunities in priority infrastructure projects along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway routes.

ESCAP initiatives have encouraged many railway authorities to collaborate in organizing demonstration runs on sections of the Trans-Asian Railway Network and new scheduled commercial train services are increasingly being launched.

ESCAP member states recognized the important role of dry ports in integrating modes of transport, reducing border-crossing and transit delays and creating opportunities for economic growth, and have given clear support to the secretariat's initiative to secure an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports. In this respect, and in line with ESCAP resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, a range of initiatives have been taken by ESCAP to assist member countries in working towards the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports. In November 2010, a regional expert group meeting, held in Bangkok, paved the way for the preparation of a working draft of the agreement as the basis for future negotiations among member countries.

Collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) continued to contribute substantially towards the further development and promotion of the Euro-Asian transport linkages that provide the landlocked and transit developing States in Eurasia with connectivity.

Priority attention has been given to the provision of technical assistance and advisory services to national associations of freight forwarders and national logistics associations for the design, delivery and monitoring of customized training programmes in freight forwarding, multimodal transport and logistics in several countries. Training courses conducted in 2010 in Yangon, Almaty, Phnom Penh and Dhaka, resulted in the countries incorporating updated ESCAP training materials into their national training materials. The training material was translated into the Russian language, enabling the programme to be extended to Russian-speaking countries.

ESCAP's active participation on the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Connectivity contributed to the adoption of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity at the 17<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit on 28 October 2010.

Partnering with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Asia Development Bank, significant progress was made on the negotiation of the annexes to the Agreement between the SCO Governments on Facilitation of International Road Transport.

Based on ESCAP's regional road safety goals, indicators and targets, a multitude of road safety initiatives have been taken by member countries, in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 64/255 of 2 March 2010 on improving global road safety, as well as in support of ESCAP resolution 66/6 of 19 May 2010 on improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific.

#### ***Subprogramme 4: Environment and Development***

##### **(i) Introduction**

ESCAP carries out activities to improve the environmental sustainability of economic and social development and the effective management of energy and water resources in the Asian and Pacific region in order to achieve internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals.

##### **(ii) Programme focus**

The Environment and Development Division has actively supported member states and leading regional cooperation in addressing the region's converging multiple crises and changed reality posed by the threats of increasing vulnerability of economies and societies, depletion of natural resources and environmental carrying capacity, and continuing energy insecurity that challenge not only the prospects for future

development, but also current development gains. ESCAP's work emphasizes analysis and advocacy on emerging innovative policies for achieving environmentally sustainable and eco-efficient economic growth; and capacity building, both at the policy maker as well as institutional levels, for facilitating the development and implementation of such policies by identifying the barriers, opportunities and expected impacts, and delineating the required financial, technical and institutional capacities.

### (iii) Key results and accomplishments

- ESCAP took the lead in organizing the 6th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED-6) in October 2010, which reaffirmed the importance of regional cooperation, in particular, in shifting Asia-Pacific's development paradigm towards inclusive and sustainable development, by adopting the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Implementation Plan on Sustainable Development in Asia and Pacific 2010-2015, and endorsing the Astana Green Bridge Initiative.
- Member states' dialogue on sustainable development was strengthened with the dissemination in 2010 of the ESCAP-drafted preview summary of the regional report on the state of environmental sustainability, focusing on Green Growth, Resources and Resilience, produced every five years in collaboration with UNEP and ADB.
- The Division continued to provide the capacity development programme to assist member states to develop and implement relevant policy options, to enhance the institutional capacities required. As a concrete result, the Government of Cambodia has adopted, with the assistance of the Division, the Green Growth Roadmap, and has set up the National Committee on Green Growth. The Government of Kazakhstan has also integrated green growth in its national development strategy and is now taking the lead for regional and inter-regional cooperation through the Astana Green Bridge Initiative.
- The Government of Mongolia has requested support for setting up their National Committee on Green Growth. ESCAP has already confirmed to H.E. **Sukhbaatar BATBOLD**, Prime Minister of Mongolia that it will provide all the support it can muster.
- At the provincial level, Aceh Province, Indonesia, has recognized the importance of "payments for ecosystem services" (PES) in its recently ratified environmental management policy, the experience of which is being shared with other South-East Asian countries.
- ESCAP has facilitated the interactive discussion to develop a regional road map for achieving low carbon development and green growth. In the field of the promotion of the eco-efficient and sustainable infrastructure, the Division has developed the Guidelines, which has now been put in use in the capacity building activities by

ESCAP as well as other agencies, such as the International Training Course - Eco-efficient and Sustainable Urban Infrastructure, organized by UN-HABITAT.

- ESCAP established the first hands-on Regional Training Centre on Pro-poor and Sustainable Solid Waste Management in Dhaka Bangladesh. The Training Centre has already provided training on bringing the “3R Strategy - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle’ and other profit-making approaches to the region’s solid waste management in 2010 for over 100 national and local government officials.



**Box 3: Clean Cities: Integrated Resource Recovery Centres (ESCAP partnership with Gates Foundation)**

**Supporting Asia's urban poor and sustainable solid waste management in ten Asian cities**

Current solid waste management systems in Asia are strained and landfill space is fast becoming a rare commodity. Through out the region local governments face increasing costs of disposal – while public health and the environment suffer from the damaging effects of untreated solid wastes.

In most developing towns and cities as much as 20 to 30 per cent of the waste generated is collected, sorted and recycled by informal collectors and junk dealers. However, the informal sector does not have the capacity to manage the organic waste. 60–80 per cent of municipal solid waste in Asia's developing countries is made up of organic material. This waste is currently sent to landfills and dumps, where it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions every year.

To meet the challenge of growing amounts of waste, cities need efficient, low-cost solutions that improve waste collection, provide better working conditions for waste pickers and capitalize on the high organic content of the waste.

AS solid waste management had been identified as a priority among many local governments, ESCAP undertook research in the region to identify good and promising practices. It identified the decentralized compost plants developed by Waste Concern, an NGO in Bangladesh, as an approach that met the above criteria.

Since 2005, ESCAP, together with Waste Concern and local partners, ESCAP have tested and further refined the approach in Matale, Sri Lanka and in Quy Nhon, Viet Nam with very successful results. In 2010, with substantial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, ESCAP is expanding IRRCs to ten cities in Asia; A separate Trust Fund will be established to directly sustain and nurture this innovative policy.

**What are Integrated Resource Recovery Centres (IRRCs)?**

Integrated Resource Recovery Centres are decentralized centres that include compost plants. The Integrated Resource Recovery Centres (IRRCs) allow local governments to turn 80-90 per cent of municipal waste into resources, leaving only 5-10 per cent of total waste to be disposed at the landfill.

