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### Collaboration with other global and regional organizations and initiatives

## Collaboration with other global and regional organizations and initiatives

### Note by the secretariat

#### Summary

The subprogramme on trade and investment is implemented in close collaboration with other global and (sub)regional organizations working in the area of trade and investment development in Asia and the Pacific. The level of cooperation varies and is in most cases subject to improvement. Constraints resulting from limited budgets and diverging mandates, work programmes, administrative and financial rules and regulations among agencies need to be overcome. The present document argues that enhanced cooperation between ESCAP and other agencies, in particular those in the United Nations system needs to be membership driven. The Committee is invited to review existing cooperation mechanisms and advise on their further development.

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## **I. Introduction**

1. In the present document, current modalities of cooperation between ESCAP and global and other regional organizations are reviewed and suggestions on how such cooperation can be strengthened, in cases when it is deemed desirable, are presented. Cooperation with global organizations that have trade and investment programmes is reviewed in chapter II, while in chapter III, cooperation with other regional and subregional organizations in the area of trade and investment is assessed. Chapter IV contains highlights of issues in strengthening collaboration with these organizations. Chapter V consists of a summary of issues for consideration by the Committee.

## **II. Cooperation with global organizations in the area of trade and investment**

### **A. The United Nations system**

2. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is the natural partner of ESCAP in the area of trade and investment at the global level. Over the years, these two organizations have enjoyed a long-term collaborative relationship, but the implementation of many of their joint efforts have faced challenges in mobilizing the necessary resources and thus have been implemented under budget constraints. UNCTAD has often participated in technical assistance activities organized by ESCAP while ESCAP has contributed to the regional courses organized by UNCTAD on key issues on the international economic agenda also known as the Paragraph 166 Course for developing countries of the region in the area of trade and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development. The director of the Trade and Investment Division of ESCAP routinely attends the annual Trade and Development Board sessions of UNCTAD. ESCAP was also represented at UNCTAD XIII and the World Investment Forum 2012. The two events were held concurrently in Doha. The Conference was held from 21 to 26 April 2012 while the Forum was held from 20 to 23 April 2012. A promising start was made in 2012 on collaboration in the area of investment between the two organizations, with ESCAP providing inputs to the 2012 edition of the UNCTAD publication, *World Investment Report*. It is desirable that collaboration in this area continue, with one option being a joint launch of the Report in the Asia-Pacific region.

3. Coordination of the programme of work of ESCAP in trade and investment with the programme of work of UNCTAD or the ones of other relevant United Nations agencies normally takes place through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) Working Group on Trade,<sup>1</sup> which is chaired by UNCTAD. It would be desirable if the Working

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<sup>1</sup> ECESA operates under the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. It is one of four thematic committees set up for the purpose of coordination among United Nations bodies within the United Nations Secretariat in the particular thematic area through working groups. Trade is one of these areas.

Group were to meet more frequently in order to ensure more effective coordination of work programmes among concerned agencies.<sup>2</sup>

4. Stronger collaboration has been achieved under the newly established United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity,<sup>3</sup> convened by UNCTAD. The cluster has been active at the regional level, with ESCAP acting as the regional coordinator of its activities in Asia and the Pacific. In February 2013, it undertook a joint mission to Myanmar, which has resulted in a matrix of activities to be undertaken individually and jointly with the purpose of developing a joint technical assistance programme for the country in the area of trade and investment. The matrix of activities is currently being finalized for resource mobilization purposes.

5. Collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) generally has been strong, but could be further improved. Frequent contacts exist between ESCAP and the UNIDO regional office. A joint capacity-building project with the European Commission on implementing World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments for Nepal was implemented from 2008 to 2011. In the 1990s, ESCAP and UNIDO jointly organized training workshops on appraising industrial projects. Revival of this collaborative effort is currently under discussion. In 2013, UNIDO extended financial support for an ESCAP project to furnish technical assistance for the drafting of a new SME Law in Myanmar. UNIDO also has participated in other ESCAP activities undertaken in Myanmar, including the Myanmar Business and Development Week in September 2013.

6. ESCAP and the International Trade Centre (ITC) regularly hold consultations. A recent example of cooperation was the implementation of a European Commission capacity development project from 2007 to 2009 to assist Bhutan in its accession to WTO.

