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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**

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document summarizes the progress made in the implementation of Commission resolutions on which the secretariat is required to report to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and to provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance for the effective implementation of the resolutions.

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I. Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development

Resolution 66/3

Implementation of the Dhaka Outcome Document on the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

1. In its resolution 66/3, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries in forwarding the Dhaka Outcome Document¹ as the Asia-Pacific regional input to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2011;

(b) To continue to assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries, in cooperation with other international entities and taking into account their respective mandates, in implementing the recommendations of the Dhaka

¹ E/ESCAP/66/6.

Outcome Document and in building their capacity to make appropriate policy responses that mitigate the impact of the economic crisis, restore growth and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as well as recommendations that may be adopted under a new programme of action for the least developed countries for the decade 2011-2020;

(c) To submit to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

2. Since the adoption of this resolution, the secretariat has focused on the key issues highlighted in the Dhaka Outcome document. The progress outlined below captures these key elements from the wider programme of work carried out by the secretariat with the least developed countries.

(a) Main activities under operative paragraph 2 (a)

3. The secretariat forwarded the Dhaka Outcome Document to the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) for submission as the regional input to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011.

4. The secretariat has been in contact with OHRLLS concerning the preparations for Conference, including the convening of a round-table discussion on the Dhaka Outcome Document. The round table would bring together selected heads of State/heads of government, senior ministers, eminent persons, senior policymakers and other stakeholders from Asia-Pacific least developed countries as well as from other countries. The round table is intended, among other things, to ensure that the concerns and priorities of the Asia-Pacific least developed countries are adequately addressed when the Conference begins its deliberations.

(b) Main activities under operative paragraph 2(b)

5. In response to paragraph 2 (b), the secretariat initiated the activities described below.

(i) Responding to the challenges of the financial crisis and development-friendly reform of international financial architecture

6. ESCAP organized jointly with the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Cambodia a high-level workshop entitled “Strengthening the Response to the Global Financial Crisis in Asia-Pacific: The Role of Macroeconomic Policies” from 22 to 24 June 2010. The workshop focused on monetary, fiscal and balance of payments policy issues and on strengthening competitiveness. It brought together senior Cambodian government officials with policymakers from India, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam and enabled the officials to learn from the experiences of neighbouring countries and identify best practices and areas for future cooperation. Experts from ESCAP and partner institutions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, also participated in the workshop.

7. To assist non-G20 developing countries in putting forward a coordinated voice vis-à-vis the agenda of the G20 Seoul Summit, the secretariat organized a high-level consultation, which was held in Bangkok on 25 and 26 October 2010 and brought together high-level officials from 26 Asia-Pacific countries. The outcome document was shared with the G20 Chair. The consultation emphasized that all countries – large and small, rich and poor – had a role to play in sustaining global growth, and that the benefits generated from it should be shared widely. It also pointed out that since all countries were affected by the decisions taken by the G20, it was important that the Group be concerned with inclusion and transparency. The ESCAP secretariat hopes to institutionalize this process.

(ii) Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

8. With regard to progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, ESCAP organized a regional partnership dialogue on developing and implementing Goals-based national development strategies in Asia-Pacific countries. The meeting, which was held in Phnom Penh from 13 to 15 December 2010, was organized in collaboration with the Government of Cambodia, UNDP and ADB as part of the 2005 World Summit Outcome,² which committed member States to incorporating the Goals in their national development strategies. The key objective of the meeting, which included participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar and Nepal, was to contribute to capacity development for senior policymakers in countries with special needs to develop and implement Goals-based national development strategies and to improve basic service delivery systems in achieving the Goals by 2015.

9. The secretariat also organized a high-level side event in New York in September 2010 to launch the ESCAP/ADB/UNDP joint report on the Millennium Development Goals, *Paths to 2015: MDG Priorities in Asia and the Pacific: Asia-Pacific MDG Report 2010/11*.³ The three agencies highlighted the key messages of the report and put forward a framework for further action based on seven drivers that could propel the achievement of the Goals in Asia and the Pacific. The side event included a high-level panel discussion with participation from the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, the Minister of Finance of Bangladesh, the State Minister for National Development Planning and the Director-General of the National Economic Development Authority of the Philippines. At the event, it was made clear that, while many countries of the region were performing well on several indicators, none were on track towards meeting all the Goals. It also highlighted some of the critical constraints that were holding back the achievement of the Goals in the region and underlined the importance of strengthening regional and South-South cooperation in accelerating the progress towards achieving them.

10. Under phase 3 of the ESCAP/ADB/UNDP tripartite programme on supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP is implementing a project that aims to strengthen national capacity in the effective use of statistical data for policy analysis and advocacy through the sharing of good practices. A high-level consultative meeting, held in Bangkok on 13 and 14 December 2010, yielded concrete recommendations for developing a framework for identifying and documenting good practices in using statistical data for policy analysis and advocacy with regard to the achievement of the Goals, as well as a strategy for sharing good practices.

² General Assembly resolution 60/1.

³ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.F.20.

Participants from the developing member States, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, and development partners also agreed on a plan to pilot the framework in the first part of 2011.

