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Management issues: Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions

Overview of technical cooperation activities and extrabudgetary contributions

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document affords an overview of the secretariat's technical cooperation work in 2012. It contains a description of trends in technical cooperation to meet current and emerging development challenges in the region, particularly the growing focus on South-South cooperation and capacity development. It also contains a summary of the financial contributions made available to the secretariat in 2012 for technical cooperation work, details on the delivery of technical cooperation in 2012 and steps taken by the secretariat to strengthen both its technical cooperation work and relations with partners and donors.

The Commission may wish to review the present document and provide the secretariat with guidance on the development, direction and priorities of its technical cooperation work.

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* E/ESCAP/69/L.1.

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I. Trends and developments in the ESCAP technical cooperation programme in 2012

A. Introduction

1. Over the past decade, there have been marked changes in the context of development cooperation. These changes include: (a) the emergence of a growing number of middle-income countries, many of which are becoming providers of development resources in their own right; (b) the growth of “new regionalism”, as countries increasingly consider regional solutions to regional and national challenges; and (c) a shift to a greater focus on inclusive partnerships with all stakeholders.

2. The increased emphasis on South-South cooperation accentuates the critical role of ESCAP in development cooperation in the region. As the most comprehensive multilateral platform for promoting cooperation among Governments and other stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP considers South-South cooperation as a core component of its role, with capacity development as the primary focus of its technical cooperation work.

3. The importance for the United Nations development system to work together with all relevant partners, including at the regional level, was recently reaffirmed by the General Assembly. In the context of the recent quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the General Assembly recognized “...the importance of the United Nations development system increasing capacity to engage in results-oriented innovative national, regional and global partnerships, with diverse stakeholders, including international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and foundations”, and encouraged “the United Nations development system to intensify its collaboration with these stakeholders”.¹

4. In the context of improving the functioning of the United Nations development system at the regional level, the General Assembly at the same time encouraged “... resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to draw more upon the normative support work and policy expertise that exists within the regional commissions, and requests the regional commissions to

¹ See General Assembly resolution 67/226, chap. I, para. 20.

further develop their analytical capacities to support country-level development initiatives, at the request of the programme countries...”²

5. The secretariat’s capacity development work in 2012 continued to be guided by a set of higher-level overarching capacity-development project documents for the period 2011-2013. Achievement of results through strengthened results-based management is emphasized in these documents, including through a stronger focus on monitoring and evaluation to ensure the secretariat’s accountability to its member States and the donor community and to facilitate learning and ongoing improvement in performance. In the documents, emphasis is also given to partnerships with other stakeholders, strengthening interdivisional collaboration within the secretariat and identifying all the funding sources for each project to facilitate the identification of gaps to be addressed. The secretariat has started to identify lessons from this approach, with a view to further improve its focus on results, performance, accountability and learning in its capacity development work after 2013 in the evolving regional context for development cooperation.

B. Enhancing coordination with other United Nations agencies

6. Strong partnerships and coordination with other agencies in the United Nations system within the framework of system-wide coherence and the United Nations “delivering as one” initiative at the regional level are vital to ensuring the effectiveness of the capacity-development work of ESCAP. One key vehicle for enhancing such partnerships is the regional coordination mechanism (RCM) convened by ESCAP.

7. Much of the work of RCM in 2012 was focused on the articulation of Asian and Pacific perspectives on the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, including through preparations for, and subsequent implementation of, the decisions made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). The 18th annual RCM session on 19 December 2012 and ad hoc meetings on 9 February 2012 and 2 August 2012 were dedicated largely to the topic. This work has resulted, among other things, in: (a) agreement among RCM members to develop a strategic framework for development cooperation for the region in conjunction with the United Nations Development Group Asia-Pacific; (b) the articulation of views by a large number of policymakers and stakeholders from across the region obtained through a series of subregional workshops held throughout 2012 and early 2013 as input for the *Asia-Pacific MDG Report 2012/13*, which is jointly prepared by ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme; and (c) an enhanced role for RCM in knowledge-sharing, including through the RCM website,³ which has become a repository of information on events and resources related to the work of all United Nations entities in the region concerning processes relating to Rio+20 and the development agenda beyond 2015.

8. RCM promotes improved regional cooperation on specific operational and programmatic issues through its thematic working groups. Highlights of the work of the seven such groups in 2012 include: (a) agreement on an interagency strategy for the improvement of gender statistics under the Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women; (b) production of an

² Ibid., chap. IV, para. 150.