7. ITC and UNIDO are collaborating with ESCAP in furnishing technical assistance to Myanmar in the area of export promotion (ITC) and standards (UNIDO).

8. The Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), a regional institution of ESCAP, is collaborating with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in promoting sustainable agricultural mechanization strategies (SAMS), which aim to enable developing countries to achieve the dual goals of intensifying agricultural production and environmental sustainability involving all relevant stakeholders. SAMS is designed to implement five strategic pillars. The outcome publication of pillar 1 is under preparation and will be released by

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<sup>2</sup> The last meeting of the Working Group was held in November 2011. The latest collaborative effort was a joint publication entitled "Trade and development policy for a green economy: global and regional perspectives". Work on the publication began in 2011. It is now being published.

<sup>3</sup> The cluster, established within the United Nations Chief Executive Board, aims to coordinate joint operations of a number of international organizations in the area of trade and capacity-building. In addition to UNCTAD, its members are the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the International Trade Centre, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, United Nations Office for Project Services and the five United Nations regional commissions.

the end of 2013.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the European Network for Testing of Agricultural Machines (ENTAM), FAO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNIDO are assisting CSAM in its initiative to establish an Asian and Pacific network for testing of agricultural machinery (ANTAM). The aim of the network is to ensure the sustainability and high quality of agricultural machinery produced and traded in participating countries in the Asia-Pacific region through the harmonization of national testing codes and standards of agricultural machinery, and the application of uniform or mutually recognized testing procedures that address quality, performance, occupational safety and environmental sustainability of agricultural machinery in the region.

9. Between 2006 and 2008, ESCAP and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) jointly organized an annual training workshop on trade-related intellectual property rights issues, with particular reference to the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, as well as capacity-building events. Collaboration between the two organizations ceased for a while due to resource constraints and overburdened agendas. It has since been revived through the organization of the following events: Regional Workshop on Research on Intellectual Property and Economic Policies (2010), and two seminars, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on addressing environmentally safe disposal of intellectual property-infringing goods (2012 and 2013). ESCAP and WIPO could consider strengthening their joint efforts in conducting capacity-building activities given the importance of intellectual property (IP) rights in the development of countries of the region. Notably, ESCAP, UNEP and WIPO are collaborating on the preparation of a brochure on environmentally safe disposal of IP-infringing goods in Asia and the Pacific, which will be launched online in November during the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week.

10. The secretariat's collaboration with other United Nations regional commissions in the area of trade and investment has taken an uneven path, with most of the activities being undertaken through the ECESA Working Group on Trade. Among the regional commissions, ESCAP has worked the most with Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) as the two agencies jointly support the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which includes the annual SPECA Project Working Group on Trade. Various development account projects in trade facilitation have been jointly implemented by ESCAP and ECE, while recently they have also included participation from other regional commissions.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, ESCAP has worked with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on sharing trade and investment data and reporting on trends and developments in interregional cooperation. Collaboration between the two agencies has the potential to be strengthened as they both are involved in programmes organized within the framework of the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC).

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<sup>4</sup> The five strategic pillars are: surveys, assessments and analyses of the current status of agricultural mechanization; enabling policies and institutions; human capacity development; financial support to enhance investment in SAMS; and advocacy on sustainable agricultural mechanization.

<sup>5</sup> The project under the Development Account, seventh tranche, which started in 2012 and is to be completed in early 2014 includes the five regional commissions and is led by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). It is envisaged that several projects of the Development Account, ninth tranche, will include most if not all of the regional commissions.

## **B. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**

11. ESCAP has enjoyed a long-term relationship with OECD in collaborating in the area of trade and investment. In particular, the two organizations have organized joint conferences related to corporate social responsibility either alongside the Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) or as part of the secretariat's Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week. The first OECD/ESCAP regional conference on responsible business conduct was held during the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week in November 2009, the second conference was part of APBF 2012 and the third conference was scheduled to be held as part of the third Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week in November 2013 prior to the third session of the Committee on Trade and Investment. Also of note, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP addressed the inaugural OECD Global Forum on Responsible Business Conduct, which was held in Paris on 26 and 27 June 2013.