IRRCs are proven to be self sustaining and profitable for local governments, entrepreneurs and investors. Through their simple, non-mechanical technology, IRRCs can be built and operated at low costs, meaning that initial investments can be quickly returned and that profits can be sustained throughout their operation.

Because the IRRCs reduce greenhouse gas emissions using an approved methodology, they can qualify as Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects under the Kyoto Protocol, allowing centres to sell their carbon credits to developed countries for a profit.

IRRCs directly benefit the urban poor, providing waste pickers at the centres with better, more stable incomes and safer working conditions and buying recyclables from the informal waste pickers at advertised prices.

*Photo: Clean Cities Initiative: With a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, ESCAP has started a network of pilot projects in cooperation with municipal governments in 10 Asian cities designed to create sustainable and integrated resource recovery and recycling programs.*

## ***Subprogramme 5: Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction***

### **(i) Introduction**

The ESCAP promotes regional cooperation mechanisms and provides analytical support and technical assistance to address the major issues and policy challenges in the area of information and communications technology (ICT) development, including space applications and disaster risk reduction. Through policy analysis, knowledge sharing and advocacy, ESCAP encourages and enables the member Countries to use strategically ICT and disaster risk reduction for inclusive and sustainable development which support the achievement of internationally agreed development goals especially those related to the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) and the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA).

### **(ii) Programme focus**

Several initiatives and studies, such as (i) the publication in October 2010 of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, 2010; (ii) the Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and Development, which became operational in November 2010, thereby enabling the sharing of information and best practices; (iii) ICT capacity-building through the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development; (iv) the launch in September 2010 of the space information-based Regional Cooperative Mechanism on Disaster Monitoring and Early Warning, Particularly Drought; (v) the promotion of regional collaborative disaster communication capacity through the Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and Communications Technologies, and (vi) Broadening the base of the ESCAP Trust Fund, which is renamed as Tsunami, Coastal Hazard and Climate Change Regional Trust Fund and now proven as a reliable vehicle for spurring greater disaster preparedness for the countries of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, (vii) Regional Cooperation – the Central Asia DRR Knowledge Network; and (viii) Linking the Pacific to the Asian Space Network as part of ICT for Pacific Connectivity.

The floods that swept across Pakistan in 2010 affected 20 million people and claimed nearly 2,000 lives, while causing direct damage and indirect losses estimated at \$9.7 billion. Recognizing the critical need to enhance the region's knowledge of disaster risk reduction policies and to share policies and tools for socio-economic vulnerability and disaster impact assessment with key government representatives, civil society and the general public, ESCAP worked with Pakistan government for developing capacity resilience to water-related disasters through space application and flood risk management. ESCAP responded to the member States viz., Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia and Maldives for regional advisory services in disaster risk reduction.

### (iii) Key results and accomplishments

- **The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, 2010**, launched during the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Incheon, Republic of Korea, profiled disaster risks in all ESCAP subregions, indicated that the ongoing efforts made by high-risk developing countries towards reducing disaster vulnerability are not enough. The study called for the scaling up of efforts in disaster risk reduction and new multidisciplinary policy approaches. The post-disaster efforts in the region were found to be devoted disproportionately to rebuilding infrastructure and other sectors of the economy, even though the damage and losses were greater in the social sectors, a divergence that risked widening the levels of socio-economic inequity that expose the poor to disasters. Following the recommendation of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, the ESCAP secretariat, jointly with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, brought out the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2010, which makes the first attempts at improving understanding of the disaster risks of the region.
- **The Asia-Pacific Gateway on Disaster Risk Reduction and Development** launched during the second session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology in Nov 2010. The Gateway is a web portal that promotes the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development planning for countries in Asia and the Pacific. It aggregates relevant information from existing online sources in the region and, where relevant, other parts of the world, thereby promoting an online community of practice where professionals can network and exchange information. Phase one of the Asia-Pacific Gateway was launched, supporting an online community of practices on ESCAP-promoted regional mechanisms to reduce disaster risks, available to the public at [www.APDRRGateway.net](http://www.APDRRGateway.net).
- **ICT capacity-building through the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development:** The Centre adopted an inclusive and participatory approach and achieved rapid expansion of its flagship ‘Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders’ programme. This programme has been initiated in 19 countries of the region, including many countries with special needs, in strategic partnership with national and sub-regional organizations. As part of its mandate to promote regional cooperation in the ICT for development (ICTD) capacity building, the Centre has also assisted member States in gaining the support of many other donors including ADB, EU and UNDP to further implement the Academy programme at the national and sub-regional levels. The Academy training curriculum has already been translated into Bahasa Indonesia, Myanmar language, Russian and Vietnamese by Academy partners and further localizations are under way. In accordance with the recommendations of the first session of the Committee on ICT, two new Academy modules on the use of ICT for disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation have been developed to build the capacity of policymakers and government officials. The Centre continued to widen the reach of its ICTD capacity building services in the region via APCICT Virtual Academy (AVA), the online distance learning version of the

Academy, which is now also available in Bahasa Indonesia and Russian. Further, in response to the demands from member States, the Centre launched a new initiative to promote enhanced coverage of ICTD in educational institutions in order to create a cadre of ‘future leaders’ equipped with the capacity to use ICT for attaining development goals. In addition to the above, the Centre organized thematic training on various topics relating to ICTD such as e-government. Overall, the Centre organized 21 Academy and thematic training workshops and events in partnership with national Governments, training institutions, research organizations, academia and the private sector. Another 24 Academy workshops and events were organized by APCICT’s partners utilizing the Academy modules independent of APCICT’s support, indicating strong field uptake of the programme. Together with the number of course enrolments in the APCICT Virtual Academy, a total of 4,992 participants have been reached. As part of the Centre’s efforts under the research and knowledge management pillar, it also achieved increased membership on e-Collaborative Hub, an online knowledge-sharing platform for ICTD.