³ See www.rcm-asiapacific-un.org.

inter-agency publication⁴ for Rio+20; (c) formulation of a regional implementation plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics; (d) implementation of the Secretary-General's Joint Action Plan for Women's and Children's Health; (e) preparation of a situation report on international migration;⁵ and (f) ongoing implementation at the regional level of the Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, including through the Asia-Pacific regional commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

9. In addition to facilitating policy consensus, coordination and information-sharing at the regional level, another aim under RCM is for the United Nations system to work coherently and effectively at the global and national levels. In the context of promoting global policy coherence, RCM hosted ad hoc meetings with: Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, on 23 January 2012; Ms. Valerie Amos, Emergency Relief Coordinator of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on 23 March 2012; Mr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, on 16 May 2012; Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, on 6 June 2012; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna, on 28 November 2012; Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, on 6 December 2012; and Mr. Guy Ryder, Director-General of International Labour Organization (ILO), on 14 December 2012.

10. Engagement by the secretariat in the work of the United Nations Development Group Asia-Pacific (UNDG A-P), which is focused on United Nations coordination at the country level, provides another important means for enhancing cooperation with United Nations counterparts. The establishment in 2012 of the Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth, both as an RCM thematic working group and a UNDG A-P working group, is a further effort towards strengthening synergies in the United Nations system between the regional and national levels.

11. ESCAP partnerships for capacity development are further underpinned by memorandums of understanding that provide frameworks for cooperation with 25 United Nations entities and other organizations. Annual formal consultations were held with ADB in July 2012 and ILO in November 2012. Both consultations reviewed results achieved and prioritized cooperation in 2012. With ADB, the main areas of cooperation are: helping countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals; water; environment; climate change; statistics; social protection; and regional connectivity. With ILO, collaboration is taking place in the areas of social protection, statistics, macroeconomic and labour market policies, green economy and green jobs, and youth employment and entrepreneurship.

⁴ *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience: Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/2600). Available from www.unescap.org/esd/environment/flagpubs/ggrap/documents/Full-Report.pdf.

⁵ *Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia* (ST/ESCAP/2622). Available from www.unescap.org/sdd/publications/SituationReport/SDD-Sit-Rep-book.pdf.

C. Mobilizing resources and partnerships

12. The secretariat, through the Programme Planning and Partnerships Division, initiated a number of measures and actions during 2012 to step up relations with development partners and donors. These included: (a) in April 2012 broadening the annual consultation with the Republic of Korea to include several agencies that are ESCAP partners and donors in the delivery of its technical cooperation programme;⁶ (b) discussions with other existing and potential donors, including China, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the European Union, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Hilti Foundation, Microsoft Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation; and (c) a side event at the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on enhancing partnerships and collaboration among ESCAP regional institutes with development partners. A broader multi-donor consultation is planned for 2013 to enhance engagement with current and potential donors and promote awareness of the role, priorities and approaches of ESCAP in the region.

13. To underpin such initiatives, the secretariat continued to develop and improve tools to enhance its visibility with and outreach to partners and donors, including through an internal donor profile system and the ESCAP website, which in 2012 featured a dedicated “Partners” page.⁷ Furthermore, following the sixty-eighth session of the Commission, the secretariat held a workshop for staff on success stories in resource mobilization; that activity drew on in-house experiences, practices and lessons.

14. The importance of the private sector as a partner of the secretariat in promoting and delivering capacity development is increasing. In this context, ESCAP concluded agreements during 2012 with, among others, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., the Hilti Foundation and the Nippon Foundation.

15. In recognition of increasing private sector engagement, the secretariat in 2012 established the Task Force on Private Sector Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, the brief of which is to examine and develop a substrategy on collaborating with the private sector supplementary to the resource mobilization strategy adopted in 2011. The Task Force is expected to complete its work by the middle of 2013.

II. Delivering the ESCAP technical cooperation programme in 2012

A. Contributions to the ESCAP technical cooperation programme in 2012

16. For the purpose of the present document, technical cooperation focusing on capacity development is defined as encompassing: (a) policy advocacy and dialogue on critical and emerging issues, including follow-up to global and regional commitments; (b) regional knowledge-networking aimed at enabling

⁶ The following government agencies in the Republic of Korea are donors and partners of ESCAP in delivery of its technical cooperation programme: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Ministry of Unification; Ministry of Health and Welfare; Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA); Korea Communications Commission (KCC); Korea Maritime Institute (KMI); Korea Energy Economics Institute (KEEI); Korea Energy Management Corporation (KEMCO); Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO); and Korea Expressway Corporation (KEC).

⁷ See www.unescap.org/partners.

the members and associate members of ESCAP to share and discuss information and experiences on good and innovative practices; and (c) training, advisory services and other forms of technical assistance aimed at strengthening the capacity of the members and associate members of ESCAP to formulate and implement effective policies and programmes in a range of key development areas.

