

Briefing Note on SSWA

India

✓ India is happy to host the ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office in New Delhi and support it with an annual contribution and office space. We are happy to see that the office has become functional and effective with a number of activities organized across the subregion in its first full year of functioning.

✓ The office is producing research and analysis of vital importance to the subregion. Its first flagship report *Regional Cooperation for Inclusive and Sustainable Development: South and South-West Asia Development Report, 2012-13* makes a strong case that improved regional cooperation can play a key role ensuring inclusive growth, food and energy security, regional connectivity, and improved productive capacity in the least developed countries.

The office is also partnering closely with governments and institutions in the subregion for important technical capacity building activities. I am pleased to note that the office has chosen to assist Afghanistan in its bid for accession to WTO through its capacity-building activities. The ESCAP Office has also organized important consultations on regional cooperation for energy security, on women entrepreneurship, on regional value chains for inclusive development of South Asia, and on the post 2015 development agenda. The office has brought together such luminaries as Professor Amartya Sen, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, for high-level policy dialogues with the policy makers of the subregion.

In its analysis, ESCAP Office has made a strong case for connecting the important transport corridors to strengthen the regional connectivity that will enable the South and South-West Asia to leverage its strategic location at the cross-roads of Asia and the Pacific to re-emerge as the hub of East-West trade that it once was. In that light we support its proposed work of building capacity to strengthen connectivity across the region.

✓ In closing we thank ESCAP and its member states for selecting New Delhi for the location of the Subregional office. I am confident that the Office will play a vital role in the development of the member states especially the four least developed countries three of which are also landlocked as an important development partner of the region.