

# External Evaluation

**United Nations  
Economic and Social Commission  
for Asia and the Pacific  
(UNESCAP)**

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# Acknowledgements

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In requesting us to undertake the external evaluation of ESCAP, Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, has placed confidence in our ability to undertake this critical and sensitive task. We thank him for this.

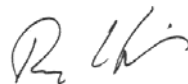
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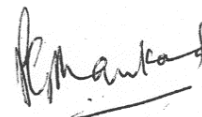
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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

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AAMO	Asian Association of Management Organizations
ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ACCI	Asian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACPR	Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APCICT	Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology
APCTT	Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APT	Asia-Pacific Telecommunity
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BIMSTEC	Bangladesh - India - Myanmar - Sri Lanka - Thailand Economic Cooperation (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)
CAPSA	Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Second Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific
CCA/UNDAF	Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework
CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EPOC	ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESDD	Environment and Sustainable Development Division
ESID	Emerging Social Issues Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GA	General Assembly
ICST	information, communication and space technology
ICSTD	Information, Communication and Space Technology Division
ICT	information and communication technologies
IGOs	intergovernmental organizations
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDCs	least developed countries
LLDCs	least developed and landlocked countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MOU	memorandum of understanding
MRC	Mekong River Commission
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDD	Poverty and Development Division
PICS	Pacific island countries
PIDCS	Pacific island developing countries
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCM	Regional Coordination Meeting
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SD	Statistics Division
SIAP	Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
SIDS	small island developing States
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPECA	Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
TID	Trade and Investment Division
TTD	Transport and Tourism Division
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAPCAEM	Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USP	University of the South Pacific
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

# Executive Summary

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This external evaluation of ESCAP, commissioned by Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, provides a timely input into the broader ongoing discussions on United Nations reform in follow-up to the World Summit Outcome of September 2005. While the primary focus of the evaluation is on establishing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of ESCAP, the organization is firmly embedded in the larger framework of the United Nations system, which is in the throes of change. As such, while many findings and recommendations highlight ESCAP's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities to further enhance the role and results of the organization, these must also be related directly to the global United Nations reform discussions and their possible implications for the Asia-Pacific region.

Notwithstanding the broad scope of the evaluation, it was launched and conducted within a period of less than two months, with the aim of providing feedback to the Executive Secretary and ESCAP's member States by early June 2006. The evaluation draws upon written and oral inputs provided by 27 member States, as well as by numerous other stakeholders, including United Nations regional entities and country teams, other regional intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the ESCAP secretariat.

The evaluation recognizes that the economic and social situation in the Asia-Pacific region has changed considerably in the last twenty years. The institutional landscape has also changed, with a proliferation of organizations, both inside and outside of the United Nations system. While ESCAP has repositioned itself from time to time to respond effectively to the needs of its membership, it still faces a challenge to maintain its relevance.

Some of the primary strengths of ESCAP, as identified by most stakeholders, include:

- Its convening power and capacity to provide a comprehensive and inclusive regional forum for high-level discussions on a wide range of policy issues;
- Its role in giving the Asian and Pacific countries a regional voice and identity and, in particular, in representing an Asia-Pacific perspective vis-à-vis global UN bodies;
- Its multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach in all areas of its work;
- Its analytical, normative and capacity development work in programme areas such as transport, statistics, energy and disability.



ESCAP also faces, inter alia, the following challenges:

- Its thematic approach is generally considered to be too broad to provide programmatic guidance;
- Its operational work at the country-level is viewed by many stakeholders as being carried out on a piecemeal basis, lacking adequate follow-up, and generally appearing not to be well coordinated with the work of the UN country team;
- Its secretariat structures, which are sectoral in nature, are viewed as inhibiting ESCAP's ability to work in a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral manner;
- Its work in general suffers from low visibility, particularly in programme areas such as information, communications and space technology, operational activities in poverty reduction (including agriculture-related work), investment promotion, tourism and ageing, and its publication, the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*.

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned strengths and challenges, the evaluation proposes that ESCAP take the following steps:

- ESCAP should focus on its primary function as an inclusive regional forum for member States to exchange views, experiences and knowledge on major policies dealing with economic, social and environmental issues;
- ESCAP should either discontinue the thematic framework, revise the thematic areas or sharpen the focus of work under each area in order to narrow the scope of coverage;
- ESCAP should re-establish itself as an organization that can undertake cutting-edge research and policy analysis, and promote creative solutions to address the changing development needs of its member States;
- ESCAP should continue to work in its programme areas of strength as long as its presence in them remains relevant. Moreover, it should also identify other possible areas of relevance in line with its comparative advantage of working in a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary manner;
- ESCAP should reassess its work with a view to discontinuing its activities in those areas where there is little or no value, bearing in mind, in particular, the efforts of other UN bodies and specialized agencies;
- ESCAP should ensure a better balance of its normative, analytical and operational work and undertake only those operational activities that contribute to ESCAP's normative and analytical functions;

- To the extent that ESCAP is involved in operational work, it should strengthen planning, coordination with other United Nations agencies, and implementation and give adequate attention to sustainability;
- ESCAP should establish suitable internal mechanisms, like interdivisional teams, on selected critical issues as a means of fully tapping its multidisciplinary approach;
- ESCAP should ensure regional value additions through closer coordination and cooperation with the work of the UN Country Teams under the United Nations country assistance framework;
- ESCAP should further strengthen system-wide coherence among United Nations entities at the regional level by utilizing its ministerial conferences as well as an improved Regional Coordination Meeting (RCM);
- ESCAP must strengthen its cooperation with non-United Nations subregional organizations to achieve synergies with the planning and programmatic processes of these organizations;
- ESCAP should devote considerably more attention to external communications to ensure higher visibility for ESCAP in the region;
- ESCAP needs to strengthen its capacity to evaluate the impact of its work in an objective and credible manner;
- ESCAP should further review the performance of the regional institutions and should apply the lessons learned from the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) to enhance the effectiveness of the other regional institutions;
- ESCAP should support member States by catalysing funds and technical assistance from various sources, and by promoting and facilitating partnership among developing countries in the framework of South-South cooperation.

This evaluation affords an opportunity to enhance ESCAP's relevance, not only directly, to its member States, but also indirectly, within the framework of a more coherent United Nations system. ESCAP has the potential to add significant value to the economic and social development of the Asia-Pacific region. In order to do so, it must address a number of challenges relating to its conceptual framework as a regional organization, its programme, conference and secretariat structure, and its operating modalities, including, importantly, its synergistic relationship with other development partners, particularly within the United Nations system.



# Part One: Introduction and Methodology

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background**

The 2005 World Summit Outcome outlines a range of issues pertaining to the role and performance of the United Nations as a whole. As an integral part of the United Nations Secretariat, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), one of five United Nations regional commissions, will also need to adjust to the changing priorities and requirements of its member States, in line with system-wide reform efforts.

Against the above-mentioned background, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP initiated, in April 2006, an external evaluation of ESCAP to assess its strategic role in the Asia-Pacific region. The external evaluation was financed by the Trust Fund for International Cooperation, supported by the Government of Japan, and administered by the United Nations Controller.

### **B. Objective and purpose of the evaluation**

The evaluation was conducted to ascertain ESCAP's comparative advantages and disadvantages in the eyes of its member States and various partners, and to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the organization's work in the Asian and Pacific region.

The overall objective was to identify key programmatic and organizational areas requiring change in order to improve the development services and products that ESCAP provides to its member States, in line with UN system-wide reform initiatives.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Overview**

The evaluation, initiated in April and completed by mid-June 2006, was conducted by a team of three high-level independent experts selected by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, based on nominations by member States and taking into account geographical representation of the region.

The following three evaluators were selected on the basis of their in-depth knowledge of intergovernmental processes, extensive international experience in a wide range of economic and social sectors, and familiarity with the work of a range of United Nations and other international agencies:

- Darmansjah Djumala <sup>1</sup>
- Ryokichi Hirono <sup>2</sup>
- Piyush Mankad <sup>3</sup>

The key findings, lessons learned and recommendations contained in this report are the consensus views of the evaluators based on information provided by ESCAP member States and other key stakeholders using the following qualitative methods:

- A written questionnaire to obtain feedback from all member States of ESCAP (Annex 3).
- Face-to-face interviews with representatives of selected member States from all subregions of ESCAP, as well as with a variety of key ESCAP stakeholders and partners, other United Nations entities and international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The interviews took place in Bangkok and during missions which were undertaken to 11 member States. In order to ensure consistency in approach, the three evaluators used a master interview guide (Annex 4).
- Interview with the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.
- Focus groups and other meetings with ESCAP staff at various levels. ESCAP staff members were also encouraged to provide inputs by email during the course of the evaluation.

## **B. Stakeholders**

- **Member States of ESCAP**

Member States of ESCAP were the key target group for the evaluation. Importance was placed on seeking their views through a range of methods, as outlined below.

The Seats of Government for all ESCAP members States were requested to provide feedback to a written questionnaire with five key questions on impact, relevance, comparative advantages, and future role of ESCAP (Annex 2).

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<sup>1</sup> A senior official of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Darmansjah Djumala has had extensive experience in representing his government at intergovernmental forums addressing economic and social development issues, including at the General Assembly, ECOSOC, UNCTAD, WTO and ESCAP.

<sup>2</sup> Having held senior management positions in ESCAP, ADB and UNDP, Ryokichi Hirono, Professor Emeritus of Seikei University, is currently serving with a number of advisory councils for the Japanese government, as well as several international organisations and foundations, and is vice-president of the International Development Evaluation Association.

<sup>3</sup> A former Secretary of Finance of the Government of India and Chairman of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, Piyush Mankad also has extensive international experience, having held the position of Executive Director/Board Member for India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Tajikistan in ADB for several years and having been posted with the Embassy of India in Japan.

In addition, in-person interviews were conducted with government officials from 22 member countries, both at embassies in Bangkok and during missions undertaken to 11 countries. The countries were selected based on criteria related to geographical representation, degree of involvement in ESCAP's work, and volume of technical cooperation and other support received from ESCAP.

Interviews were held with the Bangkok-based Permanent Representatives and/or their designated representatives of France, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Thailand, the United States of America, and Viet Nam.

Further, 11 member States were selected for the evaluators to visit across all five ESCAP subregions: South Asia (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan); South-East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao People's Democratic Republic); Central Asia (Kazakhstan); East Asia (China, Japan and Mongolia); and the Pacific Islands (Fiji). Each member State's ministry responsible for overall ESCAP matters designated a focal point official responsible for arranging meetings with relevant stakeholders, including, in most cases, line ministries. The interviewees were selected by the member State's designated focal point, based on a comprehensive list provided by the secretariat of partners and recipients of ESCAP's services. Interviews were conducted individually and in groups, depending on the availability of the stakeholders contacted. The list of stakeholders with whom meetings were held is contained in Annex 5.

- **UN entities, other international organizations and civil society**

Interviews with UN Resident Coordinators and members of the UN country teams were conducted during the missions to the member States, as described above.

In addition, the evaluators met with the Heads or representatives of several regional UN agencies as well as the Asian Development Bank.

In some countries visited, NGOs which had participated in ESCAP activities were interviewed.

The list of stakeholders with whom meetings were held is contained in Annex 5.

- **ESCAP secretariat**

The evaluators interviewed the Executive Secretary of ESCAP and participated in focus group meetings with ESCAP programme managers (division chiefs). They also had the opportunity to talk to ESCAP staff at various levels, including those based in the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) in Suva as well as the ESCAP regional institution based in Beijing (China). Further, an outlet was provided for staff members to give inputs to the evaluators through an e-mail address that was specifically created for this purpose. Staff members were also kept informed by the ESCAP Management of the evaluation through a town hall meeting and messages posted onto an electronic bulletin board.

### **C. Limitations and constraints**

The primary limitation of this evaluation was the very short time-frame in which it had to be completed (less than two months). Given this tight schedule, the evaluators were unable to visit more countries, and in the countries that they did visit, they were able to meet with counterparts and partners based in the capital cities. Notwithstanding these constraints, it should be noted that the evaluators, in every country visited, met with the focal point ministry responsible for ESCAP matter, to obtain an overview assessment of ESCAP's work across a range of sectors.

### **D. Scope of the evaluation**

The evaluation sought to examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of all aspects of ESCAP's work. Interviews and questionnaires covered topics such as ESCAP's *raison d'être* in the context of UN reform, comparative advantage areas, achievements, strengths and weaknesses, programme planning and implementation processes, partnerships, and capacity.

A master interview guide was used by the evaluators to ensure consistency in approach. The emphasis placed on specific questions during the interviews varied depending on the category of stakeholder interviewed and his/her past interaction with ESCAP's work.

## **III. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

This report includes four main parts:

- Part One: Introduction and Methodology
- Part Two: Overview of ESCAP
- Part Three: Analysis of the Key Findings – Strengths and Challenges
- Part Four: Recommendations.

Additional materials are contained in annexes, including: (1) key findings; (2) list of countries from which feedback was obtained; (3) questions to member States soliciting written feedback; (4) interview guide for focal point ministries; (5) list of stakeholders met; (6) terms of reference; (7) conference structure; and (8) secretariat structure.

## Part Two: Overview of ESCAP

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In conducting an evaluation of ESCAP, it is important to understand its history and setting. This part provides a brief overview of the context within which ESCAP operates as well as its conference, programme and secretariat structure. Against this background, Part Three will highlight the lessons learned through the evaluation.