12. Collaboration between the two organizations reached a milestone with the planned signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Executive Secretary of ESCAP and the Deputy Secretary-General of OECD alongside APBF 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to work together on issues related to trade and investment. The MoU was scheduled to be signed prior to the third session of the Committee on Trade and Investment during the third Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week. At the time of preparing the present document, OECD was planning to send a high-ranking delegation to the Trade and Investment Week.

13. The secretariat participated in two OECD multi-dimensional policy review missions to Myanmar in 2013 that focused on SME development. The mission resulted in a joint publication of which the first volume containing the initial assessment was launched by OECD and ESCAP in July 2013 in Yangon. Of note, OECD participated in the third meeting of the Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment Network for Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries and made a presentation on its investment policy reviews of various Asian countries. This has set the stage for continued collaboration between ESCAP and OECD in the area of investment.

14. Collaboration on trade facilitation research initiated in 2005 in the context of the WTO trade facilitation negotiations and the identification of trade facilitation needs and priorities of developing countries in this area has been ongoing, with the secretariat working with OECD on the collection and analysis of data on transit facilitation and trade costs, respectively.<sup>6</sup>

15. The ESCAP-OECD collaboration efforts created synergies. OECD has contributed the perspective of the developed countries as well as resources from them while ESCAP has presented the regional developing country angle. As a result, the collaboration has led to concrete results.

## **C. World Bank**

16. The joint efforts between ESCAP and the World Bank are comprised of capacity-building and research activities related to trade facilitation. In early 2013, the two organizations jointly launched a bilateral trade-cost database, which is both an extension and a revision of the regional database that has been incrementally compiled by ESCAP starting in 2010 as part of

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Evdokia Moisé and Silvia Sorescu, "Trade facilitation indicators: the potential impact of trade facilitation on developing countries' trade", OECD Trade Policy Papers, No. 144 (Paris, OECD, 2013).

the trade facilitation research programme of the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT). The database contributes significantly towards the application of evidence-based policymaking for enhancing intraregional trade connectivity as it facilitates the comparison of trade costs between countries within a subregion or among subregions. The World Bank has provided funding for updating and maintaining it. The secretariat expects the collaboration to continue in this area given the growing interest and use of this new tool. In terms of technical assistance, the World Bank and ESCAP have coordinated efforts for capacity-building in the area of development of single-window systems for trade facilitation in several countries, including among them Cambodia and Nepal. For example, in early 2013, a workshop on single-window implementation was organized by ESCAP for Cambodian officials participating in a regional study tour of single window-systems in the region. The secretariat has also co-organized Global Facilitation Partnerships for Transport and Trade Facilitation (GFPTT) meetings with the World Bank on the side of the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum, which is jointly organized annually by ESCAP and ADB.

#### **D. World Trade Organization**

17. Given the importance of the multilateral trading system (MTS) for regional trade, the secretariat has implemented various technical assistance projects to assist member States in their efforts to participate in the MTS and implement WTO commitments and to facilitate accession to WTO for those countries that have yet to become a member.

18. ESCAP and WTO have been implementing the ESCAP-WTO Technical Assistance Programme since 1999 under a MoU. For this project, the two organizations have successfully built on each other's comparative advantage; the WTO secretariat has provided expertise on the legal and technical details of the MTS, while the ESCAP secretariat has leveraged its knowledge of the region, including developmental needs and challenges. Both organizations have made financial contributions necessary for the implementation of joint capacity-building events under the Programme and also have expressed a keen interest and firm intention to extend the MoU, which expires on 31 December 2013, for up to five years to ease planning of activities and resource mobilization.

19. Since the launch of the Programme, more than 3,000 government officials and policymakers have been trained on topics relevant to trade, trade policies and WTO-related agreements. Special attention has been given to attracting female and young participants in the activities of the Programme in order to reduce the gender deficit among trade policymakers. Furthermore, ARTNeT has enjoyed support both in terms of financial backing and substantive contributions from WTO staff in developing the research capacity of junior analysts and researchers in the region in the area of trade. The long-standing collaboration between WTO and the ESCAP secretariat has enabled members in the region to benefit from the MTS.