(iii) Social development

11. Regarding social development, the capacity of government officials from several least developed countries was developed as a result of initiatives organized under the gender programme of ESCAP. Representatives of Bangladesh, Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands participated in a workshop which covered issues related to the collection and the use of statistics on violence against women. The workshop, held in Bangkok on 20 and 21 September 2010, brought together members of national women's machineries and national statistics organizations to enhance local capacities and promote intragovernmental collaboration in collecting and disseminating statistics in this area. It also provided insight for using the data as input for setting policies and designing programmes to address the issue at all levels. Workshop participants recognized that violence against women was a serious constraint to women's participation in economic and social development and constituted a major cost to societies throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

12. Representatives of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal participated in a workshop-cum-expert group meeting on institutional strengthening of national women's machineries in South and South-West Asia, held in Bangkok from 18 to 21 January 2011. The meeting was organized jointly by the secretariat and the South Asia Subregional Office of UN-Women. Issues covered at the workshop included: the roles of national women's machineries with respect to engendering macroeconomic policies; addressing violence against women; enhancing gender-responsive budgeting and tackling climate change. A recommendation from the meeting called for the implementation, in collaboration with UN-Women, of a follow-up support programme at the subregional and country levels.

13. The secretariat encouraged closer cooperation between migrant-sending countries and destination countries, including least developed countries, through, among other things, capacity-building initiatives. The Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 September 2010, was attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu. In the outcome document from the meeting, the "Bangkok Statement on Migration and Development", Governments agreed on recommendations to improve the development impact of international migration, address gender issues in the context of migration and better manage international migration while protecting migrants.

14. In order to improve the knowledge base related to international migration, the Regional Thematic Working Group on International Migration, including Human Trafficking, which is co-chaired by ESCAP and the International Organization for Migration, is drafting a situation report on international migration in South- and South-West Asia. The report will focus on Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal and will include chapters on labour migration, remittances, the protection of the rights of migrant workers, and women in the migration process. It will also include a discussion on the obstacles that migrant women face.

15. ESCAP contributed to work aimed at addressing poverty, hunger and food security, at developing infrastructure and at promoting South-South,

triangular and regional cooperation from the perspective of persons with disabilities in several least developed countries. The secretariat facilitated regional dialogues on the vicious cycle between poverty and disability, and on assessing the achievements and challenges regarding the extent to which the Millennium Development Goals and national economic and social plans as well as policies on infrastructure in the region incorporate disability. It also organized two meetings on this topic, the Expert Group Meeting-cum-Stakeholder Consultation to Review the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012: The Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, held in Bangkok from 23 to 25 June 2010 (see E/ESCAP/CSD(2)/4), and the second session of the Committee on Social Development, held in Bangkok from 19 to 21 October 2010 (see E/ESCAP/67/11). The meetings, which included representatives of and experts from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Nepal, significantly raised awareness of the need to address the rights of persons with disabilities.

16. ESCAP promoted South-South cooperation with regard to disability through a meeting organized jointly with the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability, in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The Senior Officials' Meeting on South-to-South Cooperation on Disability, which included representatives of Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Nepal, was held in Bangkok on 19 and 20 August 2010 within the framework of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific,⁴ the regional disability guideline for the current Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2003 to 2012), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,⁵ the international disability human rights treaty. During the meeting, it was advocated that disability should be an integral part of national economic and development plans as well as the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, it was agreed that a new regional decade on disability (2013-2022) should be proclaimed to provide an effective framework to further promote this position.

17. ESCAP also implemented several activities related to capacity-development in statistics, which included participation by representatives of many least developed countries. The secretariat held a workshop in September 2010 with the objective of strengthening the capacity of countries to measure, disseminate and use statistical data and indicators related to violence against women, and to create awareness in the region about the related global work by the Friends of the Chair on statistical indicators on violence against women under the aegis of the Statistical Commission.⁶ The workshop brought together representatives of national women's machineries, national statistical offices and civil society from nine countries, including Bangladesh, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

(iv) Statistics

18. The work on improving basic statistics is designed especially to assist member States with weak statistical systems, including least developed countries. This includes strengthening national statistical capacity through

⁴ See Commission resolution 59/3 of 4 September 2003 (for the text of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, see E/ESCAP/APDDP/4/Rev.1).

⁵ General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

⁶ See, for example, E/CN.3/2011/5.

technical assistance and the sharing of good practices and knowledge, as well as developing new measurements and standards while ensuring that the needs of weaker statistical systems are addressed.

19. A regional programme was developed for the improvement of economic statistics in Asia and the Pacific, and endorsed by the Committee on Statistics in December 2010.⁷ The programme is aimed at strengthening the capacity of developing countries in the region to produce a set of core economic statistics. The development of the regional programme and its implementation plan involves carrying out a region-wide capacity assessment and in-country needs assessments of Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The assessments have enabled a thorough understanding of the constraints preventing specific countries from producing a core set of economic statistics and setting priorities for improvement.