### **I. CONTEXT**

#### **A. Establishment**

On 28 March 1947, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) was established as a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) through ECOSOC resolution 37 (IV). The Commission's name was changed to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) through ECOSOC resolution 1895 (LVII) of 1 August 1974. Along with other regional commissions in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia, ESCAP was established to perform functions that included (i) promoting economic and social development within the region; (ii) conducting research on economic and social issues; and (iii) analysing research results and disseminating findings to member States.

#### **B. Responding to changing member States' needs**

The Asia-Pacific region as a whole has changed dramatically over the last 50 years. It has 2.5 times as many people, the average age of the population has risen by 7 years, and the share of the labour force working in agriculture has dropped from 71 to 49 percent. Some countries in the region have demonstrated impressive economic growth, even acquiring developed country status, which has enabled them to substantially reduce poverty, and to provide support to their less developed neighbours.

While retaining its orientation towards its primary functions, as outlined in Section A above, ESCAP has, over the years, developed in line with the changing needs of its member States. The issues addressed by ESCAP through its programme of work have therefore evolved, a reflection of ESCAP's ability to remain current and in tune with the realities of its membership. Over the years, ESCAP has also moved away from its traditional focus on normative and analytical work, to also providing technical assistance to its member States.



### **C. The changing institutional architecture in the region**

When ECAFE was established in 1947 “to give effective aid to countries devastated by war”, it was considered the preeminent regional organization in Asia and the Pacific. With the proliferation of regional organizations since then, ESCAP is now one regional entity among many.

One of the longest-standing Asia-Pacific regional organizations, in fact initiated by ESCAP, is the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), another high-profile mechanism, includes countries in Asia and the Pacific as well as the Pacific Rim. A number of subregional organizations have been established in Asia and the Pacific with the aim of promoting economic cooperation and, in some cases, cultural cooperation and peace and security, among limited groups of States. Other regional organizations have been established around themes such as trade, technical cooperation, disaster preparedness, typhoons and cyclones.

Many United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes have established regional offices in Bangkok, including, inter alia, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also established regional centres in Bangkok, Colombo and Suva and has a Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, which is based in New York.

### **D. Reform**

Over the years, ESCAP has periodically undergone reforms of its programme, conference and secretariat structures in order to be able to respond better to the changing needs of its member States. One such reform exercise resulted, among other things, in the 1974 change of name from ECAFE to ESCAP, and another significant reform effort was carried out in 1996.

One of the most fundamental reengineering exercises was launched by ESCAP’s present Executive Secretary, Kim Hak-Su, upon taking office in 2000, with the aim of enabling ESCAP to respond effectively to the emerging demands of its membership, phase out obsolete and marginally useful areas of work, and strengthen the delivery and impact of results. As part of this exercise, ESCAP’s work was refocused into three thematic areas: (1) poverty reduction (including agriculture-related work), (2) managing globalization and (3) addressing persistent and emerging social issues. The Executive Secretary also strengthened cooperation with other global, regional, national and local development partners, reorganized ESCAP’s divisional structure, eliminated certain programme areas, carried out external evaluations of some of ESCAP’s regional institutions, and took various measures to promote results-based management, including the adoption of the logical framework approach for technical cooperation work. A Technical Cooperation Strategy was put in place, and initiatives were taken to promote some of its elements, such as interdivisional teamwork.

## **E. Mandates**

Since ESCAP was established in 1947, hundreds of resolutions have been adopted by the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Commission that provide the basis for the programme of work of ESCAP.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, Member States resolved to strengthen and update the United Nations programme of work, and agreed that the General Assembly and other relevant organs should review all mandates older than five years.

An internal analysis carried out by the ESCAP secretariat in late 2005 led to the classification of mandates in the following three categories:

1. Mandates less than five years old (from 2000 onwards) which have associated outputs in the ESCAP programme of work for 2006-2007;
2. Mandates less than five years old which do not have specific outputs associated with them in the ESCAP programme of work for 2006-2007;
3. Mandates older than five years which have not been reaffirmed by the Commission during the past five years. These mandates do not have any corresponding outputs in the ESCAP programme of work for 2006-2007.

To ensure that the programme of work of ESCAP is responsive to the contemporary needs of its member States, ESCAP draws upon only those mandates which are less than five years old as a basis for the planning of its programme of work.

A continuing challenge at ESCAP has been the implementation of a range of mandates adopted by the Commission within existing resources, which have posed a strain on both the financial and human resources of the organization.

## **II. STRUCTURE**

### **A. Conferences**

Based on ESCAP resolution 58/1, the Executive Secretary spearheaded the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission in 2002 to include the Commission, three thematic committees, eight subcommittees, two special bodies and an advisory body. A mid-term review of this conference structure was carried out by the Commission in 2005, and, based on Commission resolution 61/1, the work of the subcommittees was subsumed under the respective thematic committees.

The **Commission** meets annually to review all aspects of ESCAP's programme of work, and set priorities, based on the recommendations of its subsidiary bodies and the Executive Secretary. The Commission reports to ECOSOC and each year

passes a number of resolutions based on drafts submitted by individual member States. These resolutions provide part of ESCAP's mandate, in addition to those provided at the global level by the General Assembly and ECOSOC.

There are three **thematic committees** under the overall supervision of the Commission which meet annually to review the implementation and effectiveness of ESCAP's work in the three thematic priority areas.

1. The **Committee on Poverty Reduction** focuses on assisting member States to develop poverty reduction policies and strategies to attain the Millennium Development Goals, strengthen national statistical infrastructure to improve the quality of data, and share good practices in urban and rural poverty reduction;
2. The **Committee on Managing Globalization (Parts 1 and 2)** focuses on assisting member States to formulate policies that will help them take advantage of the opportunities provided by globalization, while minimizing its negative impact;
3. The **Committee on Emerging Social Issues** assists member States in developing policies and strategies to address emerging social development challenges, focusing on socially vulnerable groups, including women, youth, people with disabilities, the ageing population, migrants, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

To focus on the special concerns of the 14 least developed and 12 landlocked countries in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the 19 Pacific island developing countries, the Commission established two special bodies, namely the **Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries** and the **Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries**, which meet in alternate years, back-to-back with the annual session of the Commission.

The **Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR)** meets every month to advise the Executive Secretary on issues related to programme priorities, preparations for key intergovernmental meetings and the annual Commission session. Through the ACPR, ESCAP strives to ensure that its programmes are driven and owned by member States.

A chart with the current conference structure is shown in Annex 7.

## **B. Programme**

The current work programme (2006-2007) is comprised of eight interrelated and complementary subprogrammes which fall under three thematic areas as follows:

- (a) Poverty reduction
  1. Poverty and development
  2. Statistics

3. Development of Pacific island countries and territories
  - (b) Managing globalization
    4. Trade and investment
    5. Transport and tourism
    6. Environment and sustainable development
    7. Information, communication, and space technology
  - (c) Addressing emerging social issues
    8. Emerging social issues

### **C. Secretariat**

The ESCAP secretariat is made up of the Office of the Executive Secretary, seven operational divisions, a Programme Management Division, an Administrative Services Division, a subregional office in the Pacific (the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre), and five specialized regional institutes. A chart of the current secretariat structure is shown in Annex 8.

The seven operational divisions are the following: Poverty and Development Division (PDD), Statistics Division (SD), Trade and Investment Division (IID), Transport and Tourism Division (TTD), Environment and Sustainable Development Division (ESDD), Information, Communication and Space Technology Division (ICSTD) and Emerging Social Issues Division (ESID). These divisions undertake normative, analytical, and technical cooperation activities in line with ESCAP's programme of work, and are clustered under the three thematic areas of ESCAP.

Aside from the ESCAP headquarters office in Bangkok, the secretariat also includes the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre in Suva, Fiji, as well as the following five regional institutes: Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (Beijing, China); Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (New Delhi, India); Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (Incheon, Republic of Korea); Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific (Bogor, Indonesia); and Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (Chiba, Japan).



# Part Three: Analysis of the Key Findings – Strengths and Challenges

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Part Three provides an overall analysis of the key findings, as contained in the Annex. The terms of reference call for an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of different aspects of ESCAP's work. Given the broad scope and the short timeframe of the undertaking, the evaluation focused primarily on reviewing a range of key aspects of ESCAP's work. In analysing these aspects, we seek to apply those evaluation criteria that are most germane to the issue in question. The observations that can be made in this regard appear below.

## **I. OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **A. Relevance**

The opinions of member States vary on the degree of relevance of ESCAP. All issue areas addressed by ESCAP are, undeniably, of developmental relevance. As such, member States present their views on, and experiences in, strengthening development policies and strategies in all of these areas and seek assistance from multilateral and bilateral organizations and agencies in strengthening related development policies and strategies. What, therefore, does ESCAP provide that other organizations and entities do not provide? Are there issue areas that only ESCAP can cover? Are there products and services that ESCAP is in a better position to deliver than others? In delivering such products and services, does ESCAP use approaches that differ from those of others and thus add value?

Overall, most member States indicate that ESCAP is working in areas that are important to them. They also suggest that ESCAP's particular regional and multisectoral approach to addressing these issues adds value. Relevance thus relates not only to the substance of ESCAP's work but, importantly, also to the modalities chosen in implementing its work.

The evaluation was not designed to determine the relative relevance of different substantive focus areas to ESCAP member States. In order to do so, a separate analysis would need to be undertaken that would focus, in particular, on the relative strength of ESCAP's regional and multisectoral approach in tackling specific substantive issues. This evaluation does, nonetheless, provide an indication of what member States consider to be of particular importance.

With regard to ESCAP's relevance, the feedback received from other ESCAP stakeholders was more differentiated. While entities such as the UNDP Regional Centres and ADB consider ESCAP's role within the region to be relevant, UN

Country Teams have more difficulties in ascertaining ESCAP's relevance at the country level.

## **B. Efficiency and effectiveness**

A large proportion of the feedback received from member States relates to how ESCAP is carrying out its work. To the extent that ESCAP is addressing the right issues, does it apply appropriate modalities to deliver its work? Is it doing things right? Much of the data obtained on issues such as implementation modalities, cooperation arrangements with partners, the intergovernmental machinery, the regional institutions, viability and resources relates to efficiency and effectiveness. Member States are appreciative of ESCAP's performance in many areas, but are also critical and have suggestions as to how efficiency and effectiveness can be improved.

## **C. Impact and sustainability**

In their responses, most member States are able to indicate what activities ESCAP implements but find it more difficult to highlight their impact. The question of ESCAP's impact poses major challenges, not least since it refers the evaluator back to the question of what ESCAP really intends to achieve. Ultimately, ESCAP's strategic frameworks indicate that the organization aims to build sustainable capacities at the national level. Its fundamental approach, however, in tackling development issues is regional – the underlying assumption being that regional cooperation and integration will contribute towards enhanced national development.

At which point, therefore, should ESCAP's impact be ascertained? At the regional level – if so, what does this mean – or at the national level, or both? While project specific-evaluations have, in the past, yielded information on particular initiatives, the overall programmatic impact has been difficult to capture.

It is acknowledged that ESCAP has, over the past few years, and in the context of the introduction of results-based management principles, made an effort to put in place a monitoring and evaluation system that seeks to clarify ESCAP's impact. It is expected that with the full implementation of the system, the identification of (i) the precise areas in which ESCAP expects to make a tangible and sustainable difference, and (ii) the extent to which ESCAP has already made such a difference, will be facilitated.

## **II. THEMATIC APPROACH**

ESCAP's conference, programme and secretariat structure is based on a thematic approach, introduced in 2002, which replaced an earlier sectoral approach. The three themes that guide ESCAP's work are "poverty reduction", "managing globalization" and "addressing emerging social issues".

The conceptual strength of the thematic approach is recognized in that it can encourage more cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary work. Member States can

thus be encouraged, through the thematic legislative and planning process, to think in terms of cross-cutting themes. The thematic approach can also be seen as supporting interdivisional work among the divisions of ESCAP's secretariat, which are still primarily sectoral in nature.

Several member States and UN partners, in particular LDCs, suggest that the theme that is most appropriate for ESCAP is that of "poverty reduction". There is some variation in this, however. Middle-income countries and some Pacific island countries indicate a preference for "managing globalization".

While many member States acknowledge the underlying intention of the thematic approach (see above), there is a sense, on the part of member States as well as other stakeholders, that the three themes overlap and are much too broad to provide programmatic guidance. In the words of one respondent, the three themes "cover just about everything, depending on how they are interpreted". Several member States and UN regional entities recommend that the thematic approach be reconsidered and suggest that further prioritization is necessary.

### **III. PROGRAMME AREAS**

A number of programme areas are highlighted by most member States as being of especial value. ESCAP's work in the area of transport stands out as being the most visible and the most appreciated by virtually all stakeholders. ESCAP appears to have a clear comparative advantage in covering international transboundary transport issues. In this connection, many respondents also value ESCAP's work in the area of transport and trade facilitation and highlight the synergies gained through close cooperation between the transport and trade subprogrammes.

A second programme area that is consistently and positively highlighted by most respondents is statistics and, in particular, the work of SIAP. The work in aligning national statistics, in particular poverty statistics, with international standards, and in harmonizing approaches and fostering national, regional and global comparisons of progress towards achieving the MDGs, appears to be viewed as being of particular value.

A third area which is mentioned by many stakeholders as being not only of current value, but as being of significant potential value in the future, is the support provided by ESCAP in cross-border and intraregional issues in the areas of energy, water and natural disaster mitigation.

