



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries: High-level exchange on development cooperation in the post 2015 era: perspectives from Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Pacific Island Developing Countries

Bangkok, 4 August 2014

Concept note

I. Introduction

The Commission, in its sixty-ninth session, adopted Resolution 69/1 on a conference structure of the Commission for the inclusive and sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific, which decided that the sessions of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries and the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries would be held jointly for a maximum of one day during the senior officials segment and would have a status commensurate with the Committees of the Whole.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will organize a High-level Exchange on “Development Cooperation in the Post -2015 Era” during the Special Body session in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 August 2014. Financing for sustainable development has become a significant and integral part of the current development discourse in the United Nations’ post-2015 development agenda. The implementation of a new, ambitious development agenda with sustainable development at its core requires more effective incentives, a more effective allocation of existing resources and additional funds from domestic, external and innovative sources.

There is no group of countries in the Asia-Pacific region where financing for sustainable development is more important than for the 31 countries with special needs, comprised by the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.¹ Home to more than 380 million people, a quarter of the total population of the Asia-Pacific developing countries excluding China and India,² their economies are

¹ The least developed countries are: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Island, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The landlocked developing countries are: Afghanistan; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bhutan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Nepal; Tajikistan; Turkmenistan; and Uzbekistan. The small island developing States are: Cook Islands; Fiji; Kiribati; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Micronesia (Federated States of); Nauru; Niue; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu; and Vanuatu.

² ESCAP Online statistical database. Available from <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/statdb/DataExplorer.aspx>, accessed on 15 January 2014.

marked by persistent structural challenges, fluctuating growth and dependence on few commodities or low-wage manufactured products for export earnings.³ These countries have experienced limited structural transformation and the impact of growth on employment creation and poverty reduction has been small. As highlighted in the *Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2012/13*,⁴ countries with special needs have lagged behind in progressing towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Socioeconomic development remains constrained by many factors including lower productive capacities,⁵ remoteness and isolation from the world markets, and high trade costs. These countries are also the most vulnerable to natural disasters making economic growth and poverty reduction a far greater challenge.⁶ Closing the development gaps of these countries requires significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing.

However, the environment for development cooperation remains challenging. Official development assistance flows stand at barely half of the 0.7% of gross national income repeatedly agreed by donor countries for more than 40 years. While South-South flows have become increasingly significant, these remain almost exclusively bilateral, rather than coordinated in support of a multilateral development agenda. For the post-2015 development agenda to succeed in countries with special needs, it is clear that all types of financing will be critical, including public, private, international, and domestic – and that these sources must be mutually reinforcing and complementary. It will also be vital to explore new policy frameworks for innovative partnerships at the national and international levels, which combine commercial profitability with sustainable development objectives

II. Objective

The objective of the High-level Exchange is to bring together senior government officials and experts from the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Small Island Developing States to exchange views on financing for sustainable development needs of these countries and on ways to preserve and increase the level of resources available to them in the post 2015 era.

III. Outcome document

The secretariat will prepare a summary of the High-level Exchange on Development Cooperation in the Post-2015 Era.

³ ESCAP (2013), *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2013, Forward-Looking Macroeconomic Policies for Inclusive and Sustainable Development* (ST/ESCAP/2654).

⁴ United Nations and Asian Development Bank publication, sISBN: 978-92-1-056250-8.

⁵ ESCAP (2011), *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2011, Sustaining Dynamism and Inclusive Development: Connectivity in the Region and Productive Capacity in Least Developed Countries* (ST/ESCAP/2586).

⁶ ESCAP (2013), *Building Resilience to Natural and Major Economic Crises* (ST/ESCAP/2655).

IV. Participants

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP will moderate the High-level Exchange on Development Cooperation in Post-2015 Era. The panelists of the High-level Exchange will include senior officials of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS).

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