

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Bangkok, 29-31 March 2017

Item 2(b) of the provisional agenda

**Assessment of the progress in implementation of SDGs at the regional level**

**Reports of the round tables on sustainable development goals**

**1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 organised under Agenda item 2(b)**

**Assessment of the progress in implementation of SDGs at the regional level**

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) reviewed in-depth the cluster of sustainable development goals that will be the focus of the 2017 session of the High-level political forum on sustainable development, in line with the UN General Assembly resolution on follow up and review 70/299.

2. For 2017 the goals to be reviewed in-depth are: Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and Goal 17. Partnership for the goals (Means of implementation).

3. Under Agenda item 2(b) Assessment of the progress in implementation of SDGs at regional level, recommendations on six of these goals (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14) were developed through six parallel roundtables. The objective of each of the roundtables was to develop a shared understanding of the outlook for the achievement of the goal and to develop recommendations on (a) addressing systemic challenges that are barriers to further progress (b) priorities for strengthening policy coherence in implementation efforts – including through attention to key leverage points; (c) areas for regional cooperation to address the transboundary dimensions of these goals and challenges ; and (d) promising innovations (policy, social, institutional, technological or other) at the national level.

4. The conclusions of each roundtable were shared in the plenary of the APFSD, with the report of each delivered by its Rapporteur.

## **II. Roundtable 1 on Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere)**

5. The roundtable was co-organized by ESCAP, FAO and UNDP. An opening presentation and remarks were delivered by Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary for Sustainable Development of ESCAP, Ms. Xiangjun Yoo, Regional Strategic Programme Coordinator of FAO, and Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific.

6. Mr. Thinley Namgyel, Secretary, GNH Commission, Bhutan, moderated the session. Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Dr. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Minister of Planning and Development, Pakistan; Mr. Subandi Sardjoko, Deputy for Human and Societal Development and Cultural Affairs, Indonesia; Mr. Ezizgeldi Annamammedov, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy and Development, Turkmenistan; Mr. Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mongolia to ESCAP; and Ms. Karin Fernando, Senior Research Professional, Center for Poverty Analysis and representatives of the Asia and Pacific CSO Forum for Sustainable Development, contributed as discussants.

7. The report of the roundtable was delivered in plenary by Mr. Thinley Namgyel, Secretary, Gross National Happiness Commission, Bhutan, as Rapporteur.

### *Outlook for the goal*

(a) In the Asia-Pacific, since the period 2000-2004, the proportion of persons living in extreme poverty has decreased from 29.7 per cent to 10.3 per cent in the period 2010-2013 in Asia-Pacific. This equates to an estimated 400 million poor for the Asia-Pacific region, with the total number of poor worldwide being estimated at 767 million (52 % of the world poor in Asia-Pacific). The extent of poverty differs significantly throughout the region, with the Pacific (excluding Australia and New

Zealand) having the highest rates at 38.2 per cent, due to the situation in Papua New Guinea, whereas the rate in East and North-East Asia is currently only 1.8 per cent.

(b) ESCAP has conducted a survey of perceptions on the attainment of SDGs with sample from the Asia-Pacific region. The findings of the survey show that the level of optimism on the SDGs stands on the middle-ground overwhelmingly. Respondents perceived political commitment, good governance, legal frameworks, data and monitoring, and capacity building are most importance areas for the attainment of the Goal 1. However, most respondents show more concerns about corruption, legal and policy framework, which are the major challenges in the attainment of the Goal.

*Overview of issues discussed in the roundtable*

(c) The primary challenge is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere while ensuring equitable and secure economic opportunities for all people and strengthening resilience, particularly in the face of new threats and risks, including as a result of climate change. In particular, the panel discussed the following four targets: eradicating extreme poverty for the poor and the vulnerable, appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, building resiliency of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, ensuring significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources.