The fourth programme area which is brought up by numerous stakeholders relates to ESCAP's work on social issues. Many respondents, particularly also from civil society, appreciate ESCAP's role in incorporating social issues in sectors that are conventionally tackled from an economic perspective. One subject area that stands out is ESCAP's work in the area of disability. Similarly, ESCAP's efforts to mainstream health and gender are also recognized. Furthermore, ESCAP is seen to be able to add value in providing support in tackling the



regional dimension of social issues in such areas as migration, human trafficking or health.

The fifth programme area which was positively assessed by respondents relates to ESCAP's work in support of the regional analysis of progress made towards achieving the MDGs. The close and constructive cooperation with UNDP and ADB in conducting the regional analyses is considered to be particularly noteworthy.

A number of stakeholders suggest that ESCAP may have the capacity to take up issues that it is currently not handling explicitly. Governance is one such area, as is the promotion of regional and subregional infrastructure development.

Some programme areas receive relatively little recognition by member States and other stakeholders. The subprogramme on information, communication and space technology stands out as a programme area with which many respondents are not familiar. Even when prompted, only a few member States, even their specific sectoral ministry, are aware of ESCAP's general approach towards ICST issues, let alone any specific work done in this area.

Other programme areas which receive relatively little, if any, attention include, e.g., operational activities in poverty reduction (including agriculture-related work), the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, investment promotion, tourism and ageing. This observation may, in part, be influenced by the lack of (i) information about these issue areas among respondents nominated for interviews and (ii) prompting in these areas on the part of the evaluators.

One significant challenge pertaining to many of ESCAP's programme areas, relates to the extent to which other international, bilateral, subregional, regional or multilateral players are considered to be active in the same areas, or are perceived to have a comparative advantage. In general, ESCAP's programme areas are perceived to be similar to those of UNDP. On the issue of trade, WTO, UNCTAD and ITC are consistently mentioned. In the area of health and development, WHO and UNAIDS are mentioned. As far as poverty reduction and MDG-related work is concerned, the entire plethora of international organizations, ranging from virtually all development-related UN entities to the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, is cited.

Most respondents are sceptical about ESCAP's potential role in tackling peace and security and human rights issues, and are also apprehensive about ESCAP working with politically sensitive issues.

#### **IV. REGIONAL CONVENING POWER AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING**

Based on the respondents' feedback, ESCAP's convening power and its capacity to provide a comprehensive and inclusive regional forum for high-level discussions on a wide range of policy issues constitutes the organization's strongest comparative advantage. One respondent encapsulated this by stating that ESCAP promotes "home-grown" regional cooperation, compared with the

regional programmes of other United Nations entities which are, essentially, extensions of centrally administered organizations with headquarters outside the region.

ESCAP is seen as providing neutral space for countries to discuss critical common issues. ESCAP helps to define shared aspirations and what needs to be done to achieve them. Most stakeholders agree that ESCAP provides an important platform for dialogue among countries regardless of political differences.

ESCAP's actual and potential role in strengthening policy coherence among UN entities and other international organizations is highlighted by member States in particular, but also by some of ESCAP's multilateral partners. Furthermore, it is proposed that ESCAP play a more active coordinating role among subregional organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. However, representatives of some UN entities appear to be less convinced that ESCAP has the required capacity to provide such services.

Views on the role of ESCAP in preparing for, and following up to, major global conferences appear to be divergent. While some member States consider this to be an important task for ESCAP to perform, many others suggest that there is a substantial risk that such discussions duplicate the efforts of global bodies, such as ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

## **V. ADVOCACY**

Many member States value ESCAP's role in giving Asian and Pacific countries a regional voice and identity and, in particular, in representing an Asia-Pacific perspective vis-à-vis global UN bodies. This is a function that other regionally-operating organizations cannot provide.

ESCAP has an advantage in conducting regional advocacy for the implementation of commitments from global conferences. Many respondents, including those from UN agencies, consider ESCAP to have an important role in promoting the MDGs as a coherent development framework within the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP is able to establish partnerships with media agencies in the region, civil society and other development partners (e.g. ADB) to conduct advocacy, particularly in the context of MDG achievement. ESCAP's convening capacity, analytical function and neutral position (as the UN representative body for Asia and the Pacific) place ESCAP in a strong position to undertake evidence-based policy advocacy.

ESCAP is, in a limited position, however, to conduct advocacy at the country level due to the lack of an in-country presence. As advocacy often needs to be undertaken in the appropriate social and political context (the right messages in the most appropriate form), this is a constraint that has the capacity to weaken the effectiveness of ESCAP's advocacy activities. Partnership with the UN Country Team is particularly important for ESCAP in this context.

## **VI. NORM AND STANDARD-SETTING**

The term “normative” is understood differently by different respondents. Within the context of ECOSOC and UN Secretariat entities that focus on economic and social issues, the term “normative” has traditionally been used to describe work relating to policy analysis, advice, advocacy and coordination. Most respondents agree that ESCAP should continue to work in this area and that it has distinct advantages in providing a regional, cross-cutting and intersectoral perspective. However, some respondents indicate that ESCAP is too “document-oriented” and suggest that policy analysis, particularly in the economic domain, can be better handled by consultants and other organizations, such as the World Bank, ADB or IMF.

Other respondents interpret the term “normative” as applying strictly to the setting of technical or sector-specific norms and standards. In this context, ESCAP appears to have a role in setting norms and standards in those sectors in which it is seen to have specific sectoral expertise. Areas that are highlighted in this regard relate to the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway initiatives. One member State suggests that “no other institution could have provided the same service as ESCAP”. Other member States and some UN partners express the opinion that ESCAP has a limited role to play in the setting of norms and standards. Such work should be left to entities that are considered to be specialized in their respective sectoral areas (e.g. WHO, ILO, etc.).

## **VII. MULTIDISCIPLINARY, CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH**

One of ESCAP’s primary comparative advantages, as reflected in the feedback received by all types of respondents, is its multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach. In all areas of its work, e.g. in providing policy advice or conducting capacity development activities, ESCAP is seen to add value by approaching issues from a broader perspective, by tackling complex issues through the integration of different sectors, and by highlighting the importance of mainstreaming social issues in sectors that are, conventionally, considered to be in the economic domain.

While ESCAP emphasizes the multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral nature of its work, its own secretariat structures appear to somewhat inhibit ESCAP’s ability to fully do justice to its claim. The intention of the thematic approach (see section II above) was to further strengthen multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral work, but does not, in itself, appear to have strengthened this kind of work since divisions generally continue to operate on a sectoral basis.

Another factor that complicates a cross-sectoral approach, however important it may be, is the nature of ESCAP’s counterparts, typically sector-based line ministries.

## VIII. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

ESCAP technical cooperation activities are often the most visible assistance available to line ministries at the country level. In some ways, this can give government officials in line ministries a limited perspective of the overall work and mandate of ESCAP. Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP are implemented in all programme areas, and are carried out through the following modalities at both the national and regional levels: advocacy, training, advisory services (by regular budget staff and regional advisers), workshops and pilot or demonstration projects.

Technical cooperation, or operational, activities of ESCAP appear to be of most benefit to member States when:

- i)* ESCAP addresses an issue or sector in which it has a clear comparative advantage (e.g. transport, statistics);
- ii)* The activities clearly support ESCAP's core analytical and normative functions (e.g. the Asian Highway, disability);
- iii)* The assistance is readily accessible and responsive (e.g. advisory services);
- iv)* ESCAP forges partnerships with other key organizations (e.g. partnership with UNDP and ADB in supporting the achievement of the MDGs);
- v)* Priority is given to the needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

ESCAP's strengths in technical cooperation include the following: It is able to draw upon a substantial pool of expertise available in-house to address technical cooperation needs from a multisectoral approach. This multisectoral approach enables ESCAP to bring together representatives from across different government ministries in addressing development issues. It can draw upon its extensive analytical capacity to inform its technical cooperation work, and can take advantage of its unique intergovernmental position to address regional issues effectively. ESCAP has potential access to the UN Country Team at the national level, which is able to provide technical and logistical support for technical cooperation activities. At the regional level, ESCAP effectively partners with UNDP and the ADB in supporting the achievement of the MDGs in the region.

ESCAP faces challenges when implementing operational activities at the national level. Operational work has often been carried out on a piecemeal basis and has lacked adequate follow-up. Technical cooperation activities at the national level require significant logistical and technical backstopping support that ESCAP lacks. It is noted by a number of UN Resident Coordinators that, without an in-country presence, it is difficult for ESCAP staff to have an understanding of the policy, economic and social context in which an activity is to be implemented. This also makes it difficult to provide follow-up to operational activities or to monitor effectiveness. Based on the limited positive feedback received on pilot projects at the national level, it appears that ESCAP should evaluate its work in this area in order to demonstrate the value and relevance of these operational activities.

ESCAP has engaged in a number of UN country planning processes in order to improve the coherence of ESCAP technical cooperation activities with the UN Country Team. However, at this stage, these efforts do not appear to have contributed to closer interaction between ESCAP and the UNCT in the planning and delivery of operational activities. In a number of cases, ESCAP technical cooperation activities appear to duplicate the work of other UN entities. Operational activities, which are planned directly by ESCAP staff with line ministries, risk being inconsistent with the work of the UNCT in promoting a harmonized approach to development assistance.

### **A. Training**

Across a number of sectors, building capacity and supporting harmonized approaches to economic and social development issues through regional training is a strength of ESCAP (e.g. SIAP statistical capacity-building). National level training on the follow-up to regional or global conferences and the implementation of global commitments are appreciated by the governments of member States. ESCAP is able to provide training in issues that have a regional or transborder dimension, and is able to share lessons from other countries.

As noted above, technical cooperation activities, including training, require technical and logistical backstopping at the national level that ESCAP does not have. Training also requires follow-up, which is a weakness of ESCAP's current approach.

### **B. Advisory services**

Advisory services, particularly services provided by Regional Advisers, are often viewed as being of value. They provide ESCAP with the capacity to respond quickly to requests for technical assistance from member States. These services are often one of the most visible aspects of the work of ESCAP at the country level, and are appreciated by member States for this reason. For instance, advisory services on MDG implementation, energy services and strategic planning and management in national planning are appreciated by some countries. Advisory missions, however, as they are undertaken at the national level in most cases, also risk duplicating the work of the UNCT or other entities (such as bilateral donors). Due to the short-term nature of this work, it is also difficult for ESCAP to demonstrate the impact of advisory missions.

Close coordination with the UNCT and national planning agencies is required to ensure that advisory services provided by ESCAP support overall government policy and the agreed work of the UN at the country level. Continued efforts need to be undertaken by ESCAP to ensure that advisory services, whether undertaken by regular budget staff or regional advisors, are consistent with the overall role and mandate of ESCAP as a regional organization while effectively complementing the work of the UN Country Team. One member State indicates that regional advisors are strongest when they have had direct experience as practitioners.

## **IX. WORKING WITH PARTNERS**

ESCAP is able to mobilize a wide range of partnerships with donors (multilateral and bilateral), UN agencies, civil society and the private sector. There are a large number of cases in which partnerships have significantly improved the impact and value of ESCAP's analytical and operational work. There is scope for further improvement in this area, however.

As noted above, ESCAP has a limited capacity to implement operational activities at the country level. The need for ESCAP to partner with the Office of the Resident Coordinator and relevant members of the UN Country Team is clear. Country planning processes (currently CCA/UNDAF) provide a valuable analytical and programmatic entry point for all UN activities at the county level. ESCAP should be no exception to this. Analytical work would also benefit from closer collaboration with the UNCT to take advantage of the accumulated knowledge of the UN at the country level, and to ensure relevance. Supporting these important processes will require resources and a strong commitment from senior management.

At the regional level, ESCAP has made progress in promoting partnerships between UN entities through the annual Regional Coordination Meeting (RCM) and the five Thematic Working Groups. ESCAP has also engaged in a highly successful partnership with UNDP and the ADB in supporting the MDGs in the region. Closer relations with the ADB have been nurtured under a MOU which was signed in 2004. While commendable, these initiatives will not ensure stronger partnerships or increase the coherence of the UN at the regional level. More needs to be done to promote genuine partnerships based on sectoral and functional comparative advantages. ESCAP appears well positioned to take a lead role in this process, which is also supported by an ECOSOC mandate. This is an ongoing process that will require a commitment from senior management with dedicated resources.

The institutional environment of the region has changed drastically since ESCAP was established in 1947. A large number of organizations have been established in the region to foster regional cooperation in economic and social sectors (such as ADB, ASEAN, SAARC, ECO, PIFS, SPC, APEC, the Asian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the APEC Business Forum). Regional intergovernmental organizations represent natural counterparts for the work of ESCAP in promoting regional integration. ESCAP needs to adjust to the changing institutional context by ensuring close collaboration and partnerships with the work of these bodies.

ESCAP has made progress in engaging non-government sectors in the overall economic and social development agenda in the region. Examples include the Pro-Poor Public Private Partnership project, and the Asia-Pacific Business Forum. Member States suggested that more could be done to promote the role of the private sector in ESCAP activities, for example by engaging chambers of commerce in programmatic activities. ESCAP also provides a platform for dialogue between civil society and government. Civil society, non-governmental organizations in particular, is a very important partner for ESCAP. The role of

civil society in programme planning and implementation through a stronger partnership could be promoted in all areas of ESCAP's work.

## **X. VISIBILITY**

By and large, stakeholders do not consider ESCAP to be very visible. While most member States' focal point ministries have a relatively strong level of awareness of ESCAP's work, the understanding of most line ministries is limited to their respective sector. There is a clear perception that ESCAP does not market itself very well, that there are few, if any, outreach activities and that its website is not sufficiently attractive or up to date.