17. ESCAP technical cooperation work in 2012 was funded from both the regular budget of the United Nations and extrabudgetary resources. The regular budget comprised the regular programme of technical cooperation (section 23) and the United Nations Development Account (section 36). Extrabudgetary resources comprised voluntary contributions provided by individual Governments, entities of the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations, the business sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Such contributions were provided as cash (funds-in-trust) or assistance in kind, including the secondment of experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis and the provision of host facilities and equipment.

18. The total cash contributions received by ESCAP in 2012 for technical cooperation, from sources within and outside the United Nations, amounted to \$17,853,908.93, an increase of 14.9 per cent over that of 2011. Bilateral voluntary cash contributions by ESCAP member and non-member States remained the main source of extrabudgetary funding. Summaries of the financial contributions by source in both United States dollars and percentage terms are provided in table 1.

19. Donor countries contributed \$8,891,340.90 of the total funds received in 2012, of which approximately 75.9 per cent was received from developing member countries. Further details on the extrabudgetary resources (funds-in-trust) received from bilateral sources are provided in annex I to the present document. The largest aggregate bilateral donor contribution was received from the Republic of Korea.

20. The United Nations contributed a total of \$6,344,343.64 from various sources, including section 23 and funding from other United Nations entities, representing 35.5 per cent of the total funds received in 2012 (see table 1).

Table 1
Summary of financial contributions in 2012, by source

<i>Source</i>	<i>United States dollars</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
(a) Donor countries (see annex I)	8 891 340.90	49.8
(b) United Nations system		
1. United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation (section 23)	3 075 100.00	17.2
2. United Nations Development Account (section 36)	2 454 000.00	13.7
3. United Nations Development Programme	153 047.98	0.9
4. United Nations Population Fund	417 928.52	2.3
5. Other United Nations agencies and bodies	244 267.14	1.4
(c) Other organizations (see annex II)	2 618 224.39	14.7
Total	17 853 908.93	100.0

21. Other intergovernmental organizations, the business sector and NGOs contributed \$2,618,224.39 of the total funds received in 2012. The three largest contributors under this category were the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the International Development Research Centre of Canada and the Korea Maritime Institute. More detailed information on contributions from other intergovernmental organizations, the business sector and NGOs is given in annex II to the present document.

22. In addition, ESCAP member States and 1 NGO also provided, on a non-reimbursable loan basis, a total of 88 work-months of services of experts in various disciplines. Further details are provided in annex III.

23. The volume of the secretariat's technical cooperation delivery in 2012 in financial terms totalled approximately \$16.3 million. Of that amount, approximately \$13.1 million was delivered under the technical cooperation programme implemented by ESCAP operational divisions and offices, as well as agencies under the ESCAP-administered Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries. Approximately \$6.3 million was utilized for institutional support of the regional institutions and subregional offices, including their technical cooperation and capacity-development work. Approximately \$1.97 million was utilized from the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation (section 23) and \$1.2 million from the United Nations Development Account (section 36).

24. The distribution of extrabudgetary resources to the eight subprogrammes of ESCAP in 2012 is shown in table 2.

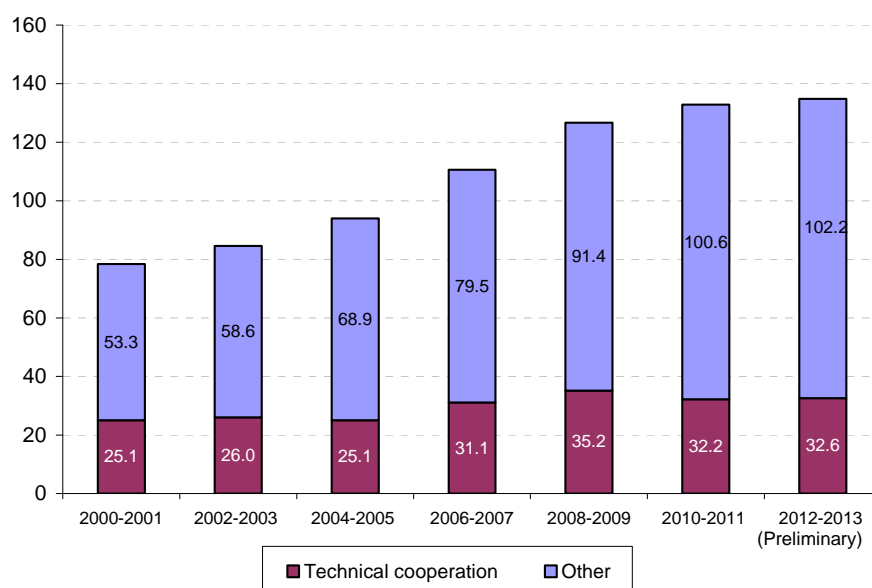
Table 2
Distribution of extrabudgetary contributions to ESCAP subprogrammes in 2012