- **Regional cooperation on space information for disaster monitoring and early warning:** ESCAP has been promoting the Regional Cooperative Mechanism on Disaster Monitoring and Early Warning, Particularly Drought, in order to provide member countries with substantive technical support, including satellite information products and services, an information portal and capacity-building activities, for the development of national drought disaster monitoring and early warning capabilities and services. Based on the support expressed by China, India, Japan, the Philippines, the Russian Federation and Thailand as well as relevant international organizations, such as WMO and the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, the Mechanism was launched by ESCAP in September 2010 and since then it is moving towards its operational phase. Efforts are also on to expand the scope of the mechanism to cover floods and other major disasters.
- **Collaborative building of regional disaster communication capacities:** Disaster communication capacities are critical for the timely dissemination of early warning alerts, for the timely and accurate reporting of the occurrence of disasters and for effectively organizing and coordinating response actions among various governmental and nongovernmental bodies. Building capacities collaboratively is more cost-effective and affordable for many developing countries. ESCAP, through the regional Inter-Agency Working Group on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which has more than 20 members representing United Nations entities and international organizations, facilitated at its 14th meeting, held on 11 August 2010, to make joint efforts to promote an Asia-Pacific regional platform for disaster communications capacities, with collaborative emergency communications capacity as its core component.
- **Broadening the base of ESCAP Trust Fund:** The “Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia”, established in 2005, broadened its scope to include overall disaster and climate preparedness within the Fund’s core areas of support. The expanded scope was

approved by Fund's Advisory Council in November 2010, and with the agreement between ESCAP and Thailand signed subsequently. The Fund had conducted six rounds of funding and received 70 proposals from various regional, sub-regional and national organizations. Sixteen projects had been approved with a total budget of approximately US\$ 11.3 million. Through these projects, the Fund has balanced programming of different aspects of early warning arrangements, including monitoring and warning services, risk knowledge, education and awareness, dissemination and communication of warnings, and response capacity.

- **Regional Cooperation – Central Asia DRR Knowledge Network:** With support from the Russian Federation, the Central Asia Disaster Risk Reduction Knowledge Network for Flood Risk Reduction was initiated following the recommendations of the Regional Workshop on ICT Applications for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Economic Development, Astana, Kazakhstan during 28-30 September 2010. It is an online network for sharing of information and knowledge that will improve disaster risk reduction and management in the subregion [<http://www.unescap.org/idd/projects/Central-Asia-DRR/index.asp>]. Participating in this network are Central Asian and neighbouring countries, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as organizations within and outside the subregion engaged in disaster risk management. The network intends to share information and develop a compendium on flood and water-related risks and extreme weather events in Asia with emphasis on Central Asia.
- **Linking the Pacific to the Asian space network as part of ICT for Pacific Connectivity:** To promote enhanced Pacific Connectivity, ESCAP, in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Pacific Islands Telecommunication Association (PITA) has embarked on various activities within the framework of the Tonga Declaration from the Pacific Regional ICT Ministers' Meeting in June 2010. ESCAP and ITU jointly have put in place a plan to assist their Pacific members and associate members for comprehensive capacity development. The ESCAP Regional Space Applications Programme (RESAP) formulates an Asian space network including space agencies of China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and Thailand for cooperation to share their space resources for development and disaster reduction. As a part of ICT for Pacific Connectivity, ESCAP has strategically put in place a concrete plan to link the Pacific to the Asia space network in different phases.
- **ESCAP Response to Pakistan Floods:** Following the historic 2010 Pakistan floods, which were considered related to extreme climate events the country has been facing, ESCAP's efforts at the request of the Government of Pakistan led to organizing the High-level Expert Group Meeting towards Developing a Roadmap to Reduce Flood Disaster Risks in Pakistan, held in Islamabad on 9 to 10 November 2010. Jointly with the UN Country Team and the Pakistan government, the Workshop helped in strategizing future activities on developing capacity for resilience to water-related disasters through space applications and flood risk management techniques among

relevant government agencies in Pakistan. It was followed up by specific ESCAP activities on Developing Capacity for Resilience to Water-related Disasters in Pakistan through Space Applications and Flood Risk Management. The 2010 flood catastrophe in Pakistan. ESCAP's approach on developing capacity to deal with these priority areas of disaster risk management was aimed at enabling the country to address other potential areas of impacts by the climate change, including melting of the glaciers, drought and desertification, spread of pest and diseases and sea level rise.

**Box 4: Disasters Preparedness: Building regional cooperation for early warning:** Regional, Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES)

The ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness contributed to the establishment of the Regional, Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) through three of its projects. ESCAP has provided equipment in Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam to strengthen the regional network of seismic and sea level stations. In 2010 RIMES started experimental operation of the regional center for earthquake monitoring and tsunami watch from the AIT campus in Bangkok, Thailand. This service is one of several regional tsunami watch providers covered by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission framework, and complements the services offered by individual national systems. Based on the needs of countries, RIMES provides products and capacity building for localized hydro-meteorological disaster risk information and responses to early warning information at national and local levels through disaster preparedness and management. RIMES also acts as a test-bed to identify promising new technologies, and make them operational through the demonstration of tangible benefits.

RIMES is an example of regional cost and resource sharing arrangements which contribute to cost savings and benefits for member countries. Several of the members are Small Island Developing States and Least Developing Countries that could not have been able to afford an independent national tsunami warning system. Contributions from members States ensure the sustainability of the system. The countries that sign Cooperation Agreements with RIMES commit to contributing their own resources to maintain and operate the early warning centre and other components of RIMES. It is estimated that the \$4.5 million contribution through the ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness to establish RIMES has resulted in cost savings of more than US\$ 100 million for its members.

### *Subprogramme 6: Social development*

#### **(i) Introduction**

The subprogramme on social development aims to strengthen cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific to build more inclusive societies that protect, empower and ensure equality for all social groups. Through rigorous and evidence-based social and demographic analyses as well as regional reviews of the implementation of international commitments, the Social Development Division identifies gaps and threats to socially inclusive development, recommends policy options and provides technical assistance to enhance national capacity, with a view to promoting change at the policy and institutional levels.

#### **(ii) Programme focus**

ESCAP worked to increase knowledge and awareness and to strengthen capacity for effective and inclusive development policies by member States, especially with regard to addressing social risks and vulnerabilities. It served as a key regional platform to

engage key stakeholders from governments and civil society in assessing progress, identifying gaps and building consensus on the implementation of the international and regional commitments pertaining to social development, in particular, on ageing, disability, youth, migration, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and social protection.

In 2010, ESCAP produced comprehensive analytical studies addressing regional concerns and priorities in the areas of population, ageing, migration, disability, HIV/AIDS, social protection and gender equality. These analytical studies, disseminated broadly among stakeholders, contributed to awareness of policy options, strategies and good practices on key social issues at regional and global forums.

The Social Development Division focused on strengthening the regional knowledge base and awareness of policy-makers and development practitioners on emerging social development and population trends, policies and good practices in the region as a basis for effective decision-making by ESCAP member States. Such information and research findings, particularly on the region's demographic transition and its profound socio-economic implications, are crucial for governments to make informed policy decisions. There is a need to raise awareness and build national capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate international commitments, including the MDGs, to promote social development, gender equality, and the rights of vulnerable groups in the Asia-Pacific region. In response, the below activities and results were undertaken in the reporting period.

### **(iii) Key results and accomplishments**

High on the agenda of many countries is the need to expand social protection programmes, the theme topic focus for the 2011 Commission Session. The study, **“The Promise of Protection: Social Protection and Development in Asia and the Pacific”** documents policy options to make systems of social protection more effective, inclusive and sustainable. The study emphasized adoption of systematic approaches to the formulation of social protection strategies so as to align them with other development policies; and ensuring the institutional arrangements needed to make social protection sustainable and truly effective.