Regional organizations, such as ADB or UNDP's regional centres, tend to have a good awareness of ESCAP, although ESCAP's role and comparative advantage in different areas is not always clear. To the extent that this could be clarified, ESCAP's visibility is expected to increase.

As far as UN country teams are concerned, ESCAP is not generally well known. To the extent that individual UN country team members are aware of ESCAP, its image is not particularly positive in so far as its work is not seen as adding value to ongoing country efforts.

Among civil society entities that are active in the sectors in which ESCAP works, there is limited awareness in so far as such entities have been involved in ESCAP activities in the past. Overall, there is a sense that ESCAP should do much more to put itself on the map and to (i) demonstrate that it can offer useful services and products in support of countries' development efforts, and (ii) highlight the role of civil society organizations in development.

## **XI. RESOURCES**

Most member States are aware of the difficulties ESCAP faces in delivering a very broad programme of work with what are considered to be relatively limited human and financial resources. This is encapsulated by the response of one country which states that "ESCAP seems to have unlimited mandates but limited financial resources". Three of the regional institutions are seen to be particularly poorly endowed.

There is a general sense that ESCAP's programme of work is too ambitious given its limited resources, and that it needs to focus more. Some member States suggest that ESCAP needs to consolidate and streamline its assistance since it cannot possibly cover demand in all areas. It is proposed that scarce resources be focused on areas where they can contribute most, bearing in mind ESCAP's comparative advantages. In this regard, the work of the regional institutions in particular should be reviewed critically.

## **XII. REGIONAL OFFICES AND INSTITUTIONS**

ESCAP does not currently have a prominent role in the Pacific. Through EPOC, it has filled a niche role in providing technical assistance in a number of economic and social sectors primarily through the two EPOC-based Regional Advisers. Other regional entities, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, perform more significant convening and technical cooperation functions in the Pacific. ESCAP's visibility in the Pacific has been closely related to the profile and activities of its staff, including the EPOC Chief. The move of EPOC to Suva, the establishment of the Advisory Council to oversee EPOC's work, and the convening of the PLUS session in Jakarta are all viewed very positively in the Pacific. A perception that ESCAP still focuses primarily on Asia, and "the Pacific is the silent P in ESCAP" persists. A number of respondents propose that the EPOC office should act as a conduit for Pacific members to access the resources available in ESCAP, and ensure that its needs are reflected in ESCAP's programme of work. The Pacific Plan is cited as the overall framework that should guide ESCAP's work in the Pacific.

SIAP clearly stands out as ESCAP's most well-known and successful regional institution. This appears to be due to several factors, including (i) the relevance of its programme, (ii) the professionalism of its services, and (iii) the strong programme support provided by the host government. With respect to APCICT, most member States are aware of its recent establishment and express the hope that it will be able to provide useful services to the Asia-Pacific region.

Positive feedback on APCAEM and CAPSA is provided by their respective host countries. With the exception of one or two other member States, most countries and almost all other stakeholders, are either unfamiliar with the work of these institutions, have not been included in any of their activities, do not consider them to be operating effectively or do not consider their work to be relevant to their needs. APCTT fared slightly better on some of these counts.

## **XIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY**

Most member States are appreciative of ESCAP's intergovernmental machinery as a mechanism through which to reach consensus on common issues. As indicated under section II above, the thematic approach to ESCAP's intergovernmental work is generally welcomed as fostering cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary work. However, some member States regret the abolition of certain sectoral committees, such as the Statistics Committee, which are considered to have functioned well in the past.

Most member States consider ESCAP resolutions to be important in so far as they identify their needs and establish common priorities and approaches in the region. Resolutions adopted at the regional level are seen as being of value in building a link between ESCAP's programme of work and the policies and priorities agreed upon in global UN forums. However, many member States consider resolutions that reiterate GA or ECOSOC resolutions to be less important. One member State indicates its concern that non-regional countries



can, at times, influence the outcomes of the resolutions committee, and also expresses the view that the level of technical support provided by the secretariat for consideration of draft resolutions occasionally varies.

Member States put forward differing views on other aspects of ESCAP's intergovernmental work. While some value the background reports prepared by the secretariat, others suggest that they are not interesting. Moreover, while some value the number of meetings held and even welcome the possibility of having more opportunities for dialogue on policy issues, others feel that there are too many meetings and that it is, at times, difficult for member States to actively take part in all.

One sentiment that is expressed clearly by a number of member States is that ESCAP's intergovernmental processes should be more participatory and inclusive. Countries from the Pacific and South-west Asia suggest that ESCAP is not sufficiently responsive to their needs.

## Part Four: Recommendations

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The economic and social situation in the Asia-Pacific region has changed substantially in the last twenty years. The institutional landscape in the region has also changed, with a proliferation of organizations, both inside and outside of the United Nations system. While ESCAP has repositioned itself from time to time to respond effectively to the needs of its membership, it still faces a challenge to maintain its relevance. The following recommendations present our views on the key steps ESCAP could take in this context:

### **I. FOCUS ON THE UNIQUE FUNCTION OF ESCAP**

ESCAP's comparative advantage is derived from its attribute as a regional commission that is able to draw together the most representative and diverse range of countries from the Asian-Pacific region. The comprehensive membership of ESCAP provides it with unique convening power to address issues of common concern to particular groups of countries along political, geographical and economic lines. ESCAP must thus focus on its primary function as an inclusive regional forum for these countries to exchange views, experiences and knowledge on major policies dealing with economic, social and environmental issues. It should also serve as a forum for the formulation of an Asia-Pacific perspective into the broader UN discourse on development.

### **II. REVISIT THE THEMATIC APPROACH**

ESCAP currently has three thematic areas, namely: (1) poverty reduction; (2) managing globalization; and (3) emerging social issues. These theme areas are too broad for an organization of ESCAP's size and capacity to effectively address. The end result is that ESCAP's work is spread too thinly across a wide range of topics, limiting ESCAP's potential to create impact at the regional level. For these reasons, the thematic framework could be discontinued. Alternatively, in the event of ESCAP wishing to continue with this approach, it must either revise these thematic areas or sharpen the focus of work under each area in order to narrow the scope of coverage.

### **III. PROMOTE PIONEERING AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES**

In the past ESCAP has been recognized for its pioneering role in identifying and advocating innovative economic and social development approaches to promote regional cooperation. ESCAP needs to re-establish itself as an organization that can undertake cutting edge research and policy analysis, and promote creative solutions to address the changing development needs of its member States.

#### **IV. BUILD UPON AREAS OF STRENGTH**

ESCAP has made significant contributions in certain sectors, such as transport, statistics, energy and disability. While ESCAP may continue its work in these sectors as long as its presence in them remains relevant, it needs to identify other possible areas of relevance and concentrate upon them using its comparative advantages of working in a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary manner.

#### **V. AVOID DUPLICATION OF WORK**

Several areas of work addressed by ESCAP appear to overlap with the work of other UN bodies and specialized agencies, which are better positioned to undertake such work. ESCAP will need to reassess its work with a view to discontinuing its activities in those areas where there is little or no value addition.

#### **VI. ENSURE BALANCE IN NORMATIVE, ANALYTICAL AND OPERATIONAL WORK**

A growing trend at ESCAP has been the increase in operational work, which in some areas has started to overshadow its traditional normative and analytical focus. While recognizing that ESCAP's operational work can serve an important function of nurturing the organization's analytical and normative work, there is a need to ensure a better balance and to undertake only those operational activities that contribute to ESCAP's normative and analytical functions.

#### **VII. ENSURE HIGHER QUALITY IN OPERATIONAL WORK**

ESCAP organizes a number of seminars and workshops, undertakes pilot projects and sends missions to member States. Often, these activities have been organized as stand-alone events, and also lack appropriate follow-up. Such activities could benefit substantially from careful planning, coordination with other United Nations agencies, better implementation and adequate attention to their sustainability. It is essential to concentrate on quality and effectiveness of these activities to improve the perception in participating countries about their usefulness.

#### **VIII. FULLY TAP MULTIDISCIPLINARY CAPACITY**

ESCAP's sectoral divisions appear to operate in isolation, which impedes ESCAP's ability to address issues from a multidisciplinary perspective. ESCAP should therefore consider establishing suitable internal mechanisms, like interdivisional teams, on selected critical issues as a means of fully tapping its multidisciplinary capacity.

## **IX. STRENGTHEN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL**

Recognizing the desirability of system-wide coherence in the United Nations, ESCAP should ensure closer coordination and cooperation with the work of the UN Country Teams under the United Nations country assistance framework, to ensure regional value addition.

## **X. STRENGTHEN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL**

There is recognition of ESCAP's convening role as well as its potential to serve as an inclusive body for coordination of UN programmes at the regional level. In this context, ESCAP should continue to strengthen system-wide coherence among United Nations entities at the regional level by utilizing its ministerial conferences as well as an improved Regional Coordination Meeting (RCM), which it chairs.

## **XI. ENHANCE SYNERGIES WITH NON-UNITED NATIONS SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Many non-United Nations organizations have come up during the past few decades to promote subregional cooperation and integration in the Asian-Pacific region. These include, among others, ADB, APEC, ASEAN, PIFS, ECO and SAARC. In order for ESCAP to remain effective, it must strengthen its cooperation with them and achieve synergies with the planning and programmatic processes of these organizations, and also with non-governmental organizations like the Asian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the APEC Business Forum, which are active in promoting regional cooperation.

## **XII. PROMOTE GREATER PUBLIC AWARENESS**

While ESCAP's work is known to government focal points as well as some line ministries, there is generally inadequate public awareness of the role of ESCAP in the region. It is important for ESCAP to project itself as a relevant, responsive and results-based organization, particularly to strategic target groups such as policymakers, the media, civil society, opinion leaders and the young generation. For ESCAP to enhance its visibility and shape its image as a leading organization in the region, it must devote considerably more attention to external communications. It needs to urgently upgrade its capacity in this area and launch a comprehensive communication strategy that will ensure higher visibility for ESCAP in the region.

### **XIII. STRENGTHEN THE EVALUATION FUNCTION TO ENSURE GREATER PROGRAMME IMPACT**

ESCAP needs to strengthen its capacity to evaluate the impact of its work in an objective and credible manner. Having made a positive start in promoting results-based management, ESCAP's capacity in this area could be further enhanced to enable it to embark on a systematic programme to monitor and evaluate the full range of its work as a basis for redirecting priorities and programmes, including curtailment of less relevant and ineffective activities.

### **XIV. REVIEW THE CONTRIBUTION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Of the various ESCAP regional institutions, SIAP appears to have achieved the most effective delivery of its products and services. ESCAP should further review the performance of the regional institutions and should apply the lessons learned from SIAP to enhance their effectiveness.

### **XV. MOBILIZE PROGRAMME MANAGERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF ESCAP**

There is concern that the compartmentalized approach to planning and delivery of work is detracting from ESCAP's overall strategic direction. There appears to be a strong need for fostering a shared vision at all levels and an identity for ESCAP that brings together all divisions and mobilizes all staff to work towards corporate goals.

### **XVI. ENSURE GREATER OWNERSHIP OF ESCAP PROGRAMMES BY MEMBER STATES**

To ensure that ESCAP programmes are relevant and responsive to the needs of its membership, it is important for ESCAP to maintain an effective consultative process with its member States, including through the mechanism of ACPR.

### **XVII. MOBILIZE GLOBAL RESOURCES TO ASSIST MEMBER STATES**

ESCAP should support member States by catalysing funds and technical assistance from various sources, including multilateral, governmental and non-governmental organizations. It could do this by assisting States in project identification and preparation, and by accessing its own extensive networks.

## **XVIII. PROMOTE SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

ESCAP members include countries at very different stages of development. ESCAP should draw from the expertise of countries in the region, in particular to address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and Pacific island developing countries. ESCAP can also be a bridge in promoting and facilitating partnerships among developing countries in areas of common interest.



# Conclusion

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As the Member States of the United Nations conduct a far-reaching review of the Organization to strengthen its relevance and impact, ESCAP stands at a crossroads. Can it respond to the requirements of the day and adjust to the dynamic environment of change? Can it demonstrate that it adds value to the process of economic and social development of its member States? Can it position itself as a key United Nations partner within the Asia-Pacific region?

This evaluation provides ESCAP with an opportunity to redefine its role as the regional outpost of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. As such, ESCAP must highlight the critical contribution it can make in bridging the global and national divide, through demonstrating its capacity to promote a regional interface between efforts to provide policy guidance and coordination at the global level and the diverse and multifaceted development realities at the national level. In doing so, ESCAP must challenge the status quo. It must prove that it is capable of spearheading bold reform initiatives that have the potential to transform ESCAP into a key vehicle for economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific.

To address the range of recommendations identified in this evaluation, ESCAP will need to change. However painful that process may be, if ESCAP is to find the space to flourish, it must overcome its fear of relinquishing old stakes. If it can do this, there is no doubt that ESCAP will be able to fulfil its important role as the most inclusive intergovernmental forum in the Asia-Pacific region. As such, it can be the vehicle for member-driven economic and social development in the region, providing critical expertise in key areas, while harnessing the strengths of all regional development stakeholders, including the United Nations regional and country-level entities, in providing comprehensive and integrated development services and products to its member States.

The opportunity to shape ESCAP's destiny is in the hands of both its member States and its secretariat. We hope that ESCAP will forge ahead and rise to successfully meet this challenge.





# Annex 1: Key Findings

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This Annex provides a detailed summary of the feedback received from all stakeholders, both in written responses to the member States' questionnaire, as well as during the course of interviews. This Annex has two main sections reflecting (a) the perspectives of ESCAP member States and (b) the perspectives of other ESCAP stakeholders.

