FAST-TRACKING THE SDGs
DRIVING ASIA-PACIFIC TRANSFORMATIONS

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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Asia-Pacific SDG Partnership

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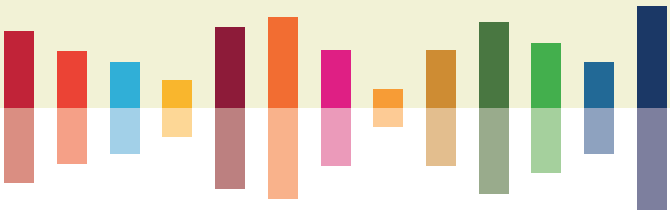

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Fast-tracking the SDGs: Driving Asia-Pacific Transformations

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FOREWORD

As we publish this report, the Asia-Pacific region is grappling with the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. A collective response will be needed to contain the loss of life and address this evolving human crisis. Beyond the immediate social and economic impacts, we still know too little about this new virus to draw conclusions about the scale or scope of its long-term effects. However, it is clear that a return to "business as usual" will not serve a region that is already off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Transformative approaches will be needed for progress, especially on goals facing the most persistent shortcomings. This report shows that some countries have been able to move faster than others and make progress on various aspects of the 2030 Agenda. It focuses on six interlinked transformative entry points that are key to the Global Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030.

Keeping focus on the 2030 Agenda as a beacon in these turbulent times is now more important than ever. The disruptions wrought by the pandemic are cause for introspection and a gateway for a shift in social values that may ease the way for transformations. The pandemic has brought to the forefront how many people in our societies live precariously close to poverty and hunger, without access to essential services to safeguard their health. It has also revealed that we are only as safe, and as strong, as the weakest and most vulnerable among us. The pandemic has changed the ways in which many people work and consume, and hastened the uptake of technologies, in ways that may help create opportunities to accelerate progress on the Global Goals.

Responses to the COVID-19 crisis must be centred on the needs of people, and promote empowerment, equality and environmental sustainability. The imperative to ensure that no one is left behind has never been as urgent, or as daunting. We will need to support countries in securing the financing they need to weather this crisis. A compelling sense of direction and urgency, a bold commitment to remove systemic barriers to change and promote people's rights, a readiness of institutions and diverse groups in society to innovate, and an upgraded and updated approach to policymaking that better manages complexity will all be essential.

Each of our institutions has been mobilized to support a well-directed, inclusive and well-resourced response. We are pleased to issue this joint report at this critical juncture, in the hope that it will support actions to fast-track Asia-Pacific transformations for the achievement of the SDGs.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana
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and Under-Secretary-General
of the United Nations

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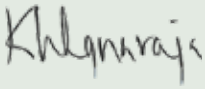

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CONTENTS

Foreword iii
Acknowledgements iv
Abbreviations vii
Explanatory notes viii
Executive summary ix

Chapter 1 The urgency of accelerating transformations 1
- Introduction 2
- Where do we stand – and is this progress enough? 4
- Unpacking accelerated transformations – an overview of the report 8

Chapter 2 How fast is progress being made across the region? 9
- Introduction and methodology 10
- Results of the quadrant analysis for six transformative entry points 12
- Observations 19
- Linkages between the entry points 21
- Conclusions 24

Chapter 3 Learning from the past 25
- Introduction 26
- What kinds of interventions are linked with rapid progress ? 26
- What steps have been taken to benefit groups often left behind? 30
- Conclusions: Moving forward to transformation 32

Country "deep dives" 33
- Bangladesh: Longer and healthier lives 34
- China: Rising living standards 37
- Fiji: A path towards greener growth 41
- Kazakhstan: Tackling unemployment 44
- Indonesia: A path to cleaner fuel 47
- Japan: Energy efficiency 49

Chapter 4 Actions for accelerating transformation – responding to COVID-19 and beyond 51
- Building blocks for accelerating transformations 52
- Aligning COVID-19 responses with accelerating transformation for the SDGs 57

Annex: Methodology 61

Boxes

Box A.1	Access to essential drugs	35
Box A.2	Expansion of urban health services for the poor	35
Box A.3	Wide provision of social insurance	37
Box A.4	A roadmap to tackle rural poverty	37
Box A.5	Empowering the rural labour force	38
Box A.6	Funds for start-ups	39
Box A.7	Targeting youth	40
Box A.8	Goals, policies and strategies for resource efficiency: Fiji's 2017 development plans	41
Box A.9	Stimulating small businesses and self-employment	45

Figures

Figure 1.1	Asia-Pacific progress in transformative entry points	5
Figure 1.2	Subregional progress in transformative entry points	5
Figure 2.1	Five-step methodology to assess and compare rates of progress across countries	11
Figure 2.2	Sample quadrant analysis	11
Figure 2.3	Quadrant analysis for "strengthening human well-being and capabilities"	13
Figure 2.4	Quadrant analysis for "shifting towards sustainable and just economies"	14
Figure 2.5	Quadrant analysis for "building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns"	15
Figure 2.6	Quadrant analysis for "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy"	16
Figure 2.7	Quadrant analysis for "promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development"	17
Figure 2.8	Quadrant analysis for "securing the global environmental commons"	18
Figure 2.9	Level of achievement - Inter-relationships between transformative entry points	22
Figure A.1	Density of different types of health-care providers per 10,000 population.	34
Figure A.2	Entrepreneurial activity among young people	38
Figure A.3	Unemployment rate in Kazakhstan 1994–2019	44
Figure B.1	'Expected years of schooling': Acceleration analysis	62

Tables

Table 2.1	Low-income and lower-middle income Sprinters	19
Table 2.2	Sprinting ahead – countries with special needs	20

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