20. To promote the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems, the secretariat facilitated, during the first quarter of 2010, a self-assessment by countries in the region, including Bangladesh, Cambodia and Vanuatu, of their respective systems through the application of the World Health Organization (WHO) rapid assessment tool. The results of these assessments were reviewed at the ESCAP/WHO Regional Forum on the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok from 23 to 25 June 2010. In its outcome statement (E/ESCAP/CST(2)/3/Add.1), the Forum called upon the Committee on Statistics to bring to the attention of the Commission the urgent need to improve the civil registration and vital statistics systems of countries in the region.⁸

21. The secretariat is also working closely with member States and development partners to develop a regional programme to promote the improvement of gender statistics in the region. As an initial step, the secretariat convened a consultative meeting in September 2010. The secretariat also co-organized a workshop on strengthening national capacities to collect statistics on violence against women in the Asia-Pacific region. The workshop, which was also held in September 2010, brought together representatives of national women's machineries, national statistical offices and civil society from nine countries, including Bangladesh, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

22. In support of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, the secretariat continues to work on activities centred on improving disability measurement and statistics in Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP trained the staff of the national statistical offices of Cambodia and Maldives, among other countries in the region, in the skills required to design questionnaires to collect data on disability based on the International Classification of Function, Disability and Health created by WHO. In particular, it held a workshop on the analysis of the cognitive and pilot test results of a proposed question set on disability for surveys in July 2010, and an expert group meeting on the analysis of the second round of cognitive testing on disability in February 2011.

23. In addition, statistical advisory services were provided on planning, designing and implementing various aspects of statistical processes to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Maldives, Myanmar and Timor-Leste. The advisory services were related to the Millennium Development Goals,

⁷ See E/ESCAP/67/12, chap. I, decision 2/6.

⁸ For the response of the Committee on Statistics, see E/ESCAP/67/12, chap. I, sect. B, decisions 2/3 and 2/4.

gender statistics, population, national accounts and economic statistics. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) has continued its systematic training to strengthen the statistical capability of developing countries to produce and disseminate official statistics, including the Millennium Development Goals. Among the developing countries in the region, 29 participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Maldives and Timor-Leste improved their knowledge and skills in SIAP training programmes. Of the participants, 19 received training in Tokyo-Metropolitan-Area based courses, 9 were trained in outreach training programmes and 4 benefited from distance-learning.⁹

(v) Trade facilitation

24. ESCAP has been assisting Asia-Pacific least developed countries in tackling inefficiencies and enhancing international competitiveness through trade facilitation. The focus of this support has centred on: (a) building capacity among trade facilitation practitioners; (b) developing trade facilitation implementation methodologies and tools; (c) undertaking analytical and advocacy work; and (d) fostering a regional community of knowledge and best practices for trade facilitation.

25. The United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade (UNNExT), launched in 2009 in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, is the main modality through which ESCAP delivers its trade facilitation programme. UNNExT comprises a network of experts from developing countries and transition economies from Asia and the Pacific, including least developed countries, who are involved in the implementation of electronic trade systems and trade facilitation. It serves as an effective mechanism for regional cooperation and capacity-building on trade facilitation. In addition, the UNNExT publication, *Business Process Analysis Guide to Simplify Trade Procedures*,¹⁰ is being used as the basis for trade facilitation capacity-building and single window development workshops, as well as for conducting studies on the simplification of trade procedures in countries of the region, including least developed countries. Multiple workshops on how to carry out BPA and related capacity-building workshops have been conducted in Cambodia. The results of the BPA and related workshops were directly incorporated in the Rice Export Policy initiative in Cambodia in 2010.

26. The Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum is aimed at promoting trade facilitation as an important component of a comprehensive strategy for national and regional development. The annual event, which has been held twice so far, in 2009 and 2010, provides an open regional platform for participants to exchange information, experiences and practices on trade facilitation in Asia and the Pacific, to identify priority areas for regional cooperation and integration, and to learn about new tools and services for increasing the efficiency of cross-border transactions. During the 2010 Forum, which was attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Nepal, a special session was organized on the theme "Challenges and ways forward in South Asian least developed countries for trade facilitation". Recommendations identified during the session and at other capacity-building events organized by ESCAP to facilitate trade in least developed countries in recent years include: phased implementation of National Single Windows; harmonization of procedures with trading partners; and aid mobilization and improved coordination among

⁹ For details, see E/ESCAP/67/13.

¹⁰ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.II.F.21.

aid agencies. In addition, addressing agricultural trade facilitation issues was identified as high priority.

(vi) Sustainable development and green growth capacity development

27. ESCAP has implemented a variety of activities to assist least developed countries in areas related to inclusive and environmentally sustainable development. Through a green growth capacity-development programme, ESCAP assisted Cambodia in the development of the National Green Growth Roadmap, which is aligned with the approach used to support the implementation of the Rectangular Strategy for Development and Poverty Reduction. As a first pilot for the application of green growth policy tools, the Cambodia National Green Growth Secretariat teamed up with Sunlabob Renewable Energy Ltd. to set up a green business model for charging solar-powered lanterns in two floating villages in Battambang Province.

28. Similarly, the secretariat provided assistance to Youth With a Mission (YWAM) in applying a green business model for the provision of renewable energy services in poor rural communities in Samoa. YWAM piloted the model with a faith-based approach. Through a revolving fund, a community cooperative will provide services in building similar facilities throughout communities in Samoa and in tourism facilities recovering from the recent tsunami. The pilot project is being implemented in other Pacific small island developing States, such as Fiji and Vanuatu, following training given to young professionals of the YWAM network. In addition, in a follow-up to the Pacific High-Level Dialogue on the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation +5, held in Port Vila on 8 and 9 February 2010, ESCAP provided support to Pacific small island States in the development of a Pacific green growth partnership and convened a high-level Pacific ministerial meeting in the framework of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific. A statement on green growth partnership was adopted at the meeting and presented at the ministerial segment of the Conference.