*Main recommendations for governments/policy-makers*

(d) Addressing systemic challenges that are barriers to further progress

1. Multidimensional poverty – policymakers need to look beyond the prevalent definition of poverty, and set up the mechanism to assess poverty,
2. Identify the target group as policies are not always targeted well. Policymakers have to promote country-specific and country led policy practices.
3. Improve better understanding of the various reasons for prevalence of poverty, both at the urban and rural areas.
4. Strengthen infrastructure development policies to improve ICT and connectivity, lack of which is constraining implementation of SDG 1
5. Lack of effective delivery of public services has been pointed out to be a factor that has failed to increase tax morale, and to boost the collection of tax revenues.

(e) Priorities for strengthening policy coherence in implementation efforts – including through attention to key leverage points

6. Prepare policies on the basis of the local specificities - localized policy making and its coherence is the most important element for sustainable inclusive growth for poverty reduction.
7. Multidimensional nature of poverty needs multidimensional mechanisms and policy coordination to eradicate poverty in all its forms
8. Budget decentralization through devolution to local government and social audits can be instrumental to use resources effectively and efficiently.
9. At various levels the depth of poverty has not been explored appropriately leading to lack of policy coherence to understand the various dimensions of poverty: the vulnerability groups get low priority, so there is need to create more awareness and representation for resources to be more targeted at the vulnerable groups and populations
10. Need to strike a right balance among the three pillars of sustainable development, while ensuring that the policy coherence to support the development progress does not come at the cost of hurting the vulnerable groups and marginalised communities.

(f) Areas for regional cooperation to address the transboundary dimensions of these goals and challenges

11. Coordinated responses across countries are necessary to address transboundary dimensions of SDG 1, especially as the economic and ecological shocks and risks can reduce the hard-won gains in poverty reduction.

12. Emphasize the importance of regional cooperation on tax matters to fight against illicit financial flows, and help the Asia-Pacific countries reducing their tax revenues gap, when applicable.
13. Regional cooperation is essential for resilient building, disaster risk reduction and disaster response, particularly those responding to cross-border risks, which caused large amount of economic and human loss.
14. Need to strengthen information and reliable and frequent data sharing on issues related to tax leakages, climate change consequences and disasters risks related issues.
15. Harness bilateral and trilateral efforts, including through south-south partnerships to ensure that concern for development partnerships to support national, subregional, and regional projects are implemented in an effective and transformative manner.

(g) Promising innovations (policy, social, institutional, technological or other) at the national level

16. Successful policies need to be replicated and adopted to local conditions through specific actions plans to support policy innovations as well as technological improvement, especially for the countries with special needs (LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS).
17. Increase technological innovations related to access to regional and subregional funds during and after natural disasters, which usually negatively affects the communities resources, as many of them don't have social insurance.
18. Policymakers are encouraged to enable innovation in supporting sustainable development of a digital community and in teaching ICT to local communities, especially to women and youth.
19. Increase the usage of technologies at various levels of the governments, and support the public and private partnership as one of the policy innovations to mobilize more financial resources and to deliver public services in an innovative and cost-effective way.
20. Ensure improved understanding of monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes, including through establishment of databases on policies on SDG 1 by introducing innovations and new methods from the local to national levels.

#### *Other recommendations*

(h) ESCAP to get involved in more regional and subregional projects and programmes, including through regional intergovernmental processes such as the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, that have meaningful and significant implications at the country level sustainable development processes, especially through their national planning frameworks, to support the implementation of their projects and programmes to address the multidimensional nature of poverty.

#### *In closing*

(i) As a way forward, success in achieving Goal 1 by 2030 will be highly dependent on several critical factors, including the effective targeting of social protection policies, job creation and effective governance mechanisms that increase support in an inclusive and sustainable manner for the most vulnerable groups and marginalized communities in the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP stands ready to implement the Goal 1 by 2030 in partnerships with UN agencies, funds and programmes, regional development banks and financing institutions, national partners through multi-stakeholder engagement process.

### III. Roundtable on Goal 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture)

8. The roundtable was co-organized by ESCAP (EDD, CAPSA, and CSAM) and FAO. Welcome remarks were delivered by Mr. Masakazu Ichimura, Head of the ESCAP Centre for Poverty Alleviation through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA) and Mr. Sumiter Broca, Senior Policy Officer and Leader, Socio-Economic Development and Policy Support Group, FAO. The opening presentation was delivered by Mr. Sumiter Broca.