## I. PERSPECTIVES OF ESCAP MEMBER STATES

### A. Thematic areas

Conceptually a number of member States viewed the thematic approach positively, as it helps focus on key issue areas from a cross-cutting perspective. However, the majority of member States are less sure about the effectiveness of the thematic approach because of its very broad nature.

The majority of member States consider themes such as *poverty reduction* and *managing globalization* to be "too broad". Other member States indicate that the three themes "overlap", are "a bit mixed up" and "cover just about everything, depending on how they are interpreted". It also leads to a practical problem of linking ESCAP's thematic work with that of the line ministries at the national level. As such, many member States are in favour of a careful review of this approach.

### B. Comparative advantages

#### Regional convening power and consensus-building

Most countries indicate that ESCAP's role in providing a UN umbrella in negotiating regional or subregional issues is important. This role cannot be substituted by another country or a nationally-based organization. ESCAP's role in this regard is particularly valued in view of Central Asian countries' interdependence on critical issues such as transport, use of common natural resources, energy, etc.

As a regional commission, ESCAP is considered to be able to draw together a representative and diverse range of countries from the region. ESCAP plays an important role in building regional consensus and holding regional forums that take into account the specificity and diversity of the Asia-Pacific region's problems. ESCAP is thus a unique forum for multilateral negotiations and discussions on a whole range of social and economic matters, and helps define shared aspirations and what needs to be done to achieve them. As such, ESCAP provides an important platform to bring diverse countries together and build trust. According to one country, "ESCAP does a great job on inclusiveness and

the integration of States that are on the margins of the global economic system". With regard to its convening power, the geographical inclusiveness of ESCAP is highly valued by the majority of respondents.

One country suggests that ESCAP is the only organization that promotes "home grown" regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, as opposed to other UN agencies whose headquarters have established and funded regional offices which are managed through central administrations.

ESCAP's support for subregional cooperation and integration is particularly recognized within the Central and North-East Asian region. From a Pacific perspective ESCAP has the potential to strengthen regional integration, i.e., bring Asian economies closer to those of the Pacific.

There are differing views as to whether ESCAP adds value in building consensus on regional issues through the organization of regional preparatory conferences for, or regional follow-up to, major global conferences. Some countries consider this to be an important function. Some also suggest, in this regard, that since ESCAP has major countries as its members, as well as many other active participating members, it can lead the other regional commissions in dealing with some global agendas. However, other countries suggest that by focusing on the preparation for, and follow-up to, major global conferences, ESCAP risks duplicating the work of global bodies such as ECOSOC or the General Assembly, as well as globally-operating UN entities such as DESA and UNCTAD. According to some countries, the nature of the discussions at ESCAP should be "constructive and genuine dialogue, rather than intergovernmental negotiations leading to consensus outcomes".

A large number of respondents also comment on the coordinating role of ESCAP at the regional level. Several respondents point out that ESCAP could make more effective use of its convening capacity to strengthen policy coherence and avoid possible duplication of work among UN entities and other international organizations.

Several respondents call upon ESCAP to provide a "link" among emerging subregional organizations. For example, ESCAP could organize meetings with SAARC, BIMSTEC and ASEAN as side-events during its annual sessions.

### Advocacy

Many member States value ESCAP's role in giving them a regional voice and identity which other globally operating organizations cannot, even if they have more substantive or technical expertise. ESCAP is thus seen as playing a useful role in advocating a regional position on international issues, thereby easing interaction between global bodies and their decisions, on one hand, and country-level work, on the other.

ESCAP's role in monitoring and evaluating progress made towards MDG achievements at the regional level is valued by several respondents.

One respondent indicates that ESCAP could also usefully take an active role in promoting reform of the UN system. Recognizing the importance of the regional dimension of UN reforms, it is also suggested that if properly focused, ESCAP can be a useful forum for the formulation and input of an Asia-Pacific perspective into the broader UN debate.

#### Regional knowledge networking

Most member States value ESCAP as a forum for the exchange of experiences and knowledge. Expert or working group consultations and policy dialogue are considered to be important in implementing ESCAP initiatives within the region. The varied and large membership of ESCAP is seen as enriching the organization. ESCAP is thus considered as facilitating interaction between countries, such as organizing workshops and technical groups on various relevant topics and issues. Disadvantaged countries, such as least developed, landlocked and island developing countries appreciate, in particular, the exchange of experiences with other subregions and countries on a range of issues.

By working closely with specialized agencies having expertise on specific thematic issues, ESCAP can provide a more in-depth analysis of issues of concern in the region.

ESCAP's role as a forum for the "sharing of information on measures to improve social development" was "most valuable" to one respondent, although this respondent indicated that such information was also accessible from ADB or the World Bank.

#### Norms and standard-setting

Respondents point to the success of the Asian Highway Project as an illustration of ESCAP's important role as a forum for dialogue, negotiation and consolidation of standards on trans-national issues. Referring to the adoption in 2003 of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, one respondent indicates that "no other institution could have provided the same service as ESCAP", which provided a negotiation platform for the Agreement, which entered into force in 2005.

The approval at the 62nd session of the Commission of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network is also repeatedly flagged as a strong indication of ESCAP's important role as a regional forum for norm-setting in the area of infrastructure development. Likewise, the recent initiative put forward by ESCAP to create a united trans-Asian energy system is evaluated positively.

Beyond the area of transport in which ESCAP is seen as playing an important sector-specific role within the region, most member States suggest that norms and standards should typically be set by UN specialized agencies and other international organizations that are considered to be authoritative in their areas of specialization. Some member States thus consider ESCAP's role in setting norms and standards to be limited.

Multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral approach

Many member States value ESCAP's multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral approach on various common and cross-border issues, which go beyond the narrow, restricted mandate of many funds and programmes. Examples include (a) the mainstreaming of social issues (e.g., health, gender, disability) in sectors such as trade or transport, (b) tackling trade facilitation in a holistic manner, by integrating issues such as trade, transport, governance, SME development, or (c) integrating environmental issues in infrastructure development projects. In order to strengthen its cross-sectoral work, one country mentioned that ESCAP should seek to develop cross-sectoral approaches that are not necessarily linked to specific ministries, with which ESCAP works primarily at the moment. Also, ESCAP needs to continue to break up "silo-mentalities" both within government as well as within ESCAP.

Some member States suggest that ESCAP's role in promoting region-wide sectoral cooperation has proved beneficial most noticeably in areas where no other agency has the geographical scope to promote region-wide coherence.

Expertise on regional cooperation and cross-sectoral approaches

Some member States highlight that ESCAP's work in the areas of regional cooperation and on cross-sectoral or multidisciplinary issues is underpinned by expertise within the secretariat, which is not available in other organizations that have a more country-based and sectoral focus.

*Selected recommendations by member States*

- ESCAP should use its "convening power" to better effect.
- Innovative ways of strengthening partnerships between the Asian and Pacific membership, with the latter benefiting from the economic growth and dynamism of the former, should be looked into.
- ESCAP could promote a bigger role for the more developed countries through South-South cooperation, in order to assist the less developed countries in the region. In this regard, ESCAP could do more to harness resources from the more developed member States to assist the poorer members.
- ESCAP should focus on tackling truly regional issues that are not handled at the global level.

## C. Programme areas

In their responses, most member States are able to indicate what activities ESCAP implements but have difficulties in highlighting what impact such activities have had and whether ESCAP's achievements are sustainable.

### General

Member States indicate that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Initiating the establishment of ADB and the Mekong River Commission (ESCAP is the “grandmother”);
- Setting regional agendas and conducting normative activities at Commission sessions and various conferences;
- Providing a platform for regional cooperation among Asian and Pacific countries and building a regional community;
- Representing an Asia-Pacific regional perspective at the global level on many global issues;
- Facilitating the formulation of an Asia-Pacific common approach on many global issues;
- Resolving pressing needs of economic and social development and ensuring coordination between Asia-Pacific countries in major fields of cooperation;
- Promoting regional cooperation by initiating cooperation frameworks, agreements, networks and forums for policy and exchanging experiences in areas of economic and social development;
- Contributing to high economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region by acting as a “think-tank” and “catalyst” for socio-economic development;
- Fostering integration and initiating regional responses to regional and global emergencies;
- Driving the SPECA initiative in Central Asia;
- Conducting work related to the Brussels Plan of Action for LDCs. ESCAP has a reputation for supporting less developed countries;
- Providing support in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries.

### Subprogramme 1: Poverty and development

Most member States give priority to the issue of poverty reduction, and in general appreciate the fact that ESCAP is involved in this important area. Its work on supporting countries in monitoring the progress towards achieving MDGs and, especially, its regional work in this area, is appreciated. ESCAP's focus on LDCs is considered to be important. Several countries suggest that ESCAP should do more to promote public-private partnerships as part of poverty reduction strategies.

Member States indicate that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Assisting countries of the region to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including through the preparation of the regional MDG report;
- Providing assistance in the monitoring of MDGs.

### Subprogramme 2: Statistics

Feedback on the value of the Statistics subprogramme is positive overall. Most member States appreciate the role of SIAP, but appear to know much less about the Bangkok-based work. With regard to the latter, some countries are familiar with the subcommittee on Statistics and support provided to it by the secretariat. One respondent is unsure as to the relative value of the Bangkok-based Statistics Division vis-à-vis SIAP and DESA.

SIAP is praised for its programmes that aim to develop the capacity of official statisticians for aligning national statistics with international standards: "There is nothing similar in the region". It is also suggested that it is doubtful that the same comprehensive capacity-building programme could be offered if left solely to other donors operating on a bilateral basis, nor would the current level of cross-fertilization of ideas from member States be possible.

One respondent suggests that the ESCAP statistical database services (e.g., Statistical Yearbook) are of limited value. The information is generally available elsewhere. What is more useful are the regional statistical reports on specific topics.

Member States indicate that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Building capacities in statistics of developing countries in the region, especially through the activities of SIAP. Particularly, ESCAP is valued for (a) its development and dissemination of techniques, methodologies and standards, (b) advisory services provided mainly by SIAP and (c) SIAP training activities and workshops with other countries.
- Conducting training activities at the national level (SIAP) involving a range of data users from different ministries, on how to understand poverty statistics.
- Conducting training activities on how to strengthen national and international comparability of MDG-related statistics.

### Subprogramme 3: Development of Pacific island countries and territories

Pacific island member States generally value the work of the EPOC office and particularly the provision of advisory services and technical assistance. The Pacific island member States also appreciate EPOC's role in keeping social and developmental issues pertaining to the Pacific at the forefront of the regional agenda. Pacific island countries, however, feel that the majority of the ESCAP work programme focuses on Asian member States.

Subprogramme 4: Trade and investment

Many member States consider ESCAP's work in the area of trade to be important, especially in conjunction with its work in the area of transport, to strengthen member State capacities to participate in international trade negotiations and to promote trade within the region. Some countries, however, indicate that it is very difficult to differentiate between the work of ESCAP, UNCTAD, WTO and ITC when it comes to technical cooperation on trade issues. There is a sense however, that ESCAP seems to be "more available" and "reaches out more".

Member States indicate that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Building capacities in the area of trade facilitation, especially its cross-cutting, integrated approach, including non-governmental players (such as chambers of commerce and industry). Concrete action plans involving different stakeholders were drawn up in the course of cross-sectoral workshops on trade and transport facilitation, and are under implementation by the governments in at least one country;
- Initiating and supporting the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (formerly known as the Bangkok Agreement);
- Supporting the reduction of trade barriers in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Providing advisory services on WTO-related issues, and training workshops on WTO-issues;
- Providing expertise on trade issues related to LDCs, LLDCs, etc;
- Initiating the Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF), which is considered a valuable platform for business people in the region to interact. It allows businesses to advocate positions or needs vis-à-vis governments. Also, it provides an opportunity for the exchange of experiences and the promotion of understanding between participants. Some issues of interest include (a) closing the gap between the rich and the poor, (b) market access and (c) public-private partnerships.

Some member States point out that the frequency of ESCAP's activities in the area of trade is appropriate for normative work ("agreement on concepts") but that it has minimal impact in terms of training. At present, trade work consists only of a few meetings per year, and has a limited impact in building the capacity of countries on trade issues. The former Bangkok Agreement, which ESCAP promotes, is considered to be fairly old and no longer so relevant.

Subprogramme 5: Transport and tourism

ESCAP's subprogramme on transport stands out as appearing to be the most well-known by member States and the most highly valued. The important role played by ESCAP in networking Asia through the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway is repeatedly praised. ESCAP is also seen as being able to address transport and road issues from a cross-sectoral, integrated perspective (e.g., linking road building with poverty, health, social development, trade, etc.). In more operational terms, human resources development for transport specialists is generally valued by Central Asian countries. The general, "holistic" training provided by ESCAP on transport issues is appreciated and is seen as



complementing well those training programmes provided by bilateral and other international organizations. One country suggests that ESCAP could work in the area of tourism logistics.

Member States indicate that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Initiating and promoting the Asian Highway Network and the Trans-Asian Railway Network, which have contributed to the development of networks among the members.
  - Some countries indicate that the promotion of the Asian Highway Network has led to the upgrading of Asian Highway route sections in their countries, and suggest that the Asian Highway Agreement has made it easier to secure grants and loans to upgrade Asian Highway routes,
  - The Trans-Asian Railway Agreement is considered to be very useful, but is not yet at a point where it is helping to attract funding for Trans-Asian Railway routes in some countries. Some countries are optimistic that it will do so in the future.
- Support, including capacity development, on trans-boundary transport issues;
- Organizing national seminars on trade and transport facilitation;
- Promoting the trilateral Mongolia-Russia-China transport agreement;
- Establishing in one country a national committee on transit matters, which brings together 21 ministries and organizations, including the chamber of commerce, as well as a transport-trade logistics council.