<i>ESCAP subprogrammes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Subprogramme 1: Macroeconomic policy and inclusive development	3.0
Subprogramme 2: Trade and investment	14.0
Subprogramme 3: Transport	5.0
Subprogramme 4: Environment and development	28.0
Subprogramme 5: Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction	26.0
Subprogramme 6: Social development	6.0
Subprogramme 7: Statistics	15.0
Subprogramme 8: Subregional activities for development	3.0

25. The evolution of the expenditures for technical cooperation as a portion of total ESCAP expenditures over the past 13 years is shown in the figure.

Figure
Evolution of ESCAP expenditures, 2000-2013

(Millions of United States dollars)



26. As indicated above, capacity development remained the main driver of the secretariat's technical cooperation work during 2011, closely linked to the policy consensus-building, normative and analytical roles of ESCAP at the regional and subregional levels. Through various modalities, such as analytical studies, training workshops, advisory services, communities of practice and networks to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and good practice, ESCAP continued to provide a vital platform for the sharing of knowledge, information

and experience among member States within the Asian and Pacific region. The diversity and scope of the technical cooperation work of ESCAP through its subprogrammes (including the regional institutions and subregional offices) to address the priorities of member States is illustrated in the subprogramme overview (E/ESCAP/69/3).

B. Highlights of evaluation work in 2012

27. Evaluation in the ESCAP context is part of the organization's ongoing efforts towards improving the results, focus and quality of technical cooperation work through enhanced organizational learning and strengthening accountability to member States. While evaluation has long been an integral part of the work of the secretariat, ESCAP senior management reinforced the importance of the evaluation function by establishing in 2012 an evaluation unit as a distinct organizational entity under the Programme Planning and Partnerships Division. The core functions of that unit are to coordinate the implementation of the ESCAP biennial evaluation plan and oversee the process and quality of evaluations in accordance with ESCAP evaluation guidelines, the rules and regulations of the United Nations Secretariat and the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group. The evaluation unit also plays a critical role in ensuring that evaluation findings and recommendations are used effectively for accountability and organizational learning, and that follow-up actions to evaluation recommendations are implemented.

28. In 2012, the ESCAP secretariat commissioned two evaluations and three evaluative reviews and continued to coordinate the implementation of follow-up actions to recommendations from completed evaluations. A particular result of the evaluative work undertaken in 2012 was the further integration of the work of the subregional offices and the substantive divisions through the formulation and adoption by the secretariat of a framework on the working relations between subregional offices and substantive divisions. That framework is used to define the roles and responsibilities of the subregional offices and substantive divisions and identify approaches for strengthening programme delivery, reporting and communications; it was issued by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP in November 2012. The framework was developed in response to the recommendations of the evaluative review of the ESCAP Office for the Pacific, which was completed in November 2011, as well as the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services emanating from an audit on the governance and organizational structure of ESCAP undertaken in 2010. In this regard, key follow-up actions have been initiated for implementation starting in 2013. Pursuant to ESCAP resolution 66/15 on strengthening the evaluation function of the secretariat, an evaluation of the ESCAP subprogramme on information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction was undertaken in 2012. Its results provided critical insight into the secretariat's comparative advantages, as well as the specific subprogramme's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. In the evaluation, the need was identified for deeper socioeconomic analysis, a clearer focus on gender mainstreaming, better definition and recognition of the subprogramme's comparative advantages vis-à-vis those of other United Nations agencies, attracting wider participation in intergovernmental bodies and improved results-based reporting. The results of this evaluation provided crucial guidance for the secretariat in formulating the strategic framework and programme of work for 2014/15. At the time the present document was being prepared, the secretariat was finalizing a management response and a follow-up action plan in order to address the findings and recommendations of the evaluation with meaningful and tangible actions. This is part of the organizational commitment of ESCAP, which is aimed at ensuring that evaluations are used to strengthen accountability and foster organizational learning (see E/ESCAP/69/18).

III. Conclusions

29. The secretariat made further progress in strengthening its technical cooperation work during 2012, working with a wide range of governmental, United Nations and other stakeholders to enhance the capacity of member States to develop and implement inclusive and sustainable economic and social development policies in Asia and the Pacific. This would not have been possible without the valuable support of ESCAP donors and development partners.