9. Mr. Sumiter Broca moderated the session. Hon. Viam Pillay, Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Fiji; Ms. Sisomboun Ounavong, Director-General, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao PDR; Prof Norichika Kanie, Project Leader for Governance for Sustainable Development; UNU/IAS; and Ms. Azra Talat Sayeed of Roots for Equity and Mr. Ajay Kumar Jha, on behalf of the Asia and Pacific CSO Forum for Sustainable Development, contributed as discussants.

10. The report of the roundtable was delivered in plenary by Hon. Viam Pillay, Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Fiji as Rapporteur.

#### *Outlook for the goal*

(a) In the MDG era, the region's efforts have resulted in a lot of positive changes. The region significantly reduced hunger, almost doubled agricultural and food production mostly by small-scale food producers. However, there are remaining challenges. About 2 billion people suffer from "hidden hunger". Obesity is increasing rapidly. 5% of arable land was lost between 1993 and 2003. Water availability per person decreased. Rates of use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides per hectare are among highest in world.

#### *Overview of issues discussed in the roundtable*

(b) The panel shared national experiences. The roundtable discussed how to achieve food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, ensure means of implementation for SDG 2 and other goals through 4 perspectives: 1) systemic changes, policy coherence, innovations, and regional cooperation.

#### *Main recommendations for governments/policy-makers*

##### (c) Systemic changes

- Address unfair and inequitable domestic subsidy rules through addressing key agricultural issues in the WTO Doha round
- To ensure Target 2.C is met, we need to regulate futures markets, and governments must cooperate on this
- Rectify the restrictive intellectual property standards enshrined in trade and investment agreements, which restrict the farmers from using their seeds freely.
- more investment in social protection responsive to disaster and focused on addressing hunger, and nutrition sensitive
- diversification of livelihood outside agriculture (investing in alternative livelihood)
- Make agriculture a formal sector and protect farmers by labor laws

##### (d) Priorities for strengthening policy coherence in implementation effort

- Ensure transparent, participatory, and democratic process for the public investments (including those by international institutions) in agriculture
- Areas for regional cooperation to address the transboundary dimensions of these goals and challenges.

- Promising innovations (policy, social, institutional, technological or other) at the national level
- Invest into education on sustainable agriculture and stimulate partnerships between academia, government, private sector, civil society
- Develop and implement regulatory framework (including taxation and subsidies) to incentivize the private sector to contribute to SDG2 in particular 2.a and 2.b.
- strengthening alternative agriculture production systems through public investment and other
- land distribution policy should be implemented for landless farmers
- conduct legislative and policy review to protect traditional livelihoods and occupation of small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples along with the recognition of the collective rights to land, territories and resources

(e) Innovation and good practices

- Public investment in agroecology which is based on using internal resources such as animal dung and compost instead of pesticides etc.
- Invest in agricultural research not just crops but also animal husbandry including indigenous species, which tend to be resistant to climate change
- Food fortification as well as diversify livestock and poultry to address nutrition needs based on indigenous genetic materials
- Ensure dietary diversity by ensuring seeds diversity including indigenous species
- Access to information to farmers, including but not limited to ICT (on price signals etc.)
- regulation of contract farming and promoting farmer owned marketing systems (farmers-own initiatives)
- research and development should be based on farmer's needs, drawing on local and indigenous knowledge

(f) Regional cooperation

- South-South cooperation (farmers and farmers cooperatives-led South-South cooperation) for knowledge exchange, farmers-led decision making, and in-kind trade
- ODA to promote fair trade in the region, especially among farmer cooperatives (landless farmers and women)
- Regional risk financing scheme to respond to disasters with focus on hunger, malnutrition and livelihood destruction due to disasters
- need to focus on prevention of stunning and malnutrition over curative measures

#### **IV. Roundtable on Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages)**

11. The roundtable was co-organized by UNFPA, WHO and ESCAP. Ms. Lubna Baqi, Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UNFPA and Dr. Phyllida Travis, Director, Department of Health System Development, Regional Office for South East Asia, WHO. UNFPA delivered the opening remarks and WHO the overview presentation.