20. Since the start of the programme, 13 economies from the region have joined WTO. As of August 2013, a total of 36 ESCAP member States were members of WTO and another six were WTO observers, with the region as a whole comprising 26 per cent of the global WTO membership and about 40 per cent of global trade. In the absence of a predictable end-date for the conclusion of the Doha Round negotiations, the programme remains relevant for the following reasons: (a) it supports countries not yet a member of WTO in their accession negotiations; (b) it supports ESCAP members in their efforts to comply and implement signed commitments; (c) it develops the

capacity of members to manage new areas that have been added to the MTS by identifying linkages between trade with other multilateral initiatives and impact from the increasing number of preferential trade agreements which have “WTO-plus”<sup>7</sup> obligations, such as competition, investment and government procurement; (d) it addresses the need to strengthen governments’ capacity in trade-related policy areas; and (e) it improves communications among members, which, in turn, contributes to building a regional voice on global trade issues based on cooperation.

21. The WTO-ESCAP Technical Assistance Programme supports capacity-building activities for two broad groups of stakeholders, government officials and policymakers, and academics and researchers. These activities are included in the WTO Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan (2012-2013). In line with efforts to build awareness of the MTS and improve coverage of MTS-related topics in the curricula of high-level educational institutions in Asia and the Pacific, the programme’s activities, whenever possible, are co-organized with academic institutions or national or international think tanks. Consequently, in 2012, two capacity-building events were organized with government officials as a main target group: Regional Seminar on Trade in Agriculture and Agriculture Negotiations, Manila, 16-18 October; and Regional Workshop on Intellectual Property, Public Health and Environment Policy for Asian and Pacific Region, Kuala Lumpur, 10-12 July. These events were hosted by local universities and benefited from the participation of resource persons of academia. In 2013, two more capacity-building programmes for government officials were held: Regional Seminar on Aid for Trade including Trade and Development, Kathmandu, 15-16 April; and Regional Workshop on Trade and Environment for Asia and the Pacific Economies, Bogor, Indonesia, 17-19 September. As part of the programme, workshops related to capacity-building on trade research tools and methods for junior analyst affiliated with research institutions and government departments have been organized in collaboration with ARTNet. In 2012, four such events were organized.

22. In summary, the usefulness of the programme has been recognized by the participants and partners as it provides an update on the latest state of play in WTO, facilitates the sharing of regional experiences by ESCAP and its resource persons, including those associated with ARTNet, and provides a platform for officials to share their perceptions and learn about the views of other participants.

### **III. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the area of trade and investment**

#### **A. Asian Development Bank**

23. ESCAP established ADB in 1966. Since then, the two organizations have evolved with different but complementary mandates and thus have maintained a long-term working relationship. The two organizations have a long-standing MoU. The relationship has been active in the area of trade and investment, in particular in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). ESCAP

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<sup>7</sup> The term “WTO-plus” refers to obligations in preferential trade agreements that exceed the existing requirements of the WTO agreements. There is no agreed standard for what is included under “WTO-plus” issues but it is commonly understood to be obligations that go beyond existing WTO requirements, such as in the areas of investment rules, government procurement and intellectual property rights.

and ADB are represented on the board of the GMS Business Forum, which the two agencies co-founded in 2000. The Forum has played a key role in facilitating public-private dialogues in the subregion through a number of international forums. In collaboration with ESCAP and ADB, the Forum established in 2012 the GMS Freight Transport Association, which aims to contribute to transport and trade facilitation efforts in the subregion. In recent years, however, cooperation between the two organizations in GMS-related activities has declined.

24. ADB and ESCAP have collaborated on trade facilitation activities at both the regional and subregional levels. At the regional level, ADB and ESCAP have jointly organized the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum for five consecutive years, with the latest Forum held in Beijing from 10 to 13 September 2013. This event currently attracts 200-300 participants from 30 countries and thus has become the main annual open regional platform for the following: exchanging information, experiences and practices for trade facilitation in the Asia-Pacific region; identifying priority areas for regional cooperation and integration; and learning about new tools and services which can increase the efficiency of cross-border transactions. ADB and ESCAP have also jointly published the 2013 update of *Designing and Implementing Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific*.<sup>8</sup> Discussions between the organizations on jointly organizing the annual Asia-Pacific Business Forum are also ongoing. As both organizations have strong programmes on regional economic integration, it is only natural that a strong working relationship exists between them. Nevertheless, there is certainly scope to further broaden and deepen their collaborative efforts. At the subregional level, collaboration on trade facilitation in the context of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) has been particularly fruitful, with a joint study on enhancing procedures along three key SASEC trade corridors recently issued, and plans in the works to develop sustainable trade and transport facilitation performance mechanisms in the subregion, which build upon the business process analysis methodology of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