29. In the field of sustainable urban development, ESCAP has implemented a project entitled “Pro-poor and Sustainable Solid Waste Management”, which is aimed at helping the Governments of Bangladesh and Cambodia improve the management of solid waste. So far, the project’s activities have included workshops and South-South collaboration that focus on strengthening the capacities of policymakers in setting policies on solid waste management. These policies would contribute to achieving Millennium Development Goal 7, ensuring environmental sustainability. In addition, policymakers from Bhutan, Nepal and Maldives attended the project’s regional workshop, held in Bangladesh in February 2010.

30. Since 2008, ESCAP has been supporting the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal in various activities aimed at strengthening capacity-building towards the development of eco-efficient water infrastructure. These activities included the development of a policy concept paper in Nepal and a national strategy in Bhutan on eco-efficient water infrastructure, consultative seminars and the organization of a national advocacy workshop. In addition, the secretariat provided technical services and resource persons to expert group meetings and national workshops on developing policies related to water infrastructure and capacity-building. Also of note, during the years 2008 to 2010, representatives of Nepal and Bhutan attended three ESCAP-sponsored regional workshops on eco-efficient water infrastructure development for green growth in Asia, which enabled them to enhance their knowledge as well as

exchange best practices, share experiences and discuss lessons learned with other stakeholders in the region.

(vii) Disaster risk reduction

31. ESCAP provided advisory services to address a variety of the capacity development needs of least developed countries in the area of disaster risk reduction. Technical assistance was provided to Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Maldives, Nepal, Samoa and Timor-Leste following specific requests from the respective Governments. The highlights of these activities were presented during a meeting ESCAP organized with LDC Watch and OHRLLS and held on 22 and 23 November 2010 to assess development challenges in Asian least developed countries. The outcome of the meeting acknowledged the need for least developed countries to build resilience through economic and social development policies in order to be better prepared for increasing frequency of hazards induced by climate change.

(viii) Transport infrastructure and connectivity

32. The secretariat has continued to promote the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks as the basis for developing an integrated regional transport system. Of note, Nepal ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network¹¹ on 14 June 2010, and Bangladesh ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network¹² on 25 August 2010.

33. Building on the success of the two transport networks, the secretariat is encouraging the development of dry ports, which would not only facilitate efficient intermodal transport and logistics services but also serve as a catalyst for the development of economic clusters. A regional expert group meeting on dry port development along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks was held in Bangkok from 1 to 3 November 2010. The meeting, which included participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Nepal, focused on issues related to the development of dry ports and provided inputs for the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.

34. The secretariat has been working to foster synergies among member States, international financing institutions and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to promote investment in transport infrastructure. In the area of public-private partnership (PPP) for infrastructure development, many least developed countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa and Timor-Leste, have participated in activities, such as a high-level expert group meeting on PPPs for infrastructure development, held in Jakarta on 14 April 2011, the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development, held in Jakarta on 17 April 2010, a regional meeting of PPP units and programmes on institutional development and support to capacity-building in PPPs, held in New Delhi from 28 February to 2 March 2011 and a regional consultation meeting on curriculum development for formal training and capacity-building programmes on PPPs, held in New Delhi from 2 to 4 March 2011.

¹¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

¹² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, No. 46171.

II. Environment and development

Resolution 64/3

Promoting renewables for energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

35. In its resolution 64/3, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To coordinate with the multilateral funding agencies with a view to enhancing financial and technology flows for the development and deployment of new and renewable energy technologies in developing countries;

(b) To facilitate synergies with regional groupings, such as the Economic Cooperation Organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to promote the development of renewable energy technologies proactively by establishing links with the Commission;

(c) To establish an institutional cooperation mechanism with the active engagement of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology and expert research institutions in the region so as to draw up a programme of cooperation by identifying activities on development, demonstration and capacity-building pertaining to various renewable energy technologies;

(d) To increase participation in public-private partnerships and initiatives that are designed to expand the use of renewable technologies through innovative policy options and practical measures, such as the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century, the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, the International Biofuels Forum and the Global Bioenergy Partnership;

(e) To submit to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session a report on the progress made in implementing the resolution.

2. Progress made

36. In response to paragraph 2 (a) of resolution 64/3, the secretariat has undertaken a number of activities related to enhancing financial and technological flows. The secretariat has on various occasions had consultations and discussions with multilateral funding agencies, including ADB, the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It has also made efforts to highlight this issue in published material, such as the theme study for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission.¹³ The study covered challenges such as financing renewable energy technology for promoting growth, an area that is both inclusive and sustainable towards helping the region achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The issue was also discussed at the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and

¹³ *Financing an Inclusive and Green Future* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.F.4). See also E/ESCAP/66/26.

Development in Asia and the Pacific, and was reflected in the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2011-2015.¹⁴

37. In response to paragraph 2 (b), the secretariat facilitated synergies with other subregional organizations in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Energy Center, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Centre for Energy (ACE) through the sharing of information and establishing links in promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency. In addition, at national and subregional workshops jointly organized by the secretariat with the SAARC Energy Center, EurAsEC and ACE, discussions focused on renewable energy policies and institutional mechanisms as well as ways to strengthen policies and institutional capacity on energy efficiency.