12. Mr. Srinivas Tata, Chief, Capacity Development and Partnerships Section, Strategy and Programme Planning Division, ESCAP served as Moderator. Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Samoa; Dr. Wah Wah Maung, Director-General, Central Statistical Organization, Ministry of Planning and Finance, Myanmar; Ms. Neha Chauhan, Programme Specialist, Advocacy, International Planned Parenthood Federation, India; Dr. Walaiporn Patcharanarumol, International Health Policy Programme, Ministry of Health, Thailand; and Ms. Maria Lourdes S. Marin, Regional Coordinator, Coalition of Asia-Pacific Regional Networks on HIV/AIDS (7 Sisters) on behalf of the Asia and Pacific CSO Forum for Sustainable Development, contributed as discussants.

13. The report was delivered by Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Samoa, Rapporteur, as follows:

##### *Regional outlook for the achievement of the goal*

(a) Universal access to health care remains a major challenge in Asia and the Pacific, especially in terms of inequity along income, education and gender lines. Substantial progress was made on the health MDGs; however, child health, maternal mortality and reproductive health targets were unmet; some 81 million women wanting to avoid pregnancy are not using effective family planning methods. While communicable diseases persist, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are rising rapidly in the region, spurred by population ageing. The afore-mentioned challenges are compounded by public health spending remaining relatively low in Asia and the Pacific compared with other regions. In sum, prospects for achieving SDG 3 in the region will depend on building on the gains made during the MDG era but taking a more integrated and multisectoral approach, backed by sustained political support.

##### *Overview of issues discussed in the roundtable*

(b) Strengthening laws, legislation and monitoring, and utilizing integrated approaches can overcome systemic barriers to progress on achieving SDG 3. Key to this is ensuring Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and using innovative means regarding, among others, resource mobilization, health promotion and disease prevention. In the Pacific, morbidity and mortality from NCD are particularly alarming; on the other hand, child and maternal mortality and lack of sexual and reproductive health services remain serious concerns in several countries across region. Nevertheless, opportunities exist especially through greater collaboration between sectors, adhering to accountability frameworks and utilizing technology to spread awareness and adopt new ideas. Further opportunities exist in reviewing and monitoring the implementation of SDGs, building on existing international and regional frameworks and monitoring mechanisms.

##### *Main recommendations for governments/policy-makers*

1. Ensure progress on the unfinished MDG agenda related to maternal, reproductive and adolescent health is achieved, by increasing political action, creating enabling environments and changing social norms; as well as specifically addressing the unmet need for family planning; and providing sufficient health workers to deliver quality care.

2. Use the right to health and UHC as the common platform for advancing SDG3, with interventions to improve access to quality care and financial protection, as well as increase local ownership of health care. A special focus should be directed to health workers, access to medicines and reducing out-of-pocket payments. It is also important to sustain and build on current actions to expand frontline services and to increase pre-payment for health care, as well as share lessons across countries for greater impact. Such actions will also make health systems more resilient to withstand internal and external shocks including from natural disasters.
3. Ensure that public policies related to health are coherent and explicitly address equity and benefit disadvantaged groups, in particular those left furthest behind, and that new approaches are developed, implemented and monitored using disaggregated data and innovative methods.
4. Bolster progress on NCDs, by increasing interaction between health and other sectors to reduce key risk factors - such as tobacco, alcohol, obesity and high blood pressure - through ensuring effective regulation and taxation, developing new service delivery models for long term care, and by being responsive to rapid demographic and epidemiological changes.
5. Promote multisectoral and multi-stakeholder action, including through public-private partnerships and engagement of civil society, to enhance the impact of investments in other goals on achieving better health, and vice versa. New technologies and other innovations need to be used, such as in addressing NCDs and involving youth.
6. Increase domestic health expenditure and better understand both economic and social gains from investing in health to attain progress on SDG3. However, public health spending is more than just the amount of funding, since innovative, transparent and efficient public financial management are essential to ensuring equity and sustainability.
7. Reinforce progress that has already been made, as evidenced in many countries, on adapting national health monitoring frameworks to incorporate SDG3. Special attention should be directed to equity monitoring, and improved civil registration and vital statistics. Increased data transparency and dialogue on results with multiple stakeholders is vital to ensure accountability.
8. Strengthen regional, including south-south, cooperation, to foster peer learning and share knowledge of successful policies and initiatives, such as on enhancing the health workforce, improving access to medicines, transferring technology, mitigating the impact of natural disasters, and addressing environmental concerns and other determinants of health.

