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CONCEPT NOTE

ESCAP/ADB/UNDP Sub-Regional Workshop on accelerated achievement of MDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda in South-East Asia 21-23 November 2012, Bangkok, Thailand

The United Nations Secretary General's 2012 annual report, "*Accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*", summarizes recent progress made towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and makes recommendations to advance consultations towards a Post-2015 development agenda. The report also states that the Post-2015 development agenda should be advanced consistent with the decision by the Member States in the 2012 Conference for Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to initiate negotiations around sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The recently concluded Rio+20 negotiations have great promise and implications for the ADB/ESCAP/UNDP regional MDG partnership, which included a renewed political commitment to sustainable development. The regional MDG partnership, given its deep insight and experience in dealing with MDGs issues during the last one decade in the Asia-Pacific region, which faces the heaviest burden of deprivations in the world, can make an effective contribution to the on-going debate and discussion on the Post-2015 development agenda and the post-Rio+20 process. The Rio+20 adopted the outcome document entitled: "*The Future We Want*". It was adopted by the representatives of more than 190 countries in Rio de Janeiro and recognized the vital role that regional commissions and regional bodies can play in the balanced integration of the three pillars – economic, social and environmental – into the sustainable development agenda.

This provides an opportunity to enrich the regional partnership with the central objective of assisting the South East Asian Member States in identifying key issues relevant for the post 2015 development agenda.

In line with the above, the regional partnership undertakes a series of regional and sub-regional workshops and consultations around the Post-2015 development agenda and the post-Rio+20 process, culminating in the publication and launch of the next *Regional MDG Report (2012/13) - The Post 2015 development agenda in Asia and the Pacific*. These consultations will also serve to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels through the integration of economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their inter linkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

Sub-regional consultations were held in Almaty on 26-28 September 2012 with government representatives and other stakeholders from Central and some East Asian Member States and in Suva for representatives from Pacific Island Member States on 10-11 October 2012.

These workshops are followed by sub-regional consultations with (i) South-East Asian Member States on 21-23 November, 2012 in Bangkok, (ii) Least Developed Member States on 17-19 December, 2012 in Siem Reap and (iii) South Asian Member States in January, 2012 in Colombo. The consultations are organized by the ADB/ESCAP/UNDP partnership.

Issues to be discussed at the sub-regional consultation

The workshops' main objectives are to (i) review MDGs achievements and assessing the sub-regional challenges during the remaining period to 2015, (ii) collect the views and perspectives of the Member States including, civil society and other stakeholders on the Post-2015 development agenda. Given that a key lesson from the conception and formulation of MDGs has been the importance of the full engagement and inclusive participation at country level of all development stakeholders the workshop format is designed to maximize opportunities for participants to contribute to the discussion.

At the same time and mainly for the purpose of organization and focus, every effort will be made to capture the country/subregion specific experiences and views from MDG implementation, as well as elicit views on how these views can be reflected in the discussion taken globally and regionally on the Post-2015 development agenda. In this regard and in line with the call for a more integrated, inclusive and sustainable development approach¹, the workshop will discuss:

- a) Experiences and lessons learned from MDG implementation in South East Asia as well as lessons drawn from other regions;
- b) How these lessons and experiences may best be reflected in global and regional consultations on the post-2015 development agenda/SDGs;
- c) The transitioning from MDGs to the Post 2015 development agenda and the integration of the economic, social and environment pillars, including key priority areas that were left out of or under-represented in the MDGs;
- d) Strategies or enablers for inclusive and sustainable development, with reference to think pieces from the UN Task Team on Post-2015 development agenda
- e) The resource (financial and human) and capacity constraints (people, policies and processes) and constraints faced in achieving country priorities bearing in mind some of the lessons from the MDGs²;
- f) How to harmonize country needs and priorities with global aspirations and ensure that the required financial and implementation resources are assessed.

The Workshop is expected to produce the following outputs:

- 1) A summary of priorities for the South-East Asian countries (i.e., areas of intervention/support and strategies) in order to accelerate achievement of MDGs between now and 2015. This summary will feed into the preparation of the next ESCAP/ADB/UNDP Regional MDG Report 2012/13;
- 2) A summary of the key priorities of South East Asian Member States (i.e., areas of intervention/support and strategies) for inclusion in the Post-2015 development agenda;

The workshop is planned for 2.5 days and will be followed by a half-day consultation on November 23 on social protection for those delegates, who are involved in social protection systems in their respective countries (representatives from Ministry of Finance and Planning and from Social Protection Ministries). The Rio+20 outcome document stressed the need to provide social protection to all members of society, encourages national and local initiatives aimed at providing a social protection floor (SPF) for all citizens, supports global dialogue and best practices for social protection programs. The consultation aims to receive feedback on how development partners and South-South Cooperation Networks can better support governments in

¹ This has been the call of the UNGA re the further implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation and the Rio+20 Conference. The UN Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has made the same call.

² The UN Task Team on Post-2015 says that the attention to financial resources and infrastructure inputs may have distracted from the more important task of structural change and institutional building.

their endeavor to establish sound social protection systems, which will also accelerate achieving the MDGs. In the Post-2015 development agenda, social protection is included as a new think piece, which is considered to be important, especially for Asia, where many governments are aiming to establish universal integrated social protection systems to build resilience and to mitigate the impact of shocks not just on the poor but on societies as a whole, and to secure recent gains in poverty reduction and political stability achieved.

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