38. In response to paragraph 2 (c), the secretariat and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) commenced work on the development of a renewable energy institutional cooperation mechanism for strengthening the capacity of member countries to adopt multiple approaches for promoting the utilization of renewable energy resources for sustainable development. APCTT is facilitating the mechanism, which is aimed at providing member countries with the opportunity to share information on best practices for the selection, adoption and use of renewable energy technologies (RETs) as well as enable them to benchmark the best practices with respect to policies and policy instruments used to promote the adoption and use of RETs. Set up in the form of a network of participating member countries, the mechanism focuses on carrying out four major functions: (a) to collect and disseminate information on RETs; (b) to share best practices on renewable energy promotion and utilization; (c) to develop capacity to plan and implement RET transfer projects; and (d) to promote collaboration in research and development on renewable energy technologies. APCTT, through the programme of work to be implemented until 2012 with funding support from the Government of India and the secretariat, is focusing on developing skills for resource assessment and the preparation of technical specifications for selecting RETs, enhancing the capacity for planning and implementing renewable energy technology transfer projects, and facilitating cross-border research and development collaboration for adaptive research on RET and renewable energy systems. As of 31 December 2010, some of the more important activities carried out under the mechanism are: the development of the Renewable Energy Cooperation Network for Asia and the Pacific (RECAP) website (<http://recap.apctt.org>); an expert group meeting to discuss and deliberate on key issues involved in designing and developing an effective institutional cooperation mechanism; a consultative meeting to determine the scope of the work of the institutional cooperation mechanism; the development of a training manual on resource assessment and a training programme entitled "Renewable Energy Technology Resource Assessment and Planning"; and an Asia-Pacific business-to-business forum on promoting renewable energy business partnerships and technology transfer in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, under the South-South cooperation initiative, a seminar entitled "Buildings Integrated with Solar Energy Technology Systems: Research and Applications" and a workshop and field trip to promote the commercialization of technology regarding jatropha oil and wood pellet machines and tools were organized in partnership with the Governments of China and Thailand, respectively.

¹⁴ See E/ESCAP/67/8, chap. I, sect. B.

39. In response to paragraph 2 (d), the secretariat initialized and strengthened its partnerships with different stakeholders to expand the use of renewable technologies through innovative policy options and practical measures. The secretariat had a series of consultations and discussions with other international organizations, such as IFAD, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) and the United Nations Foundation to explore potential cooperative efforts on renewable energy development in the region. IFAD has approved its first ever project with ESCAP, which involves widening rural populations' access to energy services with locally available renewable energy resources through pro-poor PPPs. The secretariat is serving as the lead agency in implementing a project entitled "Enhancing and improving access to energy services through the development of public-private renewable energy partnerships" This project is supported by the United Nations Development Account in collaboration with other regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The secretariat entered into an agreement to support a project of the YWAM camp in Apia, Samoa, to provide biogas technology. Biogas is an affordable renewable energy source, and this project stands to not only generate income for especially poor households, but also benefit the environment by resulting in less use of energy sources that cause pollution, such as untreated manure and wastes.

III. Disaster risk reduction

Resolution 66/8

Review of the proposal for the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for information, communication and space technology-enabled disaster management in the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

40. In its resolution 66/8, the Commission invited the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran: (a) to provide the Commission with the supplementary information requested in paragraph 1 of resolution 64/10; and (b) to consider revising its draft resolution to take into account the outcome of the review requested in paragraph 1 of resolution 64/10, in consultation with the secretariat, for submission to the Commission for consideration at its sixty-seventh session. In addition, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to provide the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran with technical assistance, if requested, in the review of the operational details of the proposal.

2. Progress made

41. A delegation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran had in-depth consultative discussions with the secretariat on 16 and 17 December 2010. The secretariat provided technical assistance to address all the issues highlighted in paragraph 1 of resolution 64/10. The technical assistance covered the feasibility aspects pertaining to the scope, functions, value added products and services, budget, human resources and staffing, and tentative schedule towards the establishment of the proposed centre. The discussion also covered topics related to the approaches and modalities for establishing an ESCAP regional institution, such as a work programme, staffing, budget and financial sustainability, which should follow the examples of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (UNAPCAEM), APCTT, the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), the

Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA), and SIAP. It was agreed that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran would submit a revised proposal for consideration by the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.

42. Accordingly, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a revised draft proposal to the secretariat on 8 February 2011. The secretariat provided comments to the Islamic Republic of Iran on the revised draft proposal and circulated it to all of the members of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission so that they could provide their comments to the Islamic Republic of Iran as well.

