



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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**REVIEW OF ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURE OF
THE COMMISSION, INCLUDING THE PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE
REPORT FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009 AND THE WORK OF THE
ESCAP REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS: SUBREGIONAL ACTIVITIES
FOR DEVELOPMENT**

(Item 3 (i) of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING ON THE
NEW ESCAP SUBREGIONAL OFFICES FOR EAST AND NORTH-EAST
ASIA, NORTH AND CENTRAL ASIA, AND SOUTH AND
SOUTH-WEST ASIA**

SUMMARY

The present document presents the recommendations resulting from the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on the New ESCAP Subregional Offices for East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, and South and South-West Asia, which was held in Bangkok from 2 to 4 March 2010. A brief summary of the proceedings of the meeting are also included.

Mandated to strengthen the United Nations development pillar, ESCAP, through subprogramme 8, Subregional activities for development, is making concerted efforts to achieve greater focus and depth in its work. The subregional offices would act as the operational arms of ESCAP at the subregional level by, among other things, contributing focused and in-depth subregional perspectives to regional efforts; forging partnerships with government agencies, institutions, the private sector and civil society; developing and disseminating virtual products; sharing good practices; and replicating successful programmes and projects. The relationships among ESCAP headquarters, the subregional offices and partners, including other regional and subregional institutions, would be complementary and synergistic, while maintaining a balance when engaging in collaborative efforts.

Accordingly, the roles of the three new ESCAP subregional offices in addressing the priority needs of the respective subregions—East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, and South and South-West Asia—were discussed during the meeting. The identified priority areas of work revolved around achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including poverty reduction and gender equality, through increased cooperation within and among subregions. Other identified areas included sustainable development, energy, water, food security, trade, transport, and information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction. The Commission may wish to review the suggestions put forth to further refine the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 and the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013, as they relate to the subregional offices, and provide further guidance to the secretariat.

I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Overview of the role of the subregional offices in addressing the priority needs of the subregions

1. The meeting agrees that the main role of the subregional offices lies within the framework of existing mandates to assist the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in the case of the joint office for the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)) in implementing the programmes of work of the regional commissions adopted by the member States in relevant intergovernmental bodies and relevant intergovernmental forums. Consultations with member States on budgetary considerations are an important step towards balancing the allocation of resources among the subregional offices.
2. The meeting recommends that, since the work of the subregional offices would be closely guided by ESCAP mandates, the subregional offices should report and be accountable to ESCAP headquarters. The ESCAP/ECE joint office for SPECA should also report and be accountable to ECE headquarters.
3. The meeting recommends a phased prioritization of the work of the subregional offices in order to ensure balanced and effective delivery of services to member States.
4. In addition, the meeting recommends that the subregional offices avoid duplicating the work of other United Nations entities and partner organizations.
5. The meeting recommends that the subregional offices be placed in a position to strengthen studies of the subregions and that those studies be, to the extent possible, demand-driven.
6. The meeting recommends that ESCAP headquarters carry out coordination functions to facilitate interactions among the subregional offices and headquarters as well as other entities. The relevant divisions located at ESCAP headquarters could work closely with the subregional offices and monitor the relevant work areas to ensure that quality outputs are delivered.

B. Role of the subregional office for East and North-East Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion

7. The meeting recommends that the subregional office assist member States in the following priority areas:
 - (a) Sustainable development, taking into account the green growth approach, and energy efficiency, including the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC);
 - (b) Information and communications technology, disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management;
 - (c) Poverty reduction, including food security;
 - (d) Infrastructure, trade and transport facilitation, including connectivity.

8. Taking into consideration the fact that the subregion hosts three ESCAP regional institutions—the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), and the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (UNAPCAEM)—the meeting recommends that synergy should be built in order to avoid duplication of efforts. This approach would be relevant when engaging in collaborative activities with relevant United Nations agencies, intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other entities.

C. Role of the subregional office for North and Central Asia in addressing the priority needs of subregion

9. The meeting recommends that the subregional office assist member States in the following priority areas:

(a) *Transport and trade facilitation*: developing better transport links, including Euro-Asian transport corridors; transit and transport cooperation, including improved border crossing; the introduction of trade facilitation measures; and the reduction of trade barriers;

(b) *Water, energy and environment*: management of water and energy resources, protection of the environment and climate change adaptation.

D. Role of the subregional office for South and South-West Asia in addressing the priority needs of subregion

10. The meeting recommends that the subregional office assist member States in the following priority areas:

(a) Bridging gaps in the Millennium Development Goals (poverty and related areas);

(b) Infrastructure development with a focus on transport; trade and transport facilitation, including connectivity;

(c) Disaster risk reduction, including drought and earthquakes;

(d) Energy and food security.

11. Capacity-building is a cross-cutting approach that can be used to address the above-mentioned areas.

**E. Short- and medium-term work programmes for the subregional offices:
programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011**

12. The meeting notes a proposal to include a technical cooperation project on cooperation mechanisms to promote infrastructure development in South and South-West Asia, with a focus on transport, specifically trade and transport facilitation, including connectivity.