#### Subprogramme 6: Environment and sustainable development

Many member States are aware of ESCAP's work in the area of environment and sustainable development, but they do not focus as much on this programme area as they do on others. Some issues, which are highlighted as being important, include water resources, energy and natural disaster management (tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, droughts, desertification, etc.). In all three cases, ESCAP is seen as being able to contribute expertise to the regional and subregional dimensions of the issues in question.

One member State, however, indicates that similar services could be obtained from UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank, and from bilateral organizations such as JICA and DANIDA. In this regard, another respondent suggests that ESCAP may be well placed to coordinate the work of such organizations within the region. Another country suggests that ESCAP has a role to play in conducting environmental impact assessments, especially of projects that have already been implemented, rather than at the inception stage, where many other agencies and firms are involved.

Member States indicate that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Initiating and providing support to the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment, which has contributed to the improvement of urban environments and the promotion of inter-city cooperation in environmental issues in the region;
- Building capacities in the area of energy and environment, in which ESCAP has played a pioneering role;
- Promoting and supporting the North-East Asia Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) and green growth;
- Providing assistance in conducting environmental impact assessments.

One member State considers ESCAP's work in the area of green growth not to be so relevant for member States and that other organizations are working more effectively on similar issues.

Subprogramme 7: Information, communication and space technology

Only a few member States comment on ESCAP's work in the area of information, communication and space technology. Some countries indicate that they would be interested in finding out more about the work of ESCAP in this area.

One member State is very positive about ESCAP's efforts in promoting and preparing for the "information society" in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in North-East Asia, through initiatives such as ICT capacity-building programmes. Another member State also suggests that ESCAP could assist in coordinating the work of APT and ITU within the region.

Member States indicates that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Building capacity on ICT-related issues;
- Providing support on the use of space technology in disaster management, e.g., for cyclones and tsunamis. Of particular value has been the establishment of links between natural disasters and economic and social development.

Several member States mention that they do not benefit from any work conducted by the work programme on ICST, and suggest that this field of work could be more effectively delivered by other entities, including the private sector.

Subprogramme 8: Emerging social issues

While the ESCAP subprogramme on emerging social issues appears to be less visible than some of the other programme areas, many member States do indicate appreciation for the work carried out in the area of social development. ESCAP's disability-related work is recognized by many member States as having no equivalent in other organizations. The role of the subprogramme in highlighting the social dimension of development, and in integrating social issues in areas that are conventionally tackled from a more economic perspective, is seen as adding

value. The role of the subprogramme in mainstreaming social issues, such as gender, disability or health, across different sectoral areas is considered to be especially important.

Some member States also point out the regional dimension of social issues and highlight ESCAP's value added in dealing with areas such as population, migration or health (e.g., HIV/AIDS, SARS, avian influenza). A number of member States have reservations about ESCAP's involvement in some of the issues, suggesting that specialized UN funds and programmes, such as WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNIFEM, may be in a better position to carry out some of the work, particularly to the extent that it focuses on national capacity-building rather than regional issues.

Member States indicated that ESCAP has played beneficial roles in the following areas:

- Conducting work in the area of disability. One country especially regarded as important the extension of the period of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons and implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific by ESCAP to improve the situation of people with disabilities in the region.
- Supporting the preparation of a Bangkok draft for an international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, which eventually formed the basis for the draft under review by the General Assembly.
- Building capacities in the area of health and development. For example, through collaboration with ESCAP, some countries were able to implement activities on HIV/AIDS targeting specific population groups.
- Effectively promoting health-related issues across different sectors.

### Sustainability

Member States provide very few comments on the extent to which ESCAP's work is considered to be sustainable or contributes to the building of sustainable capacities at the national level.

Many member States suggest that ESCAP initiatives have no or very little follow-up. While good ideas are put forward, there is then a need to become concrete, which is often not fulfilled. Other countries indicate that additional resources would allow ESCAP to focus more on sustainability.

One respondent emphasized that for ESCAP's work to have an impact and for the impact to be seen to be sustainable, considerable time has to pass. ESCAP thus works strategically over extended periods of time, and thus has a longer-term impact.

Another member State also suggests that ESCAP has had a long-standing impact upon its economy. While ESCAP does not provide money, it works as a facilitator and provides technical support. ESCAP is known to government civil servants and in intellectual circles in particular, whose capacities are built through ESCAP activities. Such work is less visible than high-profile initiatives funded by agencies such as UNDP, but it also guarantees a certain degree of sustainability.

#### Other issues

During interviews, member States were asked what potential role ESCAP could have in also covering human rights and peace and security, in addition to handling development issues. A few respondents feel that peace and security issues could be handled by ESCAP in so far as economic and social development can be seen as the basic precondition for stable societies. However, an explicit handling of peace and security issues, e.g., from the perspective of anti-terrorism, law enforcement and conflict resolution, by ESCAP is not favoured by most countries, and many have strong views against ESCAP taking these on. These issues are seen as pertaining to the sovereign domain and therefore should be addressed domestically, or should be tackled by the Security Council or by other UN entities which have capabilities and the mandate to do so. It is felt that ESCAP should focus upon and strengthen its development functions.

Many respondents are not clear on how human rights could be handled by ESCAP. While some countries indicate that economic and social rights could be considered, there appears to be a common understanding that political rights would be more difficult to accommodate in ESCAP's work. ESCAP's comparative advantage in providing assistance concerning these issues is also not clear. Most respondents are apprehensive about ESCAP working with politically sensitive issues.

Other areas that member States proposed as being among those which ESCAP may be able to tackle, or should be more involved in, include:

- Research and capacity-building for good governance and transparency;
- Promoting literacy for all;
- E-commerce;
- Disaster management (although some countries, did not consider ESCAP to have a comparative advantage in this area);
- Regional and subregional infrastructure development;
- Countries with special needs – LDCs, LLDCs, PICs, etc.

## **D. Implementation modalities**

### Policy research and analysis

Many member States indicate that they value the research and analysis conducted by ESCAP, resulting in analytical reports, policy recommendations and guidelines. According to some countries, ESCAP acts as a “knowledge centre” for poor countries. Also, one respondent said that the preparation of studies

outlining policy recommendations is appreciated since this makes it easier for countries to approach donors to seek funding.

Other member States consider ESCAP's work to be too "document-oriented". Regarding the value of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, in particular, the opinions of countries differ. While one member State is of the opinion that the *Survey* is "very relevant", others do not consider the *Survey* to have much value. One Pacific island country indicates that the *Survey* is very general and is of limited use to small island States.

Another member State suggests that it finds little value in ESCAP's policy-setting activities and reports, which could be undertaken by consultants or other organizations. Another still indicates that government officials are more inclined to read economic reports from the World Bank, ADB or IMF.

#### Technical cooperation - General

In providing general feedback on ESCAP's technical cooperation work, some member States appreciate the funding provided for national-level activities and suggest that more emphasis should be given to action-oriented technical cooperation activities involving practitioners rather than academics. Two respondents (both LDCs) say that a useful role that ESCAP could play would be to implement poverty reduction-related activities.

In contrast with the views expressed above, other member States express their concern that ESCAP is too involved in operational issues. Several member States feel that national-level capacity-building and technical assistance are not a strength of ESCAP. A number of respondents indicate that operational work is better done by UNDP. One member State indicates that, compared with other capacity-building programmes set up by bilateral donors, ESCAP lacks a good system for follow-up to its workshops, to ensure that people use the new skills after the event. Also, one member State points out that ESCAP tries to implement too many projects, some of which are duplicative.

Some member States suggest that ESCAP could play a role in mobilizing funding for national-level work, in follow-up to regional activities implemented by ESCAP. The need for financing of national-level operational activities, to implement policy advice provided by ESCAP, was highlighted. In this regard, one respondent says that "ESCAP has the experts but not the funds, while UNDP has the funds but no experts".

#### Technical Cooperation - Training

Many member States value ESCAP's training activities and call for more training, especially at the national level, in follow-up to regional workshops and conferences. Building national capacities based on knowledge conveyed through regional activities is considered to be particularly important. Several countries highlight the importance of training opportunities both within their countries and outside, implemented directly by ESCAP headquarters or through its regional institutions.

Some member States also acknowledge the difficulties ESCAP has in implementing training programmes at the national level and question whether it is well-placed to provide such training. A few member States question whether ESCAP has a comparative advantage in providing national-level training.

Technical Cooperation - Advisory services

Many member States indicate their appreciation for the advisory services received by ESCAP staff and, in particular, the regional advisors. These services are often the most visible aspect of ESCAP's work at the country level. Some countries would welcome more advisory services, although one indicated that it would prefer "real people" (practitioners from other countries) to provide advisory services. Other countries suggest that advisory services provided should be aimed more at capacity-building, with on-the-spot assistance, rather than providing analytical or theoretical advice.

*Selected recommendations by member States*

- ESCAP should concentrate more on normative and policy coordination activities and less on other activities such as research and analysis, including the publication of reports such as the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, and technical cooperation, which may be streamlined.
- ESCAP's analytical work should focus on areas where there are clear gaps, for example on common issues faced by LDCs. This would add value.
- ESCAP needs to be more field oriented to have an impact in its operational work.
- On-site, in-country assistance should be stressed more, rather than just providing reports and publications.
- ESCAP should focus less on producing theoretical or general policy frameworks or action plans, and more on assisting members to implement the existing policy frameworks or action plans under specific situations encountered by members in each subregion.
- Analytical and operational work needs to be closely linked.

## E. Working with other multilateral organizations and civil society

Most member States suggest that there is considerable scope for further improving coordination and alignment with other multilateral organizations, including UN departments, funds and programmes, as well as ADB. Comments received include:

- There is some overlap with UNDP;
- ADB and the World Bank may be able to provide better service in focusing on progress and development in the social area;
- There is some overlap in the technical assistance activities undertaken by ESCAP and various UN funds and programmes;
- ESCAP has developed operational capacities that replicate various types of activities undertaken by the funds and programmes including UNDP, UNESCO and UNEP, leading to internal competition and increased pressure on partner governments;
- Specialized agencies have a mandate and comparative advantage to undertake normative functions. Duplication of this role should be avoided by ESCAP;
- ESCAP's role in monitoring progress towards the achievement of MDGs overlaps with some of the work of other international organizations, such as the OECD Development Assistance Committee, UNDP and the development banks;
- It is important that the work of UN entities at the national level be coordinated. Procurement and management procedures should be harmonized. The current situation results in overlap and high administrative costs.

With respect to collaboration with civil society entities, one member State suggests that although ESCAP works actively and effectively in general, some other organizations, including IGOs and NGOs, could do some specific work and activities even more effectively or at lower cost. Several member States feel that ESCAP includes NGOs in some forums simply as a token attempt to appear inclusive rather than actually seeking input, and propose that ESCAP should promote the role of civil society entities, such as chambers of commerce, more explicitly.

### *Selected recommendations by member States*

- ESCAP should work closely with ADB to evaluate progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.
- ESCAP's assistance in monitoring the MDGs should be driven foremost by the expressed needs of its members, in particular those of PICs and SIDS, and identified gaps.
- ECO sometimes can help in ESCAP's activities.
- ESCAP could play a greater role in promoting cohesiveness between

BIMSTEC, SAARC and ASEAN.

- It would be useful to have one entity that coordinates the work of the UN at the regional level. It is not clear, however, whether ESCAP could fulfil this role. Coordination mechanisms would need to be considerably strengthened.
- ESCAP could play a coordinating role for UN agencies, especially during emergencies, in tackling new challenges such as SARS or avian influenza.
- ESCAP should be more inclusive of civil society organizations and give these organizations a genuine role in ESCAP activities.
- For ESCAP to make a valuable added contribution vis-à-vis the other agencies, its role may be more as a facilitator and a convener, rather than an implementer.
- Within the country, the UN should act as one agency, one programme and one fund.
- Interagency coordination is important, but very complicated. Here is a potential role for ESCAP.
- ESCAP should participate in donor meetings and various planning processes of countries to provide it with a good basis for determining what assistance should be provided.
- ESCAP should coordinate regional issues within the UN system. ESCAP needs to coordinate its work better with other UN bodies. Sometimes there is overlap and duplication.

## **F. Visibility and resources**

### Visibility

Many member States do not consider ESCAP to be very visible. While most focal point ministries have a relatively good understanding of ESCAP's work, the understanding of most line ministries' is limited to their respective sector. Some countries suggest that this is due, partly, to the ESCAP website being out of date. It is put forward that it is difficult to get specific details on the projects ESCAP is carrying out.

### Resources

Many member States acknowledge that ESCAP has difficulties delivering its broad programme of work with the few resources at its disposal. One country suggests that ESCAP seems to have unlimited mandates but limited financial resources. The regional institutions appear to be particularly poorly endowed.



One country indicates that it is easy to criticize ESCAP due of the lack of funding, combined with the nature of its work and its large membership. However, the work is still considered valuable and of a different nature than that being carried out by other entities. Nonetheless, other countries are of the view that ESCAP's programme of work is too ambitious given its limited resources, and that it needs more focus.