IV. Statistics

A. Resolution 62/10

Strengthening statistical capacity in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

43. In its resolution 62/10, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary, within existing regular budget resources, or through voluntary contributions, as available:

(a) To assist members and, as appropriate, associate members to develop their statistical systems, strengthening their capacity to collect, compile, process, analyse, disseminate and use official statistics;

(b) To provide assistance to members and, as appropriate, associate members in strengthening their capacity to monitor progress towards development goals and the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(c) To facilitate the development and implementation of international statistical standards in the region;

(d) To facilitate regional discussion and the sharing of information and good practices related to official statistics;

(e) To facilitate the coordination of international capacity-building activities related to the development of official statistics in the region, including cooperation among national statistical offices of developing countries;

(f) To facilitate the dissemination and use of data, including by providing a user-friendly platform to access socio-economic and environmental indicators in an internationally comparable format;

(g) To coordinate with regional and international agencies in the collection of official statistical data from members and, as appropriate, associate members in order to avoid duplication of effort and to minimize the response burden on national statistical systems;

(h) To report on the implementation of the resolution to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session.

2. Progress made

44. In its efforts to fully implement resolution 62/10 during the past five years, the secretariat benefited from an initial consultation with member States, during the Second Forum for Asia/Pacific Statisticians, held in Daejeon, Republic of Korea, on 21 and 22 September 2006, and from the direct guidance of member States through the first two sessions of the re-established Committee on Statistics and its Bureau, which was given the mandate to carry out the work of the Committee during the intersessional period.

45. The work of member States, the secretariat and other development partners culminated in the development and endorsement by the Committee on Statistics in December 2010 of clear strategic goals to: (a) ensure that all countries in the region have, by 2020, the capability to provide an agreed basic range of population, economic, social and environment statistics; and (b) create a more adaptive and cost-effective information management environment for national statistical offices through stronger collaboration (see E/ESCAP/67/12).

(a) Main activities under paragraph 3 (a)

46. In response to paragraph 3 (a), the secretariat, in recognition of the value of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), collaborated with the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) to galvanize country efforts in this area. During 2005 and 2006, three subregional high-level forums for statistical experts and policymakers were organized. These forums were instrumental in initiating NSDS processes in participating member States. As of November 2010, a total of 11 of the 27 International Development Association member countries in the Asia-Pacific region were implementing an NSDS strategy, and 8 countries were either designing a strategy or awaiting its adoption. In support of these efforts, SIAP implemented a wide range of training activities in different areas of statistics to develop and strengthen the statistical systems of member States and the technical skills of their staff members.

(b) Main activities under paragraph 3 (b)

47. In response to paragraph 3 (b), the secretariat continued to develop and improve methodologies for tracking progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This included methodologies for assessing disparities in the development outcomes within countries as well as between countries, and the impact of the global economic crisis with regard to progress towards achieving the Goals from a regional basis. The methodologies developed by the secretariat have been used in a number of highly visible Millennium Development Goal reports.

(c) Main activities under paragraph 3 (c)

48. In response to paragraph 3 (c), the secretariat has directed its efforts towards the development of standards related to disability, the informal sector and gender equality statistics.

49. To support the development of policies to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities, the secretariat intensified its work, in close collaboration with member States, WHO and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, in designing and testing standard instruments for the collection of disability data in line with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, a framework set by WHO.

50. To provide the basis for better protection of people working in the informal sector, the secretariat, in cooperation with project countries, ADB, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and other partners, led interregional efforts to improve the measurement of the informal sector and informal employment through the design and country implementation of an innovative data collection instrument, namely the “1-2 survey” method, which builds on existing labour force surveys.

51. In order to support the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment, the secretariat is involved in activities aimed at improving gender statistics. This includes holding consultative meetings to take stock of existing gender statistics programmes. A technical advisory group on social statistics, to be established by the Committee on Statistics,¹⁵ would also address issues identified through the gender thematic working group, which was established under the regional coordination mechanism.

(d) Main activities under paragraph 3 (d)

52. The secretariat has serviced the first two sessions of the Committee on Statistics, held in February 2009 and December 2010. The Committee is a unique regional forum for leaders of national statistical systems in the Asia-Pacific region. The Committee undertakes discussions on matters of strategic importance to statistics development in the region, decides on actions required for regional cooperation, and formulates regional positions on major statistical issues to be raised in global forums, such as the Statistical Commission.

53. The secretariat has been emphasizing and mainstreaming the sharing of good practices as an essential component in its integrated approach for promoting national statistical capacity development in the region. In addition to establishing regional forums and regional networks of national experts in various areas of statistical practices, the secretariat is developing a platform for the interactive exchange of ideas and good practices. As a prime example of this approach, the secretariat organized a high-level consultative meeting on promoting the effective use of statistical data for policy analysis and advocacy. The meeting was held along the sidelines of the second session of the Committee on Statistics, in December 2010. A framework for sharing good practices is being piloted among the consultation participants. Sharing experiences and learning from good practices have also been the focus of a number of subregional events.

(e) Main activities under operative paragraph 3 (e)

54. The secretariat has been actively promoting the improvement of a regional initiative that includes the participation of development partners in the efforts to support statistics development in the Asia-Pacific region. At the first session of the Committee on Statistics, in February 2009, the secretariat organized a side event based on the theme “Coordinating support for statistics development in Asia and the Pacific”. During the event, a consensus emerged among member States and development partners that an informal regional coordination mechanism was necessary (see E/ESCAP/65/13, para. 93). This

¹⁵ See E/ESCAP/67/12, chap. I, sect. B, decision 2/2.

initiative subsequently received strong support from the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session.¹⁶

55. At the first meeting of the Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific, held prior to the second session of the Committee on Statistics, in December 2010, a regional coordination mechanism, referred to as “the Partnership”, was established. The Partnership comprises members engaged in statistics development activities in the Asia-Pacific region from international, regional and subregional organizations and bilateral donors, including representatives of Governments that act as donors. The Partnership agreed to work towards achieving the priorities of the Committee on Statistics and report progress made to the Committee and to coordinate with the global Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.