*In closing*

(c) Translating international agreements to the local level, including national monitoring frameworks, though a challenge, provides opportunities to see issues of common concern, such as climate change, and prioritize health as central to sustainable development.



## V. Roundtable on Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)

14. The Roundtable was co-organized by the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism's Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (TWG-GEEW), co-chaired by UN Women and ESCAP/SDD and in collaboration with UNFPA and FAO. Mr. Nagesh Kumar, Director, Social Development Division of ESCAP and Ms. Anna-Karin Jätfors, Deputy Regional Director at the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific opened the meeting. An overview presentation was delivered by Ms. Cai Cai, Chief of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section of the Social Development Division of ESCAP. Mr. Rezaul Bashir Siddique, Deputy Secretary of Development Effectiveness Wing, Economic Relations Division (ERD) of Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh chaired the roundtable. Ms. Janneke van de Graaf - Kukler, Regional Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific provided additional meeting facilitation.

15. Ms. Khaleen Sasuman, Supervising Gender and Development Specialist, Philippine Commission on Women; Ms. Sarah Zaman, Director, Bodily Rights Programme, Shirkat Gah - Women's Resource Centre, Pakistan, contributed as discussants.

16. The report was delivered in plenary by Mr. Rezaul Bashir Siddique, Deputy Secretary of Development Effectiveness Wing, Economic Relations Division (ERD) of Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh as Rapporteur.

### *Objective of the Roundtable*

(a) The roundtable reviewed progress of the implementation and monitoring of SDG 5 targets at the country level in the region. The roundtable enabled participants to foster a shared understanding of regional progress; exchange experiences and south-south cooperation by identifying key challenges, good practices and opportunities for follow-up; and identify regional multi-stakeholder recommendations on each target under SDG 5.

### *The regional outlook for the achievement of SDG 5 in Asia-Pacific is seen as challenging*

(b) Persistent discrimination against women and girls is still evident throughout the region, as illustrated by low and even declining trends in female labor force participation; persistent occupational segregation; low levels of political representation in national parliaments; persistence of child, early and forced marriages as well as violence against women and girls (VAWG); high burdens of unpaid care and domestic work that are unequally distributed and remain unrecognized; discriminatory legislation among others, with emphasis on women and girls left furthest behind.

(c) Participants reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; recalled international covenants and conventions promoting the equal rights of all women and men, as well as commitments made under the Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, and considered other related international agreements.

### *Main recommendations for governments/policy-makers*

(d) In terms of addressing systemic challenges

- To address systemic challenges, participants recommended a broad range of policy actions, focused on strengthening enabling environments, institutions and regulatory frameworks that can have impacts across all the targets in SDG 5.

- To enhance interlinkages between SDGs, particularly link SDG 5 with SDG 16 as a means of ending discrimination and ensuring access to justice, strengthening the rule of law and due recourse through existing laws.
- To strengthen generation, collection, analysis and use of reliable, comparable and disaggregated data at national and local levels to better assess the situation of women and girls in order to leave no one behind.
- In line with the General Comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health (article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), ensure implementation, budgeting, monitoring and accountability of laws and policies that guarantee sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of women and girls, including those who face legal, procedural, geographic and socio-cultural barriers in their access.
- Recognising women's leadership as a pivotal pathway to achieving all the SDGs, as well as the particular importance of enabling and promoting women's leadership in the context of addressing increased extremism in the region, take measures to ensure women's full and equal participation in leadership at all levels and in all spheres in society, including national and local governance, political parties, business, civil society, science and technology.

(e) To strengthen policy coherence, participants recommended:

- Strengthening coordination and achieving synergies across government ministries to achieve the internationally agreed upon commitments on gender equality.
- Mainstreaming gender perspectives into all legislation, policies and programmes to leverage gender-responsive policies, as well as developing and implementing effective multisectoral national policies and programmes with the full and effective participation of women and girls.
- Linking the SDGs to existing frameworks on disability such as the Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities as an inclusion strategy for women with disabilities.