30. In particular, further steps were taken to enhance the impact, focus and integration of the secretariat's technical cooperation work, with a particular focus on capacity development and special attention to the needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Pacific island developing countries. Additionally, steps were taken to increase the secretariat's resource mobilization and partnership capabilities and to enhance relations with partners and donors in order to strengthen longer-term foundations for future cooperation.

31. The secretariat will continue to strengthen the application of results-based management approaches to ensure that maximum impact is achieved from its technical cooperation work with member States. Recommendations and lessons identified through evaluations and evaluative reviews will be actively drawn upon to strengthen performance and results. Furthermore, the secretariat will continue to create the necessary strategic and operational synergies with United Nations entities and subregional organizations to ensure United Nations system-wide coherence at the regional level.

Annex I

Extrabudgetary resources provided by bilateral donors in cash in 2012 (Funds-in-trust)

	<i>Value in United States dollars</i>
Australia	315 250.00
Bangladesh	7 050.00
Cambodia	2 000.00
China	588 019.68
Fiji	21 077.00
Hong Kong, China	30 000.00
India	157 500.00
Indonesia	149 604.13
Japan	1 809 250.00
Kazakhstan	5 000.00
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2 000.00
Macao, China	33 000.00
Malaysia	54 970.00
Maldives	2 000.00
Mongolia	15 000.00
Myanmar	3 795.58
New Caledonia	5 400.74
Pakistan	22 434.07
Papua New Guinea	4 981.00
Philippines	17 500.00
Republic of Korea	4 213 668.70
Russian Federation	1 200 000.00
Samoa	3 000.00
Singapore	15 000.00
Sri Lanka	25 000.00
Sweden	60 340.00
Thailand	73 000.00
Timor-Leste	5 000.00
Tonga	1 500.00
Turkey	15 000.00
Vanuatu	5 000.00
Viet Nam	29 000.00
Total extrabudgetary inputs from bilateral donors	8 891 340.90

Annex II**Technical cooperation resources provided by the United Nations system
and by other organizations in 2012**

		<i>Value in United States dollars</i>
1. United Nations system		
(a)	Regular budget resources	
	United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (section 23)	3 075 100.00
	United Nations Development Account (section 36)	2 454 000.00
	Subtotal (a)	5 529 100.00
(b)	Extrabudgetary resources	
	United Nations Development Programme	153 047.98
	United Nations Population Fund	417 928.52
	Other United Nations agencies and bodies	244 267.14
	Subtotal (b)	815 243.64
	Subtotal of resources from the United Nations system (a) + (b)	815 243.64
2. Other organizations		
	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	1 484 105.00
	China Disabled Persons' Federation	10 000.00
	Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.	125 000.00
	Hilti Foundation	117 520.00
	International Development Research Centre (IDRC)	231 704.39
	Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)	68 788.00
	Korea Energy Economics Institute (KEEI)	27 000.00
	Korea Expressway Corporation (KEC)	82 490.00
	Korea Maritime Institute (KMI)	180 000.00
	Nippon Foundation	151 100.00
	Rockefeller Foundation	75 000.00
	World Trade Organization (WTO)	65 517.00
	Subtotal of extrabudgetary resources from other organizations	2 618 224.39
	Grand total	8 962 568.03

Annex III

Extrabudgetary assistance in kind (non-reimbursable loans) in 2012

Japan

(Total 3.5 work-months)

Mr. Shoji Matsubara

Expert on Space Technology Applications

Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

3 work-months

Mr. Michio Ito

Expert on Disaster Reduction

Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

0.5 work-months

Republic of Korea

(Total 84.5 work-months)

Mr. Won-Tae Kim

Expert on Environment Policy, Environment and Development Division

12 work-months

Mr. Woo Young Gyu

Expert on Information and Communication Technology

Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

6 work-months

Mr. You-sik Kim

Expert on Space Technology

Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

12 work-months

Mr. Kwang Dong Kim

Expert on Information and Communication Technology

Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

6 work-months

Mr. Bong Seok So

Expert on Regional Cooperation in North-East Asia, with particular focus on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division

2.5 work-months

Mr. Jehak Jang

Expert on Programme Management, Programme Planning and Partnerships Division

12 work-months

Mr. Young Hun Jeong

Expert on Social Policy, Social Development Division

11.5 work-months

Mr. Daehi Lee

Expert on Trade and Monetary Cooperation, Trade and Investment Division

10 work-months

Mr. Jun Ho Shin

Expert on Regional Trade and Monetary Cooperation, Trade and Investment Division

0.5 work-months

Mr. Kim Hyung-Suk

Expert on Railway Transport, Transport Division

12 work-months