56. The secretariat supported the Committee on Statistics by working with the Committee’s Bureau in designing a strategy for coordinating and improving the impact of statistical training in the region. This strategy may include the establishment of a dedicated mechanism.

(f) Main activities under operative paragraph 3 (f)

57. In response to paragraph 3 (f), the secretariat continued its efforts to improve the dissemination of internationally comparable statistical data. The *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and Pacific* was redesigned to be a reference tool for statistical information on the region; the first issue of the revamped publication was released in early 2008. In addition, the secretariat substantially improved the interface for the online statistics database, enabling users to utilize the latest web technologies to generate animated graphs and download various country data in a user-friendly manner. The secretariat is developing an online data collection and dissemination platform to improve the regional availability of internationally comparable short-term statistics.

58. To improve access to survey microdata in Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat, from 2006 to 2008, implemented a project funded by PARIS21 and the World Bank as a component of the global Accelerated Data Program initiative. As a result of the activities of the project, there is strong awareness among statistical offices in the region regarding: (a) the importance of documenting household surveys and censuses in accordance with international standards; (b) the need to suitably anonymize microdatasets before their dissemination; and (c) the need to formulate dissemination rules and regulations. Under the project, country inventory databases were established at the regional level and 119 censuses and surveys were documented. Other activities of the project included the development of microdata dissemination rules and regulations for several countries and of software plug-ins to anonymize micro datasets.

(g) Main activities under paragraph 3 (g)

59. To reduce the response burden of national statistical systems, the secretariat discontinued its collection of data on short-term indicators through questionnaires to national statistical offices. The system is being replaced by the collection of monthly and quarterly data through the websites of national statistical offices and other national organizations. Furthermore, to reduce the response burden and improve the comparability of data, the redesign of the

¹⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 4* (E/2009/24), chap. I, sect. B, decision 40/112.

ESCAP flagship publication, the *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and Pacific*, included a shift from national to international data sources.

60. As part of its effort to coordinate with regional and international agencies in the collection of official data, the secretariat has made contributions to several initiatives, such as a workshop on statistics for monitoring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific and an Asia-Pacific regional consultation on United Nations maternal mortality estimates, which was organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WHO. Both initiatives were aimed at reconciling differences between national and international estimates. The secretariat is also an active member of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting on Millennium Development Goal Indicators, one of the aims of which is to reconcile differences between national and international estimates and coordinate with regional and international agencies the collection of official statistical data.

B. Resolution 65/2
Regional technical cooperation and capacity-building in statistics development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

61. In its resolution 65/2, the Commission:

(a) Requested the Executive Secretary to continue to assist members and, as appropriate, associate members in strengthening their statistical capacity, in accordance with Commission resolution 62/10;

(b) Encouraged members and associate members to implement paragraph 20 of the annex to Commission resolution 61/2 and, where appropriate, to increase financial support to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;

(c) Noted that the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific would celebrate its fortieth anniversary in 2010 and encouraged members and associate members to contribute to the preparations for that celebration.

2. Progress made

62. In response to paragraph 2 of resolution 62/10, the secretariat has undertaken a number of activities related to strengthening the statistical capacity of member States (see paras. 44-60).

63. In response to paragraph 5 of the resolution, the Governing Council of SIAP, at its fifth session (2009), reiterated the need to raise member countries' sense of ownership of the activities of the Institute, thereby leading to increased contributions. Council members stressed that, whenever possible, countries should increase contributions to enable SIAP to carry out its activities. The Institute received cash contributions of \$2,048,978 and \$2,019,562, from the Government of Japan and other members and associate members of ESCAP in 2009 and 2010, respectively, though the share of the total cash contributions of the Government of Japan decreased from 83.2 per cent in 2009 to 81.3 per cent in 2010. Six countries—India, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Viet Nam—increased their cash contributions to the Institute in 2010. The Russian Federation pledged to make a cash contribution to SIAP for 2010. Kyrgyzstan and Turkey became

new contributing members in 2009, and Azerbaijan made its first contribution in 2010.

64. In response to paragraph 6, SIAP celebrated its fortieth anniversary with a series of activities, which included a meeting and luncheon held during the sixty-sixth session of the Commission. Heads of delegations, diplomats, eminent officials, statisticians and other distinguished guests, including some SIAP alumni, participated in the celebration. The anniversary celebration took place at the United Nations University building in Shibuya, Tokyo, on 31 August 2010, along with a three-day management seminar for the heads of national statistical offices in Asia and the Pacific based on the theme “Developing professional capability for national statistical systems”. The chief statisticians of 30 member countries and representatives of a number of international organizations attended the events. The keynote address was delivered by a cabinet minister from the Government of Japan, who was the guest of honour.