(f) Recommendations for regional cooperation include:

- Creating effective partnerships and coordination mechanisms to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, with all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector.
- Developing regional strategies and mechanisms to address gender-based discrimination and promote empowerment across all SDG 5 targets, especially for VAWG and harmful practices.
- Engagement of women's organizations, particularly meaningful representation of women left behind, in regional and national platforms, to support the review and implementation of the SDGs.
- To strengthen existing collaboration, coordination and relations with regional and subregional bodies on gender equality and women's empowerment

(g) Recommendations on innovations include:

- Implement gender-responsive budgeting, including tracking public investment in health and care to improve the redistribution of care work, provision of gender-sensitive services and decent work for women, to ensure equitable access to economic resources and opportunities
- Provide adequate support and enhance accountability of political parties to promote participation of women, including through affirmative action, nomination, support, education of women and the public, and funding.

## **VI. Roundtable on Goal 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation)**

17. The roundtable was co-organized by UNIDO, UNFCCC, UN-HABITAT and ESCAP. An opening presentation and remarks were delivered by Mr. S. Hansen, UNIDO Regional Director.

18. Ms. Sooksiri Chamsuk, Programme Officer, UNIDO moderated the session. The following discussants were on the panel: H.E. Mr. Theng Pagnathun Director-General of Planning, Ministry of Planning, Cambodia; Mr. Lal Shankar Ghimire, Joint Secretary/Division Chief, Economic Management Division, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Nepal; Mr. Peter Decorte, Chief Executive Officer, Tong Siang Co, Ltd, Thailand; and Mr. Gomer Padong, Philippine Social Enterprise Network. A statement on behalf of the Asia and Pacific CSO Forum for Sustainable Development was delivered by Mr. Julius Cainglet, Federation of Free Workers – International Trade Union Confederation (FFW-ITUC).

19. The report of the roundtable was delivered in plenary by Ms. Molrueedee Puangngern, Director, International Agreement Group, International Affairs Division, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Thailand, as Rapporteur.

### *Overview of issues*

(a) The roundtable on SDG9 discussed how to ensure more sustainable and inclusive industrialization, develop sustainable and resilient infrastructure, enhance innovation and technological capacities of domestic industrial sectors for this aim.

(b) The region has made progress in a number of areas, including expanding infrastructure services in energy, ICT and mobile communications, transport, water and sanitation. The share of manufacturing in total employment and as share of GDP has grown strongly, and expenditures on R&D in the region now represent over 42% of the global. However, this hides large disparities between countries, with large and widening gaps for manufacturing value added per capita, a widening digital divide, and with most R&D and innovation coming from a handful of countries. The progress has also brought additional challenges, both environmental and social.

Main recommendations for governments/policy-makers on:

(c) Addressing systemic challenges that are barriers to further progress:

- Governments need to put in place policies to adjust the cost of low-carbon technologies through shifting subsidies and taxes to favour clean and energy efficient technology
- Curricula in schools and universities should be adjusted to integrate sustainable development in coursework and education plan, in particular for engineering and management studies. The role of universities in contextualizing and localizing R&D was highlighted.
- Governments should provide increased support to SME development, including access to credits/finance, more enabling regulations, and support the integration of SME into global supply chains.
- Governments also need to incentivize and embed 'impact investing' and sustainable development thinking within the DNA of the private sector, and promote indigenous grass-roots innovations and knowledge systems in addressing SDGs
- Governments should also promote and support business to perform energy auditing, to increase the use of energy efficient technology
- In the area of ICT and infrastructure, persistent challenges include tackling digital illiteracy, leveraging innovative financing models for ICT infrastructure development, ensuring digital security, providing localized content and accessibility, and monitoring progress on ICT targets.
- The need to connect rural areas and public facilities including hospitals and local government offices with broadband connectivity and innovative ICT applications was expressed repeatedly.