**F. Short- and medium-term work programmes for the subregional offices:
draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013**

13. The meeting expresses its general support for the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013¹ and requests the secretariat to incorporate the relevant outcomes of the present meeting into the draft strategic framework and to inform the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) of the outcome of the meeting, in particular the priority programme areas identified for the three subregional offices under agenda item 4, to facilitate further review of the draft strategic framework by ACPR, prior to its consideration by the Commission. In this regard, the meeting requests that the priority areas identified under that agenda item for each of the three subregions be aligned with the list of priority areas included in the respective expected accomplishments (a) under components 2, 3 and 4.

II. PROCEEDINGS

**A. Overview of the role of the subregional offices in addressing
the priority needs of the subregions**

14. The meeting had before it the document entitled "Background and rationale behind the new ESCAP subregional offices" (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/3).

15. Representatives presented in-depth and relevant views and opinions on the priority needs of the respective subregions. That was followed by rich discussions on priority work areas for the new subregional offices. They then discussed recommendations on possible priority work areas, including further articulation of the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 and the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013 in respect of the subregional offices.

16. The meeting noted that the subregional offices could play a key role in strengthening cooperation among the member States concerned, as "outreach" offices, in close cooperation and consultation with ESCAP headquarters. Those offices, including the subregional office for the Pacific, would form a network to assist in delivering outputs mandated under the strategic framework and programme of work of ESCAP.

17. The meeting noted that the subregional offices, taking into consideration the mandates of ESCAP, should establish close working relations with United Nations country teams within the subregion and facilitate the coordination of United Nations system activities at the subregional level as well as building partnerships with other relevant actors, including subregional intergovernmental bodies, to promote subregional cooperation within a regional framework.

18. The meeting also noted that the opening of the subregional offices, subject to completion of the negotiation of the host country agreements with the respective host countries, was tentatively planned to take place during the second quarter of 2010 in the case of the offices in Incheon, Republic of Korea, and Almaty, Kazakhstan, while the office in New Delhi would be opened later.

¹ E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/8.

19. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while welcoming the establishment of the three new subregional offices in Asia and the Pacific, pointed out that its country was located within the territorial purview of three regional commissions of the United Nations, namely the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), ECE and ESCAP, especially through the subregional offices of North and Central Asia and South and South-West Asia. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserved the right to participate in the relevant activities of neighbouring subregional offices on a permanent or thematic basis.

B. Role of the subregional office for East and North-East Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion

20. The meeting had before it the documents entitled "Role of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion" (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/4) and "Report of the Expert Group Meeting to identify work priorities of the new ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia" (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/1).

21. The meeting noted that the East and North-East Asian subregion was an economic powerhouse in Asia and the Pacific as well as in the world. There was also a growing economic and environmental interdependence within and among the subregions of Asia and the Pacific. Such fast-paced growth patterns were characterized by an impressive share of gross domestic product (GDP) as well as high energy-consumption levels and corresponding carbon dioxide emissions.

22. The meeting acknowledged that, given the limited human resource availability in the subregional office, its work should focus on three or four priority areas in addition to supporting the work of ESCAP headquarters. Those priority areas would revolve around the role of the office as a driver of South-South cooperation.

23. The meeting discussed the role of the subregional office in relation to NEASPEC and agreed that further consultations with the relevant member States were required in order to determine whether the secretariat of NEASPEC could be located within the subregional office.

C. Role of the subregional office for North and Central Asia in addressing the priority needs of subregion

24. The meeting had before it the documents entitled "Role of the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion" (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/5) and "United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) 2010-2011 Work Plan" (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/INF/4).

25. The meeting noted that, due to limited human resource availability in the subregional office, its work should focus on a few priority areas in addition to supporting the work of ESCAP headquarters (and ECE in the case of the joint ESCAP/ECE office for SPECA). Those priority areas would revolve around the promotion of subregional cooperation and collaboration.

26. The meeting noted that only a few member States from the subregion were represented at the meeting.

D. Role of the subregional office for South and South-West Asia in addressing the priority needs of subregion

27. The meeting had before it the documents entitled "Role of the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion" (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/6) and "Report of the Expert Group Meeting to identify work priorities of the new ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia" (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/2).

28. The meeting acknowledged that, in light of the limited human resource availability in the subregional office, its work should focus on three or four priority areas in addition to supporting the work of ESCAP headquarters. Those priority areas would be in line with efforts to bridge development gaps and promote accelerated growth.

29. The delegation of Pakistan expressed concern regarding possible difficulties in obtaining visas for participants attending meetings and other activities organized by the subregional offices. In response, the delegation of India stated that the Government of India would facilitate the issuance of visas to all participants, subject to its rules and regulations, as was the practice for all other United Nations-related meetings hosted by the large number of United Nations agencies based in India.