The 2010 session of the Committee on Social Development focused on the theme of “Mainstreaming disability into the regional development agenda in Asia and the Pacific”. The Committee strongly supported the proclamation of a new decade to promote the rights of persons with disabilities for the period 2013-2022.

The “Make the Right Real” campaign to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was launched at the regional level, to take concrete actions to realize the full rights of persons with diverse disabilities. Following the regional campaign, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea launched country level campaigns with support from ESCAP; both governments announced their intention to ratify the CRPD.

In light of the pressing challenge of rapidly ageing societies, concrete recommendations for action by governments to address the multi-faceted health issues and challenges confronting older persons in the region were identified by experts from governments, civil society and international organizations. The experts were brought together by ESCAP, in collaboration with HelpAge International at a Regional Seminar on Health Promotion and Active Ageing in Asia and the Pacific convened in November 2010 in Bangkok. In addition, good practices, policy gaps and priority areas for action in ensuring quality health and long-term care services for older persons were identified at a Regional Forum on Elderly Care Services in Asia and the Pacific, convened by ESCAP in cooperation with Zhongshan College, Nanjing, China, in January 2011 in Nanjing. The recommendations from these forums will feed into the second Asia-Pacific regional review and appraisal of the implementation of the global mandate on ageing, namely the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

The Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth, chaired by ESCAP, brought together over 200 key stakeholders representing schools, universities, civil society organizations, governments and United Nations entities to foster dialogue and mutual understanding, particularly in relation to the achievement of the MDGs and the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) at the regional launch of International Year of Youth held on 18 August 2010. In this context, ESCAP also received information from national Governments on the youth programmes being carried out in countries across Asia and the Pacific.

ESCAP conducted extensive research on migration in Asia and the Pacific. This research assessed trends and issues of international migration in the region and how countries reflect international migration in national development strategies. Regional cooperation to promote the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Their Families, and the importance of harnessing international migration to support longer-term development outcomes were enhanced by key meetings organized by ESCAP.

An important regional consultation was convened by ESCAP and UNAIDS in Bangkok in March 2011 on Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support. The participants, representing governments, civil society and parliaments adopted an outcome document recognizing the importance of evidence-informed, financially sustainable approaches to ensuring universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. The outcome document would feed into the deliberation by the Commission at its sixty-seventh session in May 2011 and the comprehensive review by the United Nations General Assembly in June 2011 of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.

ESCAP has over the past year refocused and reenergized its programme of work with regards to enhancing the capacity of national women's machineries to strengthen their ability to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Bangkok Declaration on Beijing +15, including



their role the implementation of gender mainstreaming across all areas of national policy, budget and programmes. A regional workshop to strengthen national capacities to collect violence against women statistics was organized in September 2010, with the participation of representatives from both national women's machineries and statistical offices.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Forum on Migration and Development 2010 was convened under the auspices of the United Nations Thematic Working Group on International Migration including Human Trafficking (TWG-Migration), co-chaired by ESCAP and the International Organization for Migration. As a result, policy tools were provided to Governments on enhancing the development impact of international migration, protecting the rights of migrants, and addressing issues related to migration, gender and families. Furthermore, the "Bangkok Statement on International Migration and Development" was adopted at the Meeting, enabling government delegates to better negotiate their position at the Global Forum on Migration and Development 2010, held in November 2010 in Mexico.

ESCAP jointly organized the Regional Dialogue of the Global Commission on HIV with UNDP and UNAIDS in February 2011, the first in a series of regional dialogues to be held across the world. It provided a forum for over 150 participants from 22 countries to discuss and debate region-wide experiences of restrictive and enabling legal and social environments faced by key affected populations in the Asia-Pacific region, including people living with HIV.

Under the auspices of the United Nations Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, co-chaired by ESCAP and UN Women, two important regional events were held. First, the establishment of a Regional Advisory Group on Women, Peace and Security in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on 6 October 2010. Second, the launch of the Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign for Asia and the Pacific on 25 November 2010, in the presence of HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador for the Say NO to Violence Against Women Campaign and Programme in Thailand, H.E. Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of Thailand, the Minister of Justice and more than 600 distinguished guests, students and United Nations colleagues.

In January 2011, ESCAP, in conjunction with UN-Women, brought together senior-level government officials from national women machineries in South and South-West Asia for the first in a series of subregional workshops to strengthen the broader institutional capacities of the organizations. In taking forward the recommendations of the Workshop, both the Islamic Republic of Iran and India indicated that they would initiate national level capacity-building in follow-up to the Workshop.

#### **(iv) Outlook for next year**

In the coming year, ESCAP will continue to focus on addressing gaps in terms of knowledge and capacity to respond to the rapid socio-economic transformation underway

in the Asia-Pacific region, and support Governments in planning, enacting and implementing legislation, policies and programmes that aim to protect, empower and ensure equality for all social groups in society. As a follow-up to the launch of the theme study on social protection at the sixty-seventh session of the Commission, ESCAP will focus on developing concrete policy instruments for building effective and comprehensive social protection systems. Other priorities include the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons with the upcoming review and appraisal of international commitments on ageing, the establishment of a new decade to promote the rights of persons with disabilities with a focus on the implementation of the CRPD, and advocating for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, especially for key affected populations.

**Box 5: Social Protection and Development in Asia and the Pacific**

Social protection is increasingly setting the agenda for social policy and poverty reduction in the region. This contributed to social protection being identified as the theme topic of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission in 2011. As an input to this Commission session, ESCAP prepared a study entitled “The Promise of Protection: Social Protection and Development in Asia and the Pacific” documenting good practices and providing policy options so that systems of social protection could be made more effective, inclusive and sustainable. The study emphasized the need for Governments to commit themselves to establish social protection on the basis of universal access and provision, and presented a case for social protection as an economic and social investment as well as a means of addressing poverty and inequality. ESCAP, jointly with Social Protection in Asia and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, convened a conference in October 2010 in Bangkok, which provided a platform for over 65 experts, practitioners and policymakers involved in research, formulation and implementation of social protection policies to develop a set of recommendations to promote social protection as long-term development policy in the aftermath of the economic and other crises affecting vulnerable sections of national populations across the region.

***Subprogramme 7: Statistics and Development***

**(i) Introduction**

ESCAP plays a unique role in support of national statistical capacity development through promoting the development and implementation of international statistical standards by linking up to global statistics development initiatives and addressing regional perspectives and country needs. Targeting primarily producers of official statistics in national statistical systems but also aiming to influence data users (including policy-makers), ESCAP is involved in the improvement of basic social, economic, demographic and environmental statistics, but also in the development of new measurements and statistical standards required for addressing emerging policy issues. ESCAP works in close coordination and collaboration with other international, regional, subregional and bilateral development partners to coordinate statistical development activities.