*Selected recommendations by member States*

- ESCAP should work more through the media to increase awareness about its work among the general public. It should consider “branding” its work like other development agencies do. While there is some visibility in certain ministries, ESCAP could do more to strengthen its visibility and promote its work and comparative advantage in certain areas.
- ESCAP should carry out an annual workshop in each country to explain the work it is doing and raise the organization's profile.
- ESCAP's work programme should be implemented in a transparent and coherent manner with good governance, and always giving priority to the benefits of members rather than donors.
- One should ward off projects or initiatives that may receive funding through one government or another, but may add little overall value to the work of ESCAP, or may not fit into the programmatic framework. In this regard, strong leadership is required.
- There should be a more even distribution of activities throughout the subregion, and transparent reporting to demonstrate the even distribution of activities.
- ESCAP needs to consolidate and streamline its assistance – it cannot cover the demands in all areas.
- ESCAP needs more resources and to increase efficiency.
- In light of the resource constraints, scarce resources should be focused on areas where they can contribute most. In this regard, the work of the regional institutions should be reviewed critically.
- The organizational structure of ESCAP which is currently rather fragmented, should be streamlined.

## G. EPOC and the work of ESCAP in the Pacific

ESCAP is not considered to be well known in the Pacific. However, several countries suggest that the EPOC office has made an impact, and that there is improved visibility of the Pacific in the region-wide programmes, which could, however, be further strengthened. Some countries are hopeful that the move of EPOC to Suva will improve the effectiveness and visibility of ESCAP in the Pacific.

According to the feedback received from member States, most of the assistance given to the Pacific subregion is in the form of training (e.g., statistics), technical assistance and advisory services. There is a sense, however, that the participation of PICs in ESCAP workshops is often low due to financial and distance constraints and that ESCAP's substantive contribution is mostly focused towards the Asian subregion. In this regard, the recent PLUS session held in Jakarta prior to the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission is appreciated by many Pacific island countries.

Several respondents from the Pacific say “we are not getting the full range of services or products at the disposal of ESCAP”.

### *Selected recommendations by member States*

- ESCAP needs to do more through the yet-to-be fully functioning EPOC office, which should be strengthened through appropriate staffing, resources and collaborative synergies, particularly with subregional organizations like the Pacific Forum Secretariat.
- The Special Body and its Advisory Council should be strengthened to ensure ownership by PIDCs.
- The Pacific subregional focus, which has begun with the implementation of the subprogramme for PICs, should be enhanced. The focus should be on South-South cooperation as the principal modality. ESCAP should determine how it can assist regional integration and how its programme can align with that of the Pacific Plan.
- It is important that EPOC identify its niche within the network of other organizations active in the Pacific, such as the Forum Secretariat, ADB, USP, SPC and most critically other UN agencies, and work closely with them to avoid duplication.
- ESCAP needs to significantly improve its contribution to the Pacific.
- ESCAP should decentralize decision-making authority to EPOC to allow it to better respond to emerging needs.
- ESCAP should be a member of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to build stronger cooperation.

- ESCAP should use the Pacific Plan, which has the highest level of approval, to set its programme framework. The other UN agencies and most other multilateral organizations developed programmes in support of the Pacific Plan. ESCAP should be part of this.

## H. Regional Institutions

### General

A number of member States express their view that it is not clear how the regional institutions relate to ESCAP's mission and what value they add. Some member States indicate that they do not benefit from the work of any of the regional institutions and suggest that, perhaps, they are geographically too far away from them. Others suggest that the regional institutions are simply not known.

There is a perception by some member States that the regional institutions are facing a difficult time. It is pointed out that at the recent Commission sessions, several regional institutions had difficulty in securing enough nominations for their governing councils.

One member State suggests that some of the regional institutions would perform better if they were independent, non-UN entities and thus faced fewer bureaucratic obstacles. In practice, however, if they were outside the UN context, they would probably lose any remaining opportunities they might have for attracting funding.

Another member State implies that there is nothing wrong, per se, with the creation of new institutions that meet the emerging needs of member States. However, the requirement for existing institutions also wanes.

### *Selected recommendations by member States*

- The coordination with and integration of the work of the regional institutions with that of other regional or subregional entities working in similar areas would be advisable.
- The regional institutions urgently need to be further strengthened, e.g., through dynamic leaders and closer coordination and support from ESCAP.
- Some existing regional institutions may have become obsolete and should be abolished.

### SIAP

Nearly every member State expresses appreciation for the work of SIAP, and values the organization of subregional events through SIAP in order to foster the exchange of information and experience, inter alia, on how to foster national, regional and global comparisons of progress towards achieving MDGs. One country mentions that, while it has benefited from the statistical training carried out by SIAP, courses are not offered regularly enough.

One member State points out that the degree of coordination between, and the relative comparative advantages of, ESCAP/SIAP and DESA are not obvious. Another suggests that SIAP “seems to have lost its direction a bit” in recent years.

### APCTT

Many member States are not familiar with the work of APCTT. Some suggest that this may have to do with the fact that there is no obvious counterpart or focal point in the government. One country indicates that while APCTT may be of potential use to it, APCTT’s work in the past has been crippled by serious funding constraints.

A number of member States are aware of limited interaction between them and APCTT. The last session of the APCTT Governing Council is known by a few countries to have approved a number of projects, but since then nothing has been heard. One member State implies that it has not been contacted by APCTT in about three years.

### APCICT

Since the centre is yet to be opened <sup>4</sup>, the benefits of APCICT are not yet apparent. There is some knowledge of the new APCICT and hope that Member States will be able to benefit.

### CAPSA

Some member States suggest that CAPSA faces serious funding and other operational constraints. One member State indicates that CAPSA’s strong points are capable personnel, a good database and good training programmes. The same member State reports that it used to benefit extensively from CAPSA but that the level of cooperation is now virtually non-existent due to CAPSA’s funding limitations. Nonetheless, CAPSA’s work is considered useful since it focuses on crops that are somewhat important but not sufficiently so that the government itself would collect data on them regularly.

Another member State mentions that CAPSA is not relevant because of the nature of the crops covered, as they are not grown in the country in question.

### UNAPCAEM

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<sup>4</sup> The APCICT office was officially opened in June 2006.

Some member States suggest that the work of UNAPCAEM appears useful, in theory, but it suffers from serious funding and other management and operational problems, implying that its programmes are virtually non-existent. Other countries are not clear about the potential benefits of the institution. While UNAPCAEM is considered by some member States potentially to add value, since other international organizations do not appear to be dealing with the development of agricultural machinery, it appears to have delivered little since it was established. One member State indicates that, without any concrete achievements, it is difficult to convince donors to provide funding.

One member State suggests that UNAPCAEM's work should focus on certification and testing, since machinery itself is available from the private sector.

One member State is of the view that joint initiatives undertaken by UNAPCAEM have been successful.

## **I. Intergovernmental machinery of ESCAP**

### General

A number of member States express the view that, in conducting its intergovernmental work, ESCAP does not tend to focus on their particular subregions, such as the Pacific and South-West Asia, but concentrates predominantly on South-East and North-East Asia. Similarly some smaller countries point out that the intergovernmental agenda is often dominated by larger developing and developed countries. A greater involvement by neglected subregions or types of countries would result in a better programme of work. A number of member States indicate that, in general, ESCAP should foster greater participation of member States in its intergovernmental meetings.

The experience of holding Commission sessions outside Bangkok is considered positively, particularly by the host countries. It is seen as increasing the profile of ESCAP.

Several member States suggest that ESCAP should not rush into reforming its conference structure, but that one should wait to gain sufficient experience with the current system.

Some member States consider the method of selecting and implementing theme topics not to be very effective. Another member State suggests that the calibre of representatives sent by member States to ESCAP's intergovernmental meetings is, at times, inadequate and that more of an effort should be made by member States to ensure that their representatives could contribute effectively to discussions.

### Resolutions and mandates

Much of the member States' feedback on resolutions relates to the most recent session of the Commission in Jakarta. In this regard, countries from the Pacific appreciate the focus of several resolutions on the needs of Pacific islands States and the Mauritius Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States. Such

resolutions are seen as building a link between ESCAP's programme of work and the rest of the world. Regional resolutions are considered important in establishing common priorities and approaches in the region. They should reflect deliberations of meetings convened by ESCAP, including committee meetings. The implementation of resolutions should be monitored.

Several member States suggest that resolutions should respond to member States' needs at the regional level, and should establish mandates accordingly. Responding to ECOSOC and GA mandates is seen as being less important. Overall, ESCAP's work should reflect a balance between regional and global mandates.

One member State indicates its concern that non-regional countries can, at times, influence the outcomes of the resolutions Committee, and also expresses the view that the level of technical support provided by the secretariat for consideration of draft resolutions occasionally varies.

#### Thematic committees

A number of member States find the work of the thematic committees useful.

Some countries are unclear about why previous committees were abolished, such as the Committee on Sustainable Development and the Committee on Statistics. With regard to the latter, its abolition is seen as a disappointment, especially since it was one of ESCAP's formal structures that was working well and attracted appropriate representation at meetings. It was a very useful forum for bringing together the senior statisticians of the region to discuss issues of common interest, statistical standards relevant to the region, and to provide some capacity-building at that level. It is suggested that ESCAP could still host such fora from time to time without the cost and formality of a committee.

A number of member States indicate that often they cannot attend committee meetings due to resource constraints and that having so many meetings can become a burden. One member State points out that these meetings are dominated by the ESCAP secretariat and secretariat-driven processes, for instance, outcomes are largely prepared in advance. Delegates tend to come for the opening session and then leave. Another member State points out that discussions in the committees are still broad and do not provide much useful information. Reports are not so useful, and normally just emphasize the importance of issues that people already know are important, without saying anything new about how to address them.

One member State suggests that the committees are important in providing direction to the secretariat. However, there does not appear to be much integration with the work of other UN entities. The secretariat's translation of mandates and guidance by the committees into on-going operational requirements is weak. One member State proposes that the thematic committees should develop draft resolutions for consideration at Commission sessions.

#### ACPR

Most member States consider ACPR to be very useful and constructive, and emphasize the importance of meeting regularly. Many member States are satisfied with the way ACPR meetings are conducted and see no need to change its format. One member State suggests, however, that ACPR could be more useful if it were more deliberative and that it is underutilized as a forum for discussion of substantive issues.

Some member States point out that, while the embassies in Bangkok are seen as doing a good job covering ESCAP's work in ACPR, more representatives from government ministries should participate in ACPR meetings. In some cases, government representatives in the capital are seen as being bypassed in decision-making by ACPR in Bangkok. In this regard, one member State is of the view that up to 80 per cent of ESCAP's decisions are made by ACPR representatives.

*Selected recommendations by member States*

- ESCAP's three themes are too closely connected. They need to be further prioritized.
- Poverty reduction should receive highest priority by ESCAP, since it is also a national priority for a majority of member States.
- ESCAP's intergovernmental work should be guided by a more balanced approach as far as subregions and countries with different levels of development are concerned.
- More intergovernmental meetings should be held in subregions that are unable to actively participate in meetings at ESCAP headquarters. Also, in order to ensure that country needs are better reflected in ESCAP's programme of work, ESCAP should visit each country and collect information on what their problems are.
- ESCAP should represent the Asia-Pacific region's common view and approach at the global level more actively.
- ESCAP's efforts to improve its conference structure and programme of work should take the needs of member States more fully into account.

## **II. PERSPECTIVES OF OTHER ESCAP STAKEHOLDERS**

### **A. Regional Organizations or Regional UN Entities<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup> The regional organizations interviewed were five Bangkok-based organizations: ADB, IOM, FAO, UNFPA and the UNDP Regional Centre; in addition, the UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo, the UNDP Subregional Centre for the Pacific, and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat were also interviewed.

International organizations, including regional UN entities, perceive regional cooperation as important in the context of accelerated social and economic development, which increases cross-border interactions. Regional cooperation is deemed as being crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and addressing issues such as migration, which entail orchestrated policy actions across the region.

#### Thematic and programme areas

Most regional organizations recognize the relevance and importance of the three themes: poverty reduction, managing globalization and addressing emerging social issues. However, many of the regional organizations interviewed express the view that the scope of these themes, which cover almost everything, is too broad, and therefore, a greater focus is needed to enhance the effectiveness of ESCAP work.

Among the three thematic areas, poverty reduction and managing globalization are viewed more positively, though the UNDP Subregional Centre for the Pacific highlighted the Emerging social issues and Statistics subprogrammes as the most successful programme areas. Overall, the MDGs, water, trade and poverty reduction are considered as the most successful programme areas. As for the least successful programme areas, one organization feels that some of the regional institutions should be “wrapped up”, as the services they provided can be better delivered by the private sector. Another example cited is the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, which is considered as “well-known” in the region, but widely criticized for paying insufficient attention to social issues.

Some organizations point out that governance appears to be a major gap in ESCAP’s current work programme, and suggest that ESCAP give more priority to governance.

#### Comparative advantages

It is generally felt that regional UN entities are in a better position to take into account unique regional dynamics, and better able to bring in a holistic view of social and economic development in the region. The role of regional UN entities is seen as important to policy advocacy, building partnership, setting norms and standards, and promoting a harmonized approach to development issues.

Regional organizations are of the view that, compared with specialized UN agencies, funds and programmes, ESCAP has advantages in promoting a holistic and multisectoral approach to development. For instance, while ESCAP has been active in brokering the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, it is also well placed to address related development issues, such as migration, human trafficking and HIV/AIDS.

It is reiterated that ESCAP could play the role of neutral regional broker, addressing issues such as good governance and the conflicts that threaten to jeopardize the development process.



