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DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Regional workshop on cross-sectoral policies and institutional coordination for achieving the MDGs and post-2015 development agenda in Asian LDCs

Introduction

I. Background

Despite some very serious challenges, Asia-Pacific as a whole has achieved high rates of economic growth and overall development during the last decade. Yet, it continues to show deep social, ecological and economic imbalances. In countries with special needs, in particular LDCs, progress towards reducing poverty and hunger and achieving other MDGs has slowed down significantly, due to inadequate human and financial capacity, furthered by the turmoil in the global economy since 2008.

ESCAP studies have identified a two-pronged strategy for accelerating the progress of LDCs towards achieving the MDGs. First, promote growth in a more inclusive manner, which would not only increase the per capita household income of the poor and speed up poverty alleviation, but also reduce inequality. This would require enhanced productive capacity and improving basic infrastructure for creating productive and decent jobs, boosting agricultural production, and improving service delivery. To achieve these goals, all organs of governments, including line ministries but also different levels of government, must work collectively towards MDG targets.

The second part of the strategy is to mobilize national and regional resources to finance the investment required to reach the other MDGs, including through Public-Private Partnership, reorienting public expenditure towards MDG priorities, augmenting government revenue and making financial incentives MDG-friendly. This requires governments to cooperate with other stakeholders, namely the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Experiences in MDG acceleration indicates that, while financial gaps are a key bottleneck in scaling up service delivery, inadequate institutional capacities for planning, monitoring and delivery of services are equally serious bottlenecks. Even where financial resources are available, the impact is limited if sectoral focus is too narrow; for instance, building a school in a remote area may not be effective in increasing enrolment rates if access to the school is limited. On the other hand,

providing access to adequate sanitation also has major health, water, environmental, tourism and other welfare impacts which go beyond immediate benefits. Lack of sectoral coordination may forego opportunities to utilize resources for higher impact.

II. Objectives of the sub-regional advocacy workshop

The key objectives of the workshop are to:

- 1) Increase understanding and awareness of policymakers and other stakeholders in selected Asia-Pacific LDCs of better coordinated and harmonized cross-sectoral policies and programmes.
- 2) Increase capacity of key national stakeholders in selected Asia-Pacific LDCs to implement policies and programmes for improved service delivery.

III. Participation and implementation strategy

The regional workshop will be attended by senior policy makers, experts, NGOs and private sector representatives from the LDCs. ESCAP has been able to mobilize limited resources to fund participation of 4 participants each from the eight LDCs targeted in the project. Bangkok-based members of RCM will also be invited on a self-financing basis. UNCT in Cambodia would be approached to share their expertise and knowledge on MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda including the sustainable development issues and concerns.

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