**(ii) Statistics Programme focus:**

In order to ensure timely and accurate official statistics, governments in the Asia-Pacific region have recognized a need to improve statistical coordination and strengthen capacities at the national level to enable all countries in the region to produce a basic

range of population, economic, social and environment statistics. The planning, monitoring and evaluation of effective policies for inclusive and sustainable development requires timely and reliable statistics. While progress has been made in improving the availability and quality of official statistics, there are persistent gaps in basic human development indicators, including the Millennium Development Goal indicators, needed for monitoring policies and development outcomes. Those gaps reflect the lack of capacity of national statistical systems to collect, produce, disseminate and analyze data in accordance with international statistical standards and good practices.

ESCAP's Statistics Division and the Statistical Institute of Asia-Pacific (SIAP), located in Chiba, Japan, work cooperatively to strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems to collect, produce, disseminate and analyze data in accordance with internationally agreed standards and good practices. ESCAP advocates the importance of proper use of statistics for evidence-based decision-making to policy-makers in ESCAP member States. ESCAP also works to strengthen statistical cooperation and coordination at regional and inter-regional levels to avoid duplication of work and to ensure that needs of countries are being met.

### **(iii) Key results and accomplishments**

The Committee on Statistics focused its strategic direction in December 2010 on two overarching goals of (a) ensuring that all countries in the region by 2020 have the capability to provide an agreed basic range of population, economic, social and environmental statistics, and (b) creating a more adaptive and cost-effective information management environment for national statistical offices through stronger collaboration.

Endorsement by the Committee on Statistics of a core set of economic statistics as a regional framework to focus national efforts, coordinate training and mobilize donor support for capacity-building, as well as of a regional programme for the improvement of economic statistics.

Endorsement for the development, by ESCAP and FAO, of a regional implementation plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics.

Support by Committee for the full development and implementation of a regional programme for improving vital statistics.

Agreement with country partners and the Washington Group on disability measurement on measures, tested both cognitively and in the field, for the collection of disability data that are comparable across countries and in line with the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

Led a region-wide initiative to strengthen national capacities in collecting, disseminating and using data on violence against women.

Establishment of a Partnership for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific, in December 2010, with the purpose of improving the combined impact of capacity building

activities through enhanced coordination, synergy and complementarity among international agencies and donors, and to align its work with priorities outlined by the Committee on Statistics and the global Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.

Updates on regional, sub-regional and national development trends, including progress in achieving the MDGs. In 2010, ESCAP continued to produce statistical analyses of most recent development trends which underpin regional MDG reports and other publications and contributed to high-level dialogues about inclusive and sustainable development.

The addition of interactive tools (animated graphs and maps) increased the visibility of statistical databases maintained by ESCAP, reinforcing its role as a key data reference for the region on development issues.

Feedback provided by senior managers who participated at the SIAP Ninth Management Seminar for the Heads of NSOs, indicated that a majority of them had acquired substantive knowledge on important and emerging issues relevant to building necessary institutional capacity, and that the seminar had also contributed to strengthening their management skills.

In the past year, 443 government officials/statisticians have developed their skills and improved their knowledge in official statistics, including internationally agreed standards, methods and frameworks for statistical activities in the following areas: (i) promoting the use of and generating quality and reliable data to monitor the progress of MDGs; (ii) implementing the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA); and (iii) improving the use of ICT in processing, analysis and dissemination of data.

**Box 6: Core set of economic statistics**

The Committee on Statistics endorsed at its second session in December 2010 a core set of economic statistics needed to inform short and long-term economic analyses and decision-making by both government and non-government agencies and organizations. The core set delineates a clear and achievable target for the region by identifying the minimum set of economic statistics that all countries in Asia and the Pacific should have the capacity to produce by 2020 after taking into account their varying needs, and as such serves as a framework for focusing related regional capacity building efforts, including through the mobilization of donor funding and the coordination of training.

***Subprogramme 8: Subregional activities for development***

Given the vast coverage and diversity of the Asian-Pacific region, ESCAP's programme on subregional activities for development strengthens the Commission's presence and engagement at the subregional level in order to better target and deliver programmes that address specific key priorities, including poverty reduction and sustainable development, of member States in the respective subregions.

The programme on subregional activities provides more focused and in-depth technical assistance to address key development challenges, including capacity-building activities, through the provision, on request, of advisory services, the organization of training workshops and the implementation of field projects. The subregional work also serves as catalyst to operationalize the analytical and normative work of ESCAP at the subregional and national levels.

ESCAP's work on subregional activities for development cover five subregions:

### ***1) Subregional office for the Pacific***

#### **(i) Introduction**

The ESCAP Pacific Office and the subprogramme on development of Pacific island countries and territories address issues faced by the 12 members and 7 associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The countries in the Pacific form a very diverse group. Development challenges faced by small atoll island countries are substantially different from resource and land-rich countries such as Papua New Guinea. In spite of such differences, many of the Pacific Island countries are confronted with similar adversities characterized by their geographic disadvantages of remoteness, smallness and dispersion. As small island developing States, these countries also face high food, transport and development costs and limited opportunities for realizing economies-of-scale.

There are issues - for example, rapid population growth, shortage of professional and technical skills, paucity of domestic savings and vulnerability to external shocks - that could be alleviated through policy measures. However, most of the challenges faced by Pacific SIDS are structural.

Climate change and resulting sea level rise is at present the most critical threat to the sustainable development of PICs. The long-term effects of climate change may even threaten the very existence of some of them. Pacific Island countries also face a high degree of exposure to natural disasters which are becoming more frequent due to climate change. The frequent natural disasters and climate change, also reflect "market failures" arising out of structural weaknesses in national and global economic systems.

#### **(ii) Programme Focus**

The subprogramme focuses on strengthening institutional capacities of governments, especially in the least developed countries of the Pacific, to formulate and implement evidence-based sustainable development policies. The mandates for EPO's Capacity Development Program come from the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI) and its recently concluded 5 year review.

The overall focus of the Program is on enhancing national sustainable development strategies and processes, which remain the main national institutional framework for implementing the MSI and addressing the vulnerabilities of SIDS. It will also specifically address some of the policy and structural issues faced by vulnerable groups, especially women and youth; support the shift from a “grow-now-and-clean-up-later” development model to one (i.e., green growth) that can decouple economic growth from environmental pressures; assist Pacific SIDS with their participation in regional and global policy meetings and reviews; and, in support of these goals, enhance the capacity of Pacific SIDS for evidence-based policy and planning. The emphasis will also continue to be placed on knowledge sharing and networking, including through the dissemination of good practices for adaptation, experience sharing and replication.

