

**Remarks by Mr. Adnan H. Aliani, Director, Strategy and Programme
Management Division, at the Roundtable Discussion during the
ECOSOC Management Segment on “Transformation is possible:
Actions from the ECOSOC system”**

**Thursday, 8 June 2023
10:00 – 12:00 NY Time
(21:00 – 23:00 BKK Time)**

Good morning.

Thank you for inviting ESCAP to address this Roundtable Discussion.

The Asia Pacific region is grappling with the intertwined risks of disease, disasters, and climate change. ESCAP’s research reveals that natural and biological hazards results in annual economic losses of approximately \$780 billion across the region. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed 85 million people in the region into extreme poverty, exacerbating inequality and impeding progress towards achieve the SDGs.

As we reach the midpoint in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the progress made in the Asia-Pacific region stands only at 14.4%. At the current pace, the region will miss 90% of the 118 measurable targets by 2030 unless concerted efforts are made.

Despite these multiple challenges, countries in the region remain firmly committed to the 2030 Agenda as a blueprint for responding to the multiple crises and the region’s major challenges. They are implementing various

solutions and undertaking transformative measures in energy, social protection and healthcare systems to foster a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery.

Digital transformation presents a significant opportunity for inclusive development in the region. While the region has witnessed substantial progress in digital connectivity and transformation since the onset of the pandemic, not all countries have benefited equally. The pandemic has worsened the digital divide within and between countries in the region.

ESCAP has focused its intergovernmental support, knowledge products and technical cooperation on facilitating transformations at the speed and scale necessary to achieve the SDGs.

First, to put people at the center and leave no one behind,

ESCAP is assisting countries in developing comprehensive and universal **social protection** systems. For instance, we are supporting Cambodia, Maldives and Mongolia in enhancing their social protection systems in line with the *Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation in Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific*.

Moreover, the 2022 *Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023-2032*, provided concrete entry points to enhance **disability inclusive development** in the region.

ESCAP is also supporting the regional implementation of the UN Executive Action Plan on Early Warnings for All, 2023-2027, by developing a plan of action outlining pathways to achieve **early warnings for all** by 2027 in Asia and the Pacific.

Second, to accelerate the decarbonization of the economy,

ESCAP is working towards scaling up **NDC commitments** to limit global warming within the 1.5°C pathway. Our support includes revising NDCs, developing strategies and plans for smart mobility, and developing a regional modality that can help countries in the region collectively tackle air pollution.

The new *Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business*, proposed by the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network, has generated momentum in the **private sector** to scale up sustainability initiatives and decarbonizing private sector operations.

Third, to harness the potential of digitalization and digital transformation,

ESCAP supports countries through the *Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative*. Our aim is to turn the digital divide into a digital dividend by, for example, promoting subregional Internet Exchange points.

ESCAP also assists in the implementation of the *Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade* to foster climate-smart trade.

Finally, to strengthen and improve financing for sustainable development,

With member States, we strive to align national recovery policies with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. ESCAP's macro-economic modelling tool has been developed and utilized to simulate the socioeconomic and environmental effects, including public debt sustainability, of different national economic policy scenarios in Indonesia and Mongolia.

Additionally, ESCAP supports countries in developing innovative financings. In the Pacific, we collaborate with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat to establish

debt-for-climate swaps. We are also engaged in Cambodia, supporting national stakeholders in issuing and SDG bonds.

As the most inclusive global and regional platforms for consensus building, ECOSOC and its subsidiary organizations, including the regional commissions, play a crucial role in promoting global and regional norm setting.

This year, ESCAP is coordinating efforts across the five regional commissions, focusing on three key priorities set by Member States. These priorities involve

1. Contributing to the SDG summit,
2. Amplifying the level of ambition at COP-28 and the Secretary-General's Climate Ambition Summit; and
3. Enhancing financing for development.

ESCAP is guided by newly adopted resolutions that call for urgent action against climate change and its impacts, emphasizing the importance of strengthened regional and subregional cooperation, clean and renewable energy sources, low emission mobility, and greater utilization of climate change-related statistics and early warning systems.

We firmly believe that now is the opportune time to accelerate the transition to low-emission, climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies. Sustainable development will otherwise continue to elude us.

Please count on ESCAP as your trusted partner in assisting our countries in better preparing for the future.