(d) Priorities for strengthening policy coherence in implementation efforts – including through attention to key leverage points;

- Governments need to ensure coherence between IPR systems and trade agreements to facilitate local technology adaptation and development
- Government need to set standards that can help identify high sustainability impact innovations and technology early on. UN can help in creating capacity within governments.
- The importance of competition and enabling regulations was underlined in the discussion to ensure that the service providers can offer affordable access to rural as well as urban citizens.

(e) Promoting innovations (policy, social, institutional, technological or other) at the national level

- Promoting ICT R&D in education and research to develop and utilize digital innovations are essential to ensure that everyone can reap the benefits of ICT, including localizing content and applications to address local SDG challenges.
- The need to promoting the use of private and voluntary sustainability standards through appropriate enabling policy frameworks and national platforms was also stressed.

(f) Areas for regional cooperation to address the transboundary dimensions of these goals and challenges.

- UN can help countries develop regional technology facilitation mechanisms and strong national innovation systems based on diverse sources of knowledge.
- UN can support and facilitate collaboration on conducting technology foresight studies to scan the horizon to assess sustainable development impact of emerging technologies.
- Regional collaboration on energy-efficient technologies; information sharing, trainings and knowledge exchange between countries.
- There is the need for concerted efforts and regional cooperation, taking a multi-stakeholder approach including the private sector and universities, to promote innovation and broadband connectivity, share best practices and resources, and ultimately enable everyone in the Asia-Pacific region to reap the benefits of ICT.
- The Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway was identified as an important initiative to ensure open-access, cross-border, disaster-resilient ICT infrastructure and regional cooperation.

## **VII. Roundtable on Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development)**

20. The roundtable was co-organized by: UNESCO, UNDP, UN Environment, and ESCAP. Mr. Iosefa Maiava, Director, ESCAP Pacific Office opened the meeting. On behalf of co-organizers, Mr. Wenxi ZHU, Head, IOC Regional Secretariat for the Western Pacific and adjacent regions (WESTPAC), UNESCO Bangkok provided a presentation on the SDG 14 outlook in the Asia Pacific;

21. Mr. Iosefa Maiava, moderated the roundtable. The following invited discussants contributed to the roundtable discussion: H.E. Mr. Semi Koroilavesau, Minister for Fisheries, Fiji; H.E. Ms. Saida Muna Tasneem, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Thailand; and Mr Ukkrit Satapoomin, Program Specialist from the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand; Ms. Lani Eugenia from Indonesian Farmer and Rural Women Organization and Ms. Viva Tatawaqa from the Diverse Voices for Action (DIVA) for Equality Fiji in their capacity as the representatives of the Asia and Pacific CSO Forum for Sustainable Development.

22. The report of the roundtable was delivered in plenary by H.E. Ms. Saida Muna Tasneem, as Rapporteur.

### *The regional outlook for the achievement of the goal*

(a) The roundtable agreed that oceans, seas and coasts in the Asia-Pacific are of vast social and economic importance to the region, the growth engine of the world economy. The prospects for the achievement of this goal hinge on effective conservation and sustainability of marine and coastal ecosystems while maintaining the social, and economic value to humans' livelihoods and regional prosperity. It was agreed that climate change and ocean acidification, overfishing, pollution, invasive species introduction and habitat losses, arising from poor or sectoral management practices and limited knowledge & transfer of marine technology are threatening ocean health, with serious harmful and irreversible consequences

(b) The roundtable agreed that a number of countries in the region have been taking immediate actions to fulfill their commitments, which include, among other, the establishment of inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms with associated task forces on respective goals; the alignment of national strategies/development plans with the SDG 14, the development of relevant SDG 14 indicators to monitor the progress; the strengthening of inclusive and partnership approaches to implementing the SDG 14, and the launching of ocean advocacy or campaigns for SDG 14.

(c) The roundtable also recognized that in the Pacific sub-region, Pacific countries just concluded their Pacific Regional Preparatory meeting for the UN Ocean Conference, committed to significantly improve ocean governance, the development of comprehensive frameworks to sustainably manage, and conserve ocean and its resources by 2020, with the goal of full implementation by 2030. The Pacific Leaders have made unprecedented commitments in the Pacific through robust regional ocean policy and established effective coordination arrangements.