The multi-disciplinary nature of ESCAP’s makeup and expertise is an advantage when dealing with the multi-dimensional and structural challenges facing the Pacific. The EPO will attempt to unleash the potential for further intra-regional cooperation--in trade/infrastructure policy and facilitation, finance, development assistance, and environment/resource management--where ESCAP has the comparative advantage of the regional/policy mandate and expertise.

The program also focuses on creating one sub-regional voice on critical issues such as natural disasters and climate change, and voicing the position of Pacific SIDS in Commission sessions and other policy meetings and dialogues at the regional and global levels such as in Millennium Development Goals Summit, Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, RIO + 20.

### **(iii) Overall Results**

#### **(1) Policy Advocacy and Research**

As a result of ECSCAP Pacific Office’s advocacy effort, at the Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Development and Green Growth, 28-29 September 2010, Astana, Kazakhstan, Pacific delegates agreed to undertake a number of actions in the Pacific Subregion to further promote green growth strategy implementation as one approach to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and inclusive and sustainable development.

At the meeting in Astana, Pacific leaders also further agreed to facilitate South-South cooperation for sharing of knowledge, good practices and technical expertise.

#### **(2) Analysis and Dissemination**

Pacific Island States’ use of statistics in policy and decision-making and to better measure progress towards achievement of the MDGs was strengthened through workshops organized by the ESCAP Pacific Office in 2010. The EPO website serves as an e-knowledge centre for its work on sustainable development, statistics, disability, connectivity, and urban issues across countries of the Pacific.

### **(3) Engagement with policy makers and other stake holders**

At the 66th ESCAP Commission Session, resolution 66/2 was adopted to review the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation to address the vulnerabilities of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and 66/7 was adopted to address growing urbanization under the Pacific Urban Agenda.

The ESCAP Pacific Office provided technical assistance to Pacific island countries on drafting their national disability plans. The Office also jointly provided assistance, with the UN Human Settlements Programme, on urban planning issues.

An agreement with Youth With a Mission (YWAM) in Apia, Samoa will provide biogas technology as an affordable renewable energy source for households. While generating income for poor households, the project will also reduce environmental pollution caused by organic material such as animal, human and kitchen waste. The ESCAP Pacific Office along with ESCAP Environment and Development Division assisted YWAM to build a model biogas digester.

### **(iv) Outlook for the next year**

The Programme for 2011 and 2012 will focus on the implementation of the MSI+5 review and MCED-6 outcomes and on the preparations for Rio+20 which provide the new impetus and the coordination frameworks through which EPO will work with all other partners and stakeholders in addressing the “unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States” (GA Res/65/2). In terms of environmental impact, the subprogramme will undertake more analysis to examine the impact of climate change on gender and mitigation measures to include targeted policies for women.

The Sub Programme will also provide governments of Pacific Island countries assistance in capacity development for design and implementation of policy measures to mitigate the adverse impact of continuing crises in the form of high food and fuel prices.

To better meet the needs of Pacific Island countries, the programme aims to expand its scope of social policy advisory services from disability issues and include other critical areas such as social protection. It is expected that this extended range of advisory services on social policy will assist island countries to break the circuit of vicious inter-generational cycles of poverty, hunger, lack of education and poor health care facilities.

Finally, the sub programme will provide technical assistance for member countries to enhance their statistical capacities for better measuring their MDG performance including better gender statistics for formulating evidence-based policies.

## **2) *Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia***

### **(i) Introduction**

The subprogramme on the development of countries of East and North-East Asia addresses socio-economic development issues faced by six members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, namely China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation.

Countries in this subregion represent the primary economic growth engine of the region. At the same time, the diversity of the subregion enhances economic complementarities and opens up opportunities to expand and deepen a wide range of economic and social relations.

Notwithstanding strong economic growth and steady progress in the achievement of MDGs, the subregion faces development challenges that can be addressed through all-inclusive policy measures formulated on the basis of careful analysis of subregional trends such as widening social and economic disparities between and within countries of the subregion including wide-spread poverty in select geographic areas, increased frequencies of natural disasters, high energy-intensive and resources-dependent societies causing environmental degradation, less-than-adequate trade and transport infrastructure, rapid urbanization and industrialization, population ageing, high youth unemployment, domestic rural-to-urban and international economic migration, and the need for protection of vulnerable groups especially in times of food and fuel price increases.

Many of these challenges can be overcome by ensuring closer collaboration amongst governments in the subregion, and by closely integrating civil society with policy formulation.

### **(ii) Programme Focus**

The subprogramme focuses on addressing subregion-specific development priorities, promoting knowledge sharing and subregional cooperation for advancing sustainable development, strengthening partnerships with civil society and other key development partners, and further enhancing the relevance of the Commission's work in the subregion.

The substantive priority areas of the Office are environment, energy efficiency, poverty reduction, transport and trade facilitation, and ICT/disaster risk reduction. To better address subregional environmental challenges, the activity scope of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) has been expanded to cover transboundary air pollution, nature conservation, eco-efficiency partnerships and mitigating the impact of dust and sandstorms.

In programming its activities, the SRO-ENEA will draw from the multi-disciplinary nature of ESCAP's work, and seek to strengthen intra-regional and inter-



disciplinary collaboration in pursuing a people-centered all-inclusive development agenda for the subregion.

### **(iii) Overall Results**

#### **(1) Policy Advocacy and Research**

The consultation meeting held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in November 2010 identified opportunities to further support member states towards achieving MDGs in the subregion by, inter alia, strengthening civil society participation in designing, collecting and disseminating statistical data and to enhance subregional cooperation and integration in formulating member states' approach towards implementing regional and global mandates.

The SRO-ENEA organized a cluster discussion on promoting south-south and triangular cooperation at the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and other Development Gaps faced by Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in April 2011. Discussions identified areas of south-south and triangular cooperation in support of accelerated development of the LLDCs.

#### **(2) Analysis and Dissemination**

Concerning the achievement of MDGs, the SRO-ENEA collaborated with SIAP and the ESCAP Statistics Division as well as Korea Statistics in organizing a Subregional Training/Workshop on Dissemination and Communication of MDG Statistics for Effective Use in Policy and Decision Making.

As the Secretariat for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), the SRO-ENEA organized a number of workshops and Expert Group Meetings to strengthen dialogue among member states on nature conservation in transboundary areas, on subregional cooperation to address transboundary air pollution and on mechanisms to mitigate the occurrence and impact of dust and sandstorms. These workshops and meeting resulted in enhanced understanding by policy makers of the essence of multi-lateral cooperation in addressing transboundary issues.

In strengthening its outreach, including enhancing ESCAP visibility in the subregion, the SRO-ENEA issues periodic newsletters. The newsletters represent the concerted efforts of ESCAP to use knowledge and experience sharing as drivers of change at both regional and subregional levels, focusing on all levels of stakeholders.

