

Statement of Ms. Barbara Meynert
Member of the ESCAP Business Advisory Council and
Senior Advisor to the Fung Group
at the Senior officials segment of the 69th session of the Commission
Bangkok, 25 April 2013

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor and ~~allowing me~~ to brief the Commission on the work of the ESCAP Business Advisory Council (EBAC), which has evolved as the principal modality of ESCAP to engage with the business community. I have the pleasure to represent the current Chair of EBAC, Datuk Seri Mohamed Iqbal Rawther, to make this statement.

Consisting of executives and representatives of leading businesses in a wide range of industries and sectors from across the Asia-Pacific region, EBAC was established at the first Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) in Shanghai in 2004 and has provided substantive support and in-kind contribution to various ESCAP activities ever since. In 2011, EBAC adopted its revised terms of reference and renewed its focus on providing guidance and support to ESCAP's programme of work in general and the organization of APBF in particular.

EBAC has grown to close to 50 members from 30 countries and is still expanding to be even more inclusive in terms of country and industry. It specifically aims to provide business perspectives on development issues in the Asia-Pacific region to governments as represented in the legislative bodies of ESCAP, in particular (but not limited to) the Committee on Trade and Investment and the Commission, and provide advice to the ESCAP secretariat on its programmes and projects.

Last year EBAC, under the guidance of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, established the Asia-Pacific Sustainable Business Network (SBN). The role of the SBN is to promote and nurture the concept of sustainable and inclusive business in the context of environmental sustainability and social inclusiveness in the region, with particular reference to the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development. That outcome document underscored the importance of business in promoting sustainable development.

To achieve the outcome, the network established five task forces: (1) green business; (2) social enterprises and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); (3) inclusive trade and investments; (4) intra and inter-regional connectivity; and (5) banking and finance. The aim of the task forces is to pursue policy advocacy, provide training and create awareness among both the business community and governments in specific areas.

EBAC and its Sustainable Business Network, in collaboration with ESCAP, plan to implement a number of activities in 2013. These include:

1. Business forum at the Asia-Pacific Energy Forum (APEF), Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 29 May 2013;

2. The Myanmar Business and Development Week, a capacity development event in collaboration with the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon, which has been proposed to be held in September 2013;
3. The Asia-Pacific Business Forum in Sydney, 24-26 November 2013 on the theme of “New Horizons for Asia-Pacific Business: Making Development Work for All” and
4. The Young Business Leader Programme: Business and Sustainability – Principles and Practices, possibly in Q4, 2013.

On behalf of EBAC, I look forward to our contribution to and collaboration with ESCAP on its work through EBAC and the Sustainable Business Network.

Thank you.