65. The fortieth anniversary celebration and accompanying events were a success due to the contributions from many of the partners of SIAP. The host Government made the greatest contribution at every stage, from logistics to substance, while IMF covered some of the costs of the event. Many countries and international organizations conveyed congratulatory messages, which can be found on the SIAP web page. The most significant feature of the celebration was the gathering of representatives of more than half of the member countries, demonstrating their strong sense of ownership. The events helped to increase the visibility of SIAP and could generate strong support (including financial contributions) from member States and partner agencies.

V. Management issues

A. Resolution 64/1

Restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

66. In its resolution 64/1, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To take into account the revision of the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission in the future programme of work and strategic framework of the organization;

(b) To reorganize the secretariat so as to enhance its capability to service the subsidiary structure of the Commission;

(c) To provide members and associate members with a preliminary assessment of the organizational and staffing implications of the revision of the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission within six months;

(d) To undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of the conference structure and its link to the programme priorities of the Commission;

(e) To report to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution, focusing in particular on whether the conference structure has served the purpose of improving efficiency and attracting higher and wider representation from members and associate

members, which would serve as the basis for a midterm review of the functioning of the conference structure to be conducted during the sixty-seventh session.

2. Progress made

67. In response to paragraph 2 of the resolution, starting with the period 2010-2011, both the strategic framework¹⁷ and the programme budget¹⁸ have taken into account the revision of the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission.

68. In response to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the resolution, the Executive Secretary informed member States that: (a) the requested reorganization of the secretariat had been implemented; (b) there was greater congruence between the subsidiary structure of the Commission and the new secretariat structure, which enhanced the secretariat's capability to service the subsidiary structure of the Commission; and (c) the new secretariat structure would incur no additional financial implications in terms of staffing, as all changes were being effected through internal redeployment within existing staff resources.

69. In response to paragraphs 6 and 7 of the resolution, the Executive Secretary has submitted a document on the midterm review of the functioning of the conference structure (E/ESCAP/67/15).

B. Resolution 66/15 Strengthening of the evaluation function of the secretariat of the Commission

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

70. In its resolution 66/15, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) To ensure that the secretariat's programmatic work, including the work of divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions, is evaluated periodically;

(b) To submit to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session a plan for the above-mentioned evaluations.

2. Progress made

71. In accordance with ST/SGB/2000/8, Article VII, Evaluation, all ESCAP programmes are evaluated on a regular, periodic basis. A rolling programme of evaluations of all areas of the ESCAP programme of work ensures that all divisions, regional institutions and subregional offices are subjected to evaluative processes on a cyclical basis.

72. Evaluations managed by ESCAP are implemented according to the ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation System. Generally, the evaluation unit, which is part of the Programme Management Division, oversees two forms of evaluation exercises: evaluations, which are managed by ESCAP programme

¹⁷ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/63/6/Rev.1).*

¹⁸ *Ibid., Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/64/6/Add.1).*

evaluation officers, and evaluative reviews, which may be managed by any division or any office away from Bangkok.

73. In 2011, evaluations of the ESCAP Pacific Office and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, Phase I (2007-2011) are scheduled to be completed.

74. The following evaluation activities are planned for the 2012-2013 programme of work:

- (a) Topics to be evaluated:
 - (i) The effectiveness of the ESCAP flagship publications in strengthening the secretariat's position as a major hub for policy analysis;
 - (ii) ESCAP support for energy security in Asia and the Pacific (2013);
- (b) Evaluative reviews under subprogramme 1, Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development:
 - (i) Supporting Millennium Development Goals-based development strategies through integrated regional action (2012);
 - (ii) Developing regional financial and monetary architecture in Asia and the Pacific in support of global financial reforms (2013);
 - (iii) Strengthening capacity in mitigating the impact of the financial crisis and sustaining dynamic and inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific (2013);
- (c) An evaluative review to be implemented under subprogramme 3, Transport, is on capacity-building for control authorities and transport operators to improve the efficiency of cross-border transport in landlocked and transit developing countries (2013);
- (d) Evaluative reviews under subprogramme 4, Environment and development:
 - (i) Development of eco-efficient water infrastructure for socio-economic development in Asia and the Pacific (phase 2) (2012);
 - (ii) Strengthening capacities in countries with special needs on designing and implementing economic and social development policies to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (2013);
- (e) Evaluative reviews under subprogramme 5, Information and communications technology:
 - (i) Strengthening ICT for development education in institutions of higher learning (2012);
 - (ii) The Tsunami Regional Trust Fund (2013);

(f) An evaluative review to be implemented under subprogramme 6, Social development, is on “Social development: strengthening social protection” (2013);

(g) An evaluative review to be implemented under subprogramme 7, Statistics, is on statistics with regard to interregional cooperation on the use of data on the informal sector and informal employment in national accounts (2013);

(h) Evaluative reviews under subprogramme 8, Subregional activities for development:

- (i) Subregional Office for the Pacific: Capacity-building for small island developing States to incorporate the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States¹⁹ (2012);
- (ii) The role of the ESCAP Subregional Office for the Pacific in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process and wider Pacific subregional architecture (2012-2013);
- (iii) Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia: Evaluation of the relevance of policy advocacy related to the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed targets to the national priorities of East and North-East Asian member countries (2013).

75. Evaluation plans for subsequent bienniums will be developed and integrated into the work programme cycle. Results of evaluations will be reported to the Commission through the biennial evaluation report.

¹⁹ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.