The NEASPEC website serves as an e-knowledge centre for the Secretariat's work on environmental challenges across the subregion. The SRO-ENEA website which is under construction will focus on ESCAP's work in the subregion on sustainable development, connectivity, statistics, and social protection.

### (3) Engagement with Policy Makers and other Stake Holders

During its first year of operation, the SRO-ENEA expanded on existing partnerships and developed new ones with the wider UN system, multilateral agencies and government agencies, research/ academic institutions, civil society. The partnership ensured an all-inclusive exchange of views and knowledge on subregional challenges towards setting a sustainable development agenda and identifying areas of subregional cooperation. The SRO-ENEA identified opportunities for enhanced partnership with the Secretariat of the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) through joint contributions to multilateral cooperation in the subregion since both organizations share various common areas of interest and activities and similar membership. The SRO-ENEA participated in events on energy and environment, respectively, held by the GTI and had a series of consultations on the areas and modality of collaboration.

Concerning the organization of statistics workshops, the SRO-ENEA initiated the participation of civil society participants from North-East Asia who joined government policy makers and national statisticians in the workshop, thereby adding a new dimension to statistics development by sharing their needs, interests, and challenges, as end-users of statistical data. The workshop allowed participants to identify necessary supplemental elements of data collection and dissemination, arriving at all-inclusive approaches towards generating and communicating MDG statistics.

#### **(iv) Outlook for the next year**

The Programme of Work for 2011 and 2012 will be centered around (i) inclusive development, (ii) energy security and environmental sustainability, (iii) subregional connectivity including trade, investment and transport, (iv) subregional mechanisms on disaster risk reduction, (v) increased collaboration between policy makers and civil society, and (vi) south-south cooperation.

### **3) *Subregional Office for North and Central Asia***

(Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) Afghanistan will participate in activities relating to Central Asia as a member of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

In 2011, ESCAP opened its Almaty Kazakhstan Office, providing closer links to subregional initiatives between the countries of Central Asia working to increase connectivity and paving the way for new initiatives in Central Asia. ESCAP works closely with the Economic Commission for Europe in overseeing the work of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

### **4) *Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia***

(Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey). This Subregional Office will be established in New Delhi, India.

**5) *Subregional Office for South-East Asia***

(Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam).

Subregional activities for South-East Asia are coordinated through ESCAP Headquarters in Bangkok.

## **B. REGIONAL INSTITUTES: COMPLEMENTING THE WORK OF THE SUB-PROGRAMMES**

**The Regional Institutes** – In Beijing, China, Delhi, India, Bogor, Indonesia, Chiba, Japan, and in Incheon, Republic of Korea, ESCAP-affiliated institutes provide cutting edge research and policy development for the benefit of agriculturalists, government agencies, science and research organizations across Asia and the Pacific.

Two ESCAP regional institutions, the Asia Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) and Asia-Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (APCAEM) have increased their activities in promoting regional cooperation for the transfer and development of technologies and machinery in support of inclusive and sustainable development, including climate-smart technologies.

In 2010 APCTT focused on (i) promoting the development of institutional cooperation mechanisms to promote renewable energy technology in the Asia-Pacific region; and (ii) promoting National Innovation Systems (NIS) in the Asia-Pacific region. In its work, special attention is paid to strengthening technology transfer capacity of SMEs and sharing information on global technological policies, markets, innovations and events. APCTT is currently developing a training manual on planning and implementing technology transfer.

APCAEM concluded project work on the Clean Development Mechanism, specifically related to the conservation of agricultural and household biogas. As part of this work, the Center prepared a study on the status of agricultural mechanization in six countries in Asia and the feasibility of establishing an Asian-Pacific network for testing agricultural machinery. APCAEM implemented stage two of its hybrid rice project in 2010. Technical experts were assigned to agricultural research institutes of participating countries to advise local trainers on how to adapt the technology to local conditions and monitor the training of local farmers and address their concerns through participatory engagement. In Myanmar, APCAEM piloted a learning project in post-harvest technologies to reduce post-harvest losses in rice.

APCAEM developed a draft proposal to establish an Asian-Pacific Network for Testing Agricultural Machinery (ANTAM) for sharing and disseminating good practices in the area of agricultural technology and machinery testing leading to greater farmers' access to quality and affordable agricultural machinery and farm implements based on findings of a feasibility study on the status of agricultural mechanization in six countries in Asia.

## **ESCAP'S INSTITUTES: APCICT: Bridging the digital divide**

### **Box 1: APCICT - Bridging the digital divide**

APCICT organized 21 workshops and learning events in partnership with national Governments, training institutions, academia and the private sector, including the roll out of the “Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders” programme in five new countries. Another 24 Academy workshops and events were organized by APCICT’s partners utilizing the Academy modules independent of APCICT’s support, indicating strong field uptake of the programme. Moreover, the online distance learning version of the Academy, called APCICT Virtual Academy (AVA), continued to expand. Overall, a total of 4,992 participants were reached through APCICT or its partner organized/supported events, as well as APCICT’s online training.

## **ESCAP'S INSTITUTES: SIAP: Learning policy innovation through numbers**

### **Box 2: SIAP - Learning Policy Innovation Through Numbers**

ESCAP also made contributions towards increasing national statistical capacity through the activities of SIAP, in particular, through its statistical training networks. A total of 443 government officials/statisticians developed their skills and improved their knowledge in official statistics, including internationally agreed standards, methods and frameworks in a number of areas. Course work can be offered on the SIAP campus in Chiba, Japan, or by distance learning, or in national capitals.

## **ESCAP'S INSTITUTES: CAPSA: Rice production and climate change**

### **Box 3: Rice Production and Climate Change: ESCAP identifies the links**

ESCAP’s Bogor-based Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA) produced cutting edge research in 2010: the Center’s El Nino project conducted studies of climate change in the context of rice productivity. Three rounds of research completed in the past year contributed to academic literature and forecast the impact of climate change on rice production in Malaysia, Viet Nam and Indonesia, based on advanced crop modeling and economic regression models. All three studies showed that climate change is affecting Southeast Asia’s weather patterns and crop productivity. The results showed that impact is highly location specific and requires location specific responses. The results highlight the urgent need to think further and in collaboration with research and advocacy partners across the region, on how the use of traditional crops, improved agronomic practices, crop breeding and new technologies can enhance the resilience of agricultural systems to climate change. CAPSA’s findings have been included, to date, in three journal articles and one book.

## *A Forum for the Region and a Forum for Change*

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **A. BRINGING ASIA TOGETHER**

ESCAP is a forum for its member States, with Commission Sessions and other established meetings and gatherings providing an opportunity for Asia and the Pacific's governments and policy makers to foster and agree to social and economic development approaches at regional and sub regional levels, assisting countries in building and sustaining economic growth and social equity.