E. Short- and medium-term work programmes for the subregional offices: programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011

30. The meeting had before it the programme of work for the new ESCAP subregional offices for the biennium 2010-2011 (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/7).

31. The meeting noted that the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, in respect of subregional activities for development in East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia and South and South-West Asia, had been endorsed by the Commission at its sixty-fifth session, in April 2009.² It further noted that the Commission at its sixty-sixth session, in 2010, would consider the proposed programme changes for the biennium 2010-2011 emanating from the new mandates adopted since the Commission had endorsed the programme of work, including the outcome of the present meeting.

32. Bearing in mind the above, a technical cooperation project on cooperation mechanisms to promote infrastructure development in South and South-West Asia, with a focus on transport, specifically trade and transport facilitation, including connectivity, was proposed.

33. The need for the secretariat to continue its efforts to secure extrabudgetary contributions to fund subregion-specific operational activities in priority areas was discussed.

F. Short- and medium-term work programmes for the subregional offices: draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013

34. The meeting had before it the draft strategic framework for the new ESCAP subregional offices for the biennium 2012-2013 (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/8).

² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 19* (E/2009/39-E/ESCAP/65/32), paras. 180-188.

35. The meeting was informed that the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013, in respect of subregional activities for development in East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia and South and South-West Asia had been reviewed by ACPR at its special session held on 18 February 2010. It noted that the draft strategic framework would be further reviewed by ACPR at its resumed special session, which was scheduled for 22 March 2010, and by the Commission at its sixty-sixth session, which would be held from 13 to 19 May 2010. Subsequently, the ESCAP strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013 would be reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fiftieth session, which would be held in New York in June 2010, prior to final consideration and approval by the General Assembly in late 2010.

36. Noting the process outlined above, representatives expressed general support for the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013, as contained in the above-mentioned document, and noted that the relevant outcomes of the present meeting should be incorporated into the draft strategic framework. It was noted that ACPR needed to be informed of the outcome of the meeting, in particular the priority programme areas identified for the three subregional offices under agenda item 4, to facilitate further review of the draft strategic framework by ACPR prior to consideration by the Commission. In that regard, it was noted that the priority areas identified under that agenda item for each of the three subregions should be aligned with the list of priority areas included in the respective expected accomplishments (a) under components 2, 3 and 4.

37. The meeting noted that some delegations had proposed changes to the draft strategic framework.

G. Other matters

38. No other matters were raised.

H. Adoption of the report of the meeting and closing

39. The meeting had before it the draft report (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/L.3) and a set of draft recommendations (E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/L.3/Add.1). The report and recommendations were adopted with some changes. The Chair declared the session closed.

III. ORGANIZATION

A. Opening and duration

40. The meeting was held in Bangkok from 2 to 4 March 2010. It was opened by the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

41. The main objectives of the meeting were the following:

(a) To reach a common understanding and shared vision on the priority needs of the respective subregions;

(b) To articulate short- and medium-term work programmes for the subregional offices with a view to addressing the priority issues identified.

B. Attendance

42. Representatives of the following members of the Commission attended the meeting: Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; France; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and United States of America.

43. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies also attended the meeting: Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Development Programme–Regional Centre in Bangkok.

C. Election of officers

44. The meeting elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Syed Bakri (Malaysia)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Masatoshi Sato (Japan)

Mr. Nikolay Pomoshchnikov (Russian Federation)

Mr. J.B. Disanayaka (Sri Lanka)

Rapporteur: Mr. Md. Abdullah Al Masud Chowdhury (Bangladesh).

D. Agenda

45. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Role of the subregional offices in addressing the priority needs of the following subregions:
 - (a) East and North-East Asia;
 - (b) North and Central Asia;
 - (c) South and South-West Asia.
5. Short- and medium-term work programmes for the subregional offices:
 - (a) Programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011;
 - (b) Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the meeting.
8. Closing of the meeting.

Annex

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Document title</i>
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/1	4 (a)	Report of the Expert Group Meeting to Identify Work Priorities of the New ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/2	4 (c)	Report of the Expert Group Meeting to Identify Work Priorities of the New ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/3	4	Background and rationale behind the new ESCAP subregional offices
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/4	4 (a)	Role of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/5	4 (b)	Role of the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/6	4 (c)	Role of the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia in addressing the priority needs of the subregion
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/7	5 (a)	Programme of work of the new ESCAP subregional offices for the biennium 2010-2011
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/8	5 (b)	Draft strategic framework for the new ESCAP Subregional offices for the biennium 2012-2013
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/L.1	3	Provisional agenda
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/L.2	3	Annotated provisional agenda
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/L.3	7	Draft report
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/L.3/Add.1	7	Draft recommendations of the meeting
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/INF/1		Information note for participants
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/INF/2		Tentative programme
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/INF/3		List of participants
E/ESCAP/SRO/IGM/1/INF/4	4 (b)	United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) 2010-2011 Work Plan

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