25. ADB was tasked to lead the regional Aid for Trade initiative. ESCAP has been a member of the Regional Technical Group on Aid for Trade for the Asia-Pacific region since 2009. The Group has produced two regional reports, in 2011 and in 2013, as inputs for the Global Review of Aid for Trade. ESCAP also collaborated with ADB on the preparation of relevant case stories on the use and impacts of Aid for Trade in the region for a joint OECD/WTO publication on Aid for Trade in 2011. ESCAP had been very active in the work of this regional group in the period 2009-2011, but recently it has not been able to participate in the group's meetings due to lack of available funding.

26. Cooperation with ADB is also strengthening, albeit slowly, in exchanging information on current and future programmes between ARTNeT, which was established by ESCAP and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in November 2004, and members of the Asian International Economists Network, which was set up by ADB in August 2011. As the institutional members of both networks overlap to a great extent, more effective coordination and the sharing of resources would

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<sup>8</sup> Asia Development Bank and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Designing and Implementing Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific* (Mandaluyong, Philippines, Asian Development Bank, 2013). Available from [www.unescap.org/publications/detail.asp?id=1552](http://www.unescap.org/publications/detail.asp?id=1552).

be helpful to prevent duplication of research and training efforts and to optimize use of public funding.

## **B. Subregional organizations**

27. ESCAP generally has good working relationships with the various subregional organizations in Asia and the Pacific; however, there is scope to further strengthen cooperation with them in the area of trade and investment. Agreements between ESCAP and most of these organizations covering the area of trade and investment and/or related areas have been in existence for quite some time. Additional MoUs exist between the United Nations and subregional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Representatives of subregional organizations are regularly invited to attend ESCAP events in trade and investment but the implementation of joint activities is rare. Joint activities in the area of trade and investment were undertaken with the Colombo Plan Secretariat (CPS) about ten years ago but this collaboration stopped due to lack of available funds for such activities.

28. In an effort to strengthen collaboration among subregional and other organizations on trade facilitation, ESCAP was instrumental in the establishment of the Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism on Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF) in 2010.<sup>9</sup> Under this informal mechanism, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ECO, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), as well as several other organizations active in trade facilitation in the region, such as ADB, UNCTAD and the World Bank, share information on their activities in this area once a year, typically on the side of the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum. A ROC-TF newsletter prepared based on input received from the participating organizations is issued twice a year and a joint calendar of activities on trade facilitation is maintained and shared among focal points for trade facilitation from each organization. ADB has also actively supported this informal mechanism.

## **IV. Issues in strengthening collaboration with global and (sub)regional organizations in the area of trade and investment**

29. It can be argued that the secretariat's collaboration with global organizations in the area of trade and investment has tended to lead to better results than that with subregional and regional organizations. In particular, collaboration with OECD, World Bank and WTO has been relatively successful as there is a clear complementarity between the mandates and work of these organizations in trade and investment with the mandate and work of ESCAP in this area. OECD, which is a global organization representing developed countries, is relatively resource-rich in terms of available financial support. WTO deals with a global trade negotiation agenda which requires the help of regional technical assistance agencies in the area of trade. As a regional organization representing developing countries, ESCAP is relatively resource-poor in terms of financial backing but resource-rich in terms of expertise in the issues and on the region.

30. Collaboration between ESCAP and UNCTAD can be further improved as both organizations address regional issues on trade and investment, as mandated by their respective governing bodies, in implementing their

<sup>9</sup> [www.unescap.org/tid/roctf.asp](http://www.unescap.org/tid/roctf.asp).

respective work programmes with limited budgets. In this context, the secretariat recommends that strengthened cooperation should also be member-State driven to complement initiatives at the secretariat level. Although the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity and the One United Nations initiative among United Nations agencies in the area of trade and investment has yielded results, there is scope to further improve collaboration.