- Giving Asia and the Pacific a stronger co-ordinated voice by building stronger collective leadership, capacities to dialogue, negotiate and shape the development agenda. Giving stronger participation to the smaller and often left out voices of the region, the least developed countries, the small island states, the landlocked states.
- Seeking support across Asia and the Pacific for common sets of standards, norms and approaches to inclusive and sustainable development – members states working together to achieve greater progress at the regional level.
- Within the United Nations family, the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) brings together the executive heads of 30 UN regional and subregional entities and affiliated offices, and seeks to maximize coherence, and synergy from the efforts of regional UN entities towards specific issues. As the UN regional commission, ESCAP supports the mechanism, with the Executive Secretary of ESCAP chairing RCM meetings. RCM thematic working groups promote improved UN regional cooperation on specific operational and programmatic issues, including poverty, international migration including human trafficking and gender equality and empowerment of women.

#### **B. ESCAP IN 2010: THE FORUM OF IDEAS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

The past year offered many opportunities for ESCAP's work to bring about greater regional cooperation. In particular, ESCAP's region-wide role as a convener of member States resulted in a series of critical gatherings that reflected the challenges facing the region today and the urgency of response necessary.

Through the Incheon Declaration the Commission recommitted itself to, among other things: strengthening its efforts to sustain the economic recovery underway in Asia and the Pacific, to assist countries in seeking to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, to strengthen environmental sustainability and to recognize the concerns of

countries with special needs (least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition).

ESCAP also produced its recognized publications, including its flagship *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, the *Statistical Yearbook*, the *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2010*, and the new *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2010*, which was developed to help improve policy-makers' understanding of both the risks and effects of disasters in the ESCAP subregions. Initiatives to promote the concept of regional connectivity throughout Asia and the Pacific moved forward. Priorities continued to focus on realizing the vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system, with the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks as the two major building blocks and dry ports as an additional important component. The Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum established itself as the leading regional forum to discuss issues of trade facilitation and paperless trade, while advocacy efforts led to the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific (MCED-6) adopting a Ministerial Declaration, the Astana Green Bridge Initiative and a regional action plan to promote environmental sustainability.

In continuing its commitment to supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, ESCAP, the United Nations Development Programme and the Asian Development Bank jointly issued two highly-praised reports: *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in an Era of Global Uncertainty: Asia-Pacific Regional Report 2009/10* and *Paths to 2015 MDG Priorities in Asia and the Pacific*. ESCAP assessed progress, identified gaps and built consensus among member States on the implementation of international and regional commitments pertaining to social development, in particular, on ageing, disability, migration and gender equality. ESCAP also was able to establish regional positions and requirements for a series of meetings and review conferences related to the Millennium Development Goals, including those on the least developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island developing States (SIDS).

The opening of the Incheon, Korea-located subregional office for North and North East Asia in 2010 provides new connections between ESCAP's policy work and the work of member State governments at subregional and national levels. ESCAP's Pacific Office further strengthened its engagement with member countries, leading to the active participation of the Pacific island States at the Commission session.

An update of the report *Striving Together: ASEAN and the UN* reflected the unprecedented collaboration between the Southeast Asia subregional body and the United Nations, charting a new path of partnership that includes work together in post-Cyclone Nargis Myanmar and greater substantive collaboration in implementing a Connectivity Agenda for the ASEAN member states. ESCAP has bolstered the partnership by utilizing the Regional Coordination Mechanism of UN agencies to marshal resources and support for countries.

## C. ESCAP'S CHALLENGE IN THE COMING YEARS

### *Transforming Asia and the Pacific through a Strengthened and Improved Plan of Work for 2011-2012*

Asia and the Pacific, more than any other region in the world, will see more change and experience greater transformation in the coming years, as the region's economic strength plays a greater role in the global economy and as its population centers struggle to overcome the burdens of poverty, hunger, natural disasters and the limitations of finite resources and social inequalities.

In 2011, ESCAP seeks to increase its work at the subregional level, strengthening our presence and initiatives in the Pacific Islands, Central Asia, Northeast Asia as well as in South Asia and Southeast Asia. With the opening of further subregional offices, ESCAP will possess the ability to carry out its mandated responsibilities in a broader number of arenas and forums of interest to our member states. The expansion of ESCAP's operating area through subregional offices will bring the participation of municipal and local officials from member states into the growing networks that ESCAP has established and cultivates on a range of development issues, sharing the initiatives and innovative policy approaches that ESCAP helps to succeed and promote – fostering ideas and policies from one state to many states, and in subregions as across the entire region.

Increasing resources for member states by engaging development partners across the region will be a critical step forward for ESCAP, a direction we have already begun in the past year's activities. With support from our member states, we seek to increase our cooperation and activities agreed to with government, private sector and foundation development partners, both within Asia and the Pacific and from other regions, with a special emphasis on seeking to increase non-traditional south-south forms of development assistance.

An increasing number of ESCAP initiatives will be cross-cutting, seeking to combine the ideas and innovative approaches of ESCAP offices and inputs from member States into comprehensive policy initiatives to intensify results and outcomes that improve the lives of the region's people. While we will continue to work with government representatives and officials in raising normative standards across the region, especially in addressing inter regional issues, we will also seek to increase technical assistance that ESCAP can offer directly to those countries most in need.

In the field of sustainable development, for example, there has been a three-fold interest and demand from the region's governments for ESCAP's assistance and policy inputs in the five years since "green growth" was adopted as one of several regional approaches to sustainable development. ESCAP is working to devise suitable modalities to allow larger numbers of policy makers and government officials to have access to ESCAP knowledge and training.



ESCAP has also changed the way it does its work; we have sought to make our activities more inclusive and our operating practices more substantial and transparent. In the past year, ESCAP has undergone a comprehensive internal review and assessment of its operations and has determined and made a number of critical changes to procedures to enhance organizational effectiveness. Periodic evaluations of ESCAP's work by auditors and by UN Secretariat review offices help ensure that our resources are used appropriately and effectively. A mid-term review of the conference structure will allow member states to re-target ESCAP's priorities and ensure that governments are best positioned to take advantage of the work that ESCAP offers.

Within the United Nations system, ESCAP is taking part in an overall global review of the UN's regional commissions that can result in a redefining of the regional consultative mechanism of the UN Secretariat, to better reflect needs and challenges in an increasingly inter-connected world. ESCAP is contributing to initiatives for reform of the overall UN system, as directed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

With these changes, and transformations in how our work is performed and in deepening the professional capacities of our staff and resources, ESCAP will continue to enhance its role as a critical resource and regional hub for innovation for countries and states in Asia and the Pacific seeking to improve the lives of their people.