(d) At the regional level, the role of ESCAP as a UN regional Commission was recognized as important to the implementation of SDG14, and follow up of ESCAP Resolution 72/9 was highlighted. It was also agreed that United Nations ocean-related agencies/programs and other partnership also respond immediately to the needs of their member states in the region, forming strategic links/platforms between SDG 14 global objectives and national programs and actions, providing coordination and technical assistance in addressing respective goals of SDG14.

### *Overview of issues discussed in the roundtable*

- (e) Awareness on the ocean's vital importance;
- (f) Sectoral regulatory & policy frameworks without coherence;

- (g) participatory approach /partnership;
- (h) Human and institutional capacity & limited knowledge& transfer of marine technology

*Main recommendations for governments/policy-makers on:*

- (i) Addressing systemic challenges that are barriers to further progress
  - 1. Ocean advocacy and campaigns;
  - 2. Policy coherence for sustainable development;
  - 3. Inter- ocean related ministerial coordination mechanism;
  - 4. Multi-stakeholder or partnership approaches
  - 5. Data and information gap;
  - 6. Human capacities, ocean knowledge & transfer of marine technology (for instance, ocean acidification)
- (j) Priorities for strengthening policy coherence in implementation efforts – including through attention to key leverage points;
  - 7. Governments to play a pro-active role in integrating SDG14 into their ocean policy coordination at cabinet level;
  - 8. Whole-of-government perspective on formulation, implementation of policy and regulation;
  - 9. Policy coherence framework (analytical framework, institutional framework, and monitoring framework), including through the blue economy approach;
  - 10. Inter-ministerial coordination to resolve policy conflict
- (k) Areas for regional cooperation to address the transboundary dimensions of these goals and challenges.
  - 11. Utilize the ESCAP Regional Coordination Mechanism to enhance cooperation among UN ocean-related agencies, programs at the regional level (i.e establishment of UN-Oceans for the Asia Pacific) were strongly recommended.
  - 12. Strengthen the existing regional ocean governance and scientific development mechanisms;
  - 13. Establish regional ocean partnerships among UN agencies, sub-regional and regional ocean and fishery related organizations, NGOs, civil societies, public and private sectors, including local communities;
  - 14. Support ecosystem-based approach, such as Large Marine Ecosystems, Marine Spatial Planning, Marine Protected Areas, etc.;
  - 15. Support the UN proposal for an International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)
- (l) Promising innovations (policy, social, institutional, technological or other) at the national level
  - 16. There were a number of innovations and best practices at national level. Thailand presented a number of actions to address SDG 14, including with the UNESCO/IOC-WESTPAC to establish 2 ocean acidification monitoring sites, National action plan and a Command Center for combating illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fisheries; Pacific countries implement actions for a cleaner Pacific at all level, including call for global action to reduce plastics and other forms of pollution by 2025.

*Implementation of ESCAP resolution E/ESCAP/RES/71/9*

- (m) As a follow up to the ESCAP resolution E/ESCAP/RES/71/9 on regional cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia Pacific:
  - 1. Convene a high level consultation on partnerships and commitments for SDG 14, at 73<sup>rd</sup> Commission in May 2017, as a preparatory meeting for the UN Ocean Conference;

2. Explore the possibility for organizing a side event, at the UN Ocean Conference, on regional ocean partnerships in the Asia and Pacific
3. To run the roundtable on SDG 14 on a regular basis and enlarge the participation, building on existing UN ocean-related agencies and programs.

For UN Environment Assembly 4-6 December 2017 with the theme of pollution free planet to address marine litter pollution;

*In closing*

(n) The partnerships for implementation of SDG14 at all levels between governments, the private sector and civil society is vital to the achievement of SDG14. They need to be functional and proactive and transformative. They should be an integral part of national and regional planning and implementation processes.

(o) The region is the key to link the global objectives with national development priorities. Therefore, there is a pivotal role that UN and its specialized agencies, including ESCAP, should be committed to play in assisting countries, particularly these developing countries, SIDS and LDCs, towards the attainment of SDG 14.