31. Collaboration with ADB is very natural but the terms of reference of the two organizations are quite different. ADB is a relatively resource-rich development bank that provides financing for concrete projects which often deliver visible results, such as roads, ports or enterprises, while ESCAP is a regional body of the United Nations that provides technical assistance and capacity-building and promotes regional cooperation in the area of trade and investment, often delivering “soft” results that are not necessarily visible. ESCAP, however, has a strong track record in promoting regional cooperation in trade and investment.<sup>10</sup> Over the years, ADB has increasingly engaged in providing “soft” level assistance and promoting regional cooperation as well and in this regard, collaboration with ESCAP has increased, though there is a risk of increasing overlap in the programmes that require higher levels of cooperation. Experiences with collaboration can differ considerably. ESCAP-ADB cooperation has generally been excellent with regard to GMS and in substantive areas, such as trade facilitation, but could be improved in Central Asia where it has proved difficult to forge complementarities between the trade component under SPECA with the trade component under the ADB-administered Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Programme<sup>11</sup> (both programmes address trade policy and trade facilitation issues). In addition, administrative and financial procedures differ considerably between the two organizations, making collaboration cumbersome and sometimes outright impossible and preventing a “logical” relationship between the two agencies in which ADB would provide financial resources and ESCAP would tap its expertise and convening power.

32. Collaboration with subregional organizations also suffers from similar constraints. Collaboration with APEC is challenging as ESCAP and APEC have considerably different memberships and APEC is, to a large extent, a political organization that encourages voluntary commitments from its members in trade. The secretariats of subregional organizations such as ASEAN, ECO, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and SAARC often lack the required resources to enable effective collaboration with the ESCAP secretariat which, also often does not have sufficient resources to increase collaborative efforts. In particular, activities undertaken in the Pacific are often cost-prohibitive, making closer collaboration with PIF difficult. For similar reasons, collaboration with subregional organizations covering Central Asia, such as ECO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, is

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<sup>10</sup> See E/ESCAP/CTI(3)/4.

<sup>11</sup> The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Programme is a partnership of 10 countries, namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, supported by six multilateral institutions that work together to promote development through cooperation with the objectives to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. In addition to ADB, which serves as the secretariat, CAREC is supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank. Arguably, the multi-institutional nature of CAREC makes inter-agency cooperation more difficult.

challenging. In addition, the mandates of the subregional organizations are quite different as they are often political in nature and focus on the needs of their respective member countries, ESCAP, on the other hand, takes a more holistic regional view, though it is expected that the establishment of the ESCAP subregional offices will help the organization respond more effectively to the needs of the subregions. Collaboration with CPS in the area of trade and investment has been relatively easy as the Secretariat, similar to ESCAP, focuses on providing technical assistance to countries in Asia and the Pacific. However, such collaborative activities are often undertaken in addition to existing activities rather than replacing such activities as they are not normally part of each organization's programme of work. As a result, these endeavours tend to suffer from resource constraints as they are either not originally budgeted or no longer prioritized. In general, stronger cooperation in the planning and preparation of work programmes would therefore be desirable, especially between ESCAP and other United Nations agencies working in trade and investment.

33. There is certainly potential to broaden and deepen collaboration between ESCAP and other United Nations agencies as well as with ADB and subregional organizations in the area of trade and investment. The lack of resources can be cited as either an obstacle to or as an incentive for more intense collaboration. However, it is also clear that such collaboration needs to be forged by member States in addition to secretariats. In cases in which membership in two organizations has a significant degree of overlap, member States have considerable influence to forge coordination and collaboration between the two organizations, but this requires political will.

## **V. Issues for consideration by the Committee**

34. The Committee is invited to consider the following issues:

(a) Collaboration between ESCAP and relevant global and (sub)regional organizations in the area of trade and investment and related issues;

(b) Implications of the work of global and (sub)regional organizations in the area of trade and investment for the ESCAP subprogramme on trade and investment;

(c) The need to forge synergies in the work in trade and investment between ESCAP and global and (sub)regional organizations through enhanced collaboration;

(d) Modalities to overcome constraints to such collaboration, such as lack of resources and discrepancies in mandates, as well as in administrative and financial rules and regulations;

(e) The respective roles of member States and secretariats of multilateral/regional organizations in forging collaboration.