### Implementation modalities

All regional organizations emphasize that ESCAP demonstrates its strength in undertaking comprehensive and comparative analysis. It is strongly recommended that ESCAP build on its strength and focus on developing high-quality evidence-based policy papers, which would serve as an advocacy tool for UN country teams in carrying out their work at the country level.

While ESCAP's geographic coverage of the entire Asian and Pacific region, and its convening power, are perceived as unique and important, the vast scope of the region contributes to its programme weakness in some subregions, such as the Pacific, which feels "left out" in many areas. Recent initiatives such as relocation of EPOC to Suva, and establishment of an advisory body for EPOC, as well as PLUS during the 62<sup>nd</sup> Commission session are viewed as positive steps to enhance the effectiveness of ESCAP's work in the Pacific. While some organizations suggest that ESCAP pay more attention to such areas as trade and investment, transport as well as ICT for development, which are urgently needed in the Pacific, others feel EPOC should focus on providing a valuable bridge between Asia and the Pacific, in order to optimize the value of its limited resources.

### Working with partners

There is a general consensus that ESCAP could serve as an honest and objective broker in facilitating the process of reaching agreement on issues that affect the region. In this regard, ESCAP's role in chairing the United Nations Regional Coordination Meeting (RCM) is viewed positively. Under the RCM, the restructured regional thematic working groups are seen as a positive step towards refocusing the work of UN regional entities.

The tripartite initiative of ESCAP, UNDP and ADB in the MDG project is cited as evidence of ESCAP's analytical strength, and as a good example of interagency collaboration.

#### **Key recommendations from regional organizations, including regional UN entities**

In line with ESCAP's comparative advantages, regional organizations recommend the following measures to enhance the effectiveness and impact of ESCAP:

- Aim to become a development "think-tank" for member governments, focusing on research and policy analysis, particularly on addressing diverse issues through a holistic and cross-cutting approach. Field and operational activities should be left to specialized UN agencies, funds and programmes.
- Strengthen ESCAP's cooperation with subregional bodies (e.g., ASEAN, SAARC), which provide more platforms to reach governments, in addition to its own regional forum.

- Provide more support to the Pacific delegations to ensure their active participation in the ESCAP intergovernmental forums.
- Give more priority to governance, and a rights-based approach to development.
- More actively promote the role of civil society and the private sector in development.

## B. United Nations Country Teams<sup>6</sup>

The image of ESCAP among the United Nations resident coordinators (who recently met in Colombo and, inter alia, discussed the role of ESCAP) while differing between subregions, is generally negative. There is a perception that ESCAP is not visible and has little relevance at the country level. There is a general feeling of frustration and disconnection on the side of the UNCT in dealing with ESCAP. If ESCAP has comparative advantages, these are not clear to a number of resident coordinators.

### *Thematic and programme areas*

All ESCAP's current themes, while very broad, seem relevant to the UNCTs but it is not clear what ESCAP actually has to offer in these areas. Many Resident Coordinators inform the evaluators that they could see little or no impact of ESCAP's work in their respective countries. ESCAP does not seem to be a results-based organization. With unclear priorities it appears to try to do everything.

A challenge is effective follow-up to decisions that are made by ESCAP bodies. If decisions are made without follow-up, this reduces ESCAP's usefulness and credibility.

A number of resident coordinators note that ESCAP's work on the Trans-Asian Railway and the Asian Highway and statistics appear to be appreciated by the governments. The Asian Highway is cited as an example where ESCAP's analytical and technical cooperation work supports its normative functions, and is an area where no other UN agencies are engaged. It is noted by one resident coordinator, however that, despite 30 years of implementation, little actual impact has been created by the Asian Highway (e.g., harmonized roads signs, unfettered border crossing).

It is noted that ESCAP's work to track MDGs on the regional level is useful to country teams. UNDP-ESCAP-ADB cooperation on monitoring of progress in meeting the MDGs has been successful. One respondent notes that ESCAP may be able to play a stronger role in promoting infrastructure development in the region, which seems to be neglected currently by bilateral donors.

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<sup>6</sup> Resident coordinators were interviewed in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan and Thailand. UNICEF was interviewed in Kazakhstan.

It is apparent to the resident coordinators that there is some duplication of work between ESCAP and other UN entities. Trade is an area where ESCAP works in competition with a number of other agencies (e.g., UNDP and UNCTAD). Its work in this area seems to have focused on training and advisory services, simply because it does not have funding to carry out other work. ICT is another area where there is a lot of competition. Even ITU does a lot of normative work in this area, so ESCAP needs to examine critically its ability to set norms and add value in this area.

Work on the tsunami early-warning system is partly normative and partly technical cooperation work. If ESCAP does this sort of work, it is important for it to coordinate closely with other UN agencies on the technical cooperation side.

#### Comparative advantages

It is noted by a number of resident coordinators that ESCAP does have a number of potential comparative advantages, but that these are not currently deployed. Practical questions of what functions a regional entity can carry out that cannot be carried out at the national level or the global level need to be explored. While the geographic coverage of ESCAP is also much broader, a large and diverse membership does not itself justify a regional presence for the UN.

ESCAP has a role as a forum for policy dialogue, providing a platform and a neutral space for countries to discuss common issues. This should be an important role but currently other regional or subregional organizations are far more visible in this function. ESCAP carries out normative functions, which are linked with ECOSOC priorities. A number of other UN agencies (such as WHO and ITU) also have normative functions, so this role needs to be closely coordinated.

Reform and the possible integration on UN regional entities could be pursued on the basis of one unified regional strength and one presence. It is questioned whether all UN regional entities of the funds and programmes are necessary. It is not a question of bringing all regional entities under ESCAP, but rather, to come up with a new consolidated regional entity that integrates and adds further value to the functions of the current entities.

It was hard for the resident coordinators interviewed to imagine what additional value ESCAP could bring into political areas, such as conflict, democracy and human rights. There may be a role in analytical work in how long-term social and economic development relates to conflict, but ESCAP should not engage in these areas in an operational capacity. Existing mechanisms such as the Security Council and other UN entities are established to address these issues.

#### Implementation modalities

Resident coordinators feel that ESCAP should not work in operational areas at the national level. ESCAP's technical cooperation role is very modest, and therefore adds little value. At the national level, it cannot "compete" given its resources and mandate. It is difficult to run operations without having an office in-country, even for practical reasons.

The regional level of development could be strengthened in support of country-level work. Regional work needs to be complemented by national programmes. At the regional level, ESCAP could provide the “starting point” for more operational work, to be supported by funds and programmes. ESCAP should map issues where there is a vacuum in the Asia-Pacific region, and which other subregional entities or organizations are not covering.

ESCAP should review its policy of financing countries so that their representatives could participate in its meetings. One cannot expect countries to take meetings seriously and to send the “right” people if the trip is free of charge.

#### Working with partners

ESCAP should interact more with country offices in carrying out its substantive work. It is noted that many ESCAP missions at the national level do not appear to be regional in nature, with no consultation with the UNCT, and without reference to the CCA/UNDAF process. The office of regional coordinators is required to provide a lot of backstopping and logistics for the ESCAP missions. To this end, a deal on cost-sharing, logistics and the development of joint agendas and meetings is requested.

It is noted that the diversity of the UN system is its strength. It is good to have some agencies setting norms, and others applying them on the ground. ESCAP and UNDP could work together in this regard. ESCAP should partner with other UN organizations that would carry out technical assistance work to implement norms and standards agreed within the context of ESCAP. Technical cooperation and analytical work should support ESCAP’s normative functions. Anything that comes out of ESCAP with a policy focus could be used by UN country offices. A regional entity should see itself as an extension of the country team. The resident coordinators should be seen as the representatives of the regional entity.

#### **Key recommendations from UN country teams**

In line with ESCAP’s comparative advantages, UN country teams recommended the following measures to enhance the effectiveness and impact of ESCAP:

1. UNDAF should provide the overall framework for any regional-level work.
2. ESCAP should partner with other UN organizations that would carry out technical assistance work to implement norms and standards agreed through ESCAP. Ultimately regional work has to feed into national-level work.
3. Nationally-based operational work should be left to country-based agencies.
4. ESCAP should review its policy of financing countries to participate in

its meetings.

5. ESCAP must focus on work that does not duplicate the work of other UN entities.
6. ESCAP is requested to align its work with that of the UNCT, and interact with members of UNCT in a far more structured manner.

### C. Civil society

ESCAP conducted interviews with only a few civil society organizations, but it is perhaps possible to draw some general findings from them. Four interviews were conducted with umbrella civil society organizations, three of which worked in the social field (two in disability and one in women's issues) and one in governance. Two were conducted with chambers of commerce, both of which had been involved with ESCAP's subprogramme on trade, and another with the business sector (AAMO). The final civil society interview was with a private company that had participated in an ESCAP demonstration project on Pro-Poor Public-Private Partnerships in the area of biodiversity (environment subprogramme).

Most of these organizations are familiar with ESCAP's work in their particular area of interest. The two chambers of commerce had a somewhat broader knowledge of ESCAP's programme of work through participation in the ESCAP-organized Asia-Pacific Business Forum and the Business Advisory Council, while AAMO has had extensive experience and diverse relations with ESCAP in various sectors.

The civil society organizations that had worked with ESCAP on disability and women's issues all feel that ESCAP has been effective in advocating with governments the particular issue they worked with. It has provided an effective and perhaps unique forum to promote dialogue between governments and civil society, and has been effective in convincing governments to adopt laws and policies in the respective area. However, one organization feels that ESCAP should establish a more active monitoring mechanism, and still another expresses disappointment with ESCAP for its failure to promote serious work in governance.

All of the civil society organizations that were interviewed appear to accept that ESCAP's primary target group consists of national governments. Most of the organizations suggest alternative areas in which ESCAP could provide technical assistance to national governments (e.g., exchanging good practices in the area of disability; helping countries secure funding for road networks; developing the "logistics" sector; organizing training workshops on trade and governance). None suggests a major overhaul of the ways in which ESCAP works.

As a general theme, most civil society organizations that were interviewed identify visibility and fund-raising as significant problems affecting ESCAP. Some organizations propose ways to increase ESCAP's visibility, including consolidating work in fewer areas, and focusing more on specific demonstration projects and workshops in partnership.

Some of the organizations suggest that ESCAP increase its efforts to raise funding from the private sector, with the exception of the private sector representative who was interviewed, who suggests ESCAP increase its efforts to raise funding from bilateral donors. In general, organizations that commented on the issue feel that ESCAP had not been successful in engaging the private sector.

#### **D. ESCAP secretariat**

ESCAP's Executive Secretary and his staff, while not an independent source of feedback, constitute a group of stakeholders with the best knowledge of the work ESCAP is carrying out, and of operational constraints that are faced in carrying out this work. Many of the division chiefs, with whom the evaluators consulted in person, are among the longest-serving staff, and have a good knowledge of the history of the organization, including past achievements.

The points below synthesize comments provided by the Executive Secretary and ESCAP division chiefs. However, they do not necessarily reflect the views of all ESCAP staff. Other staff also had an opportunity to provide their views to the external evaluators on an individual basis. However, most of the views below were expressed by more than one staff member during the meeting, and none were contradicted.

##### Thematic and programme areas

In general, the ESCAP staff members that provided comments strongly feel that ESCAP's work was of continued relevance. No staff members identify any ESCAP subprogramme as unsuccessful. Some staff, however, recognize there was a continuing need to evaluate the work done by each ESCAP subprogramme. The findings of one such review, carried out by the Trade and investment subprogramme, were made available to the evaluation team.

##### Comparative advantages

It is important to have a United Nations body that works at the regional level. A large vacuum would exist if the United Nations worked only at the global and the national levels. The comprehensive membership of ESCAP allows it to coordinate regional initiatives such as the Asian Highway network, the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and regional networks on energy and the environment. It can link work carried out by various subregional organizations such as SAARC and ASEAN.

ESCAP benefits from strong support from governments in the region. As such, it is well placed to carry out normative work and provide a more authoritative regional perspective on issues than other regional and subregional organizations can. Its regional convening authority gives it a comparative advantage in providing regional input to global forums, promoting regional implementation of global commitments, and, more generally, in establishing norms and policies at the regional level.

ESCAP has a comparative advantage in regional knowledge networking, including replication of good practices that are appropriate for countries in the region. It may be able to carry out this function in a more neutral manner than financing institutions such as ADB. ESCAP could play a coordination role in the social sector and other sectors in which a number of United Nations agencies are involved at the regional level.

#### Implementation modalities

ESCAP is well placed to provide more effective support to priority countries in the Asia-Pacific region – least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, Pacific island developing countries and economies in transition – than could be provided if the United Nations worked only at the global and national levels.

ESCAP can work on multisectoral issues that are difficult for specialized agencies, or for countries themselves, to address. For example, ESCAP is linking the environmental and economic/social sectors through initiatives on “green growth”.

The continuity of ESCAP’s work in various areas makes possible certain initiatives such as the Asian Highway network; this type of initiative could not be carried out under an approach taken by other United Nations agencies of working on specific shorter-term projects.

#### Working with partners

ESCAP was originally the only United Nations entity working at the regional level in Asia and the Pacific, but a number of United Nations entities now have regional offices. ESCAP has adapted its work programme in certain ways to avoid duplication, with work being carried out by other UN entities.

However, ESCAP should not respond to these developments simply by carrying out “residual” work not covered by other United Nations entities. Instead, it is important to balance the extent to which ESCAP’s involvement duplicates, with the extent to which it complements, the work of other United Nations entities on specific subjects. This analysis should consider not only the funding that ESCAP can attract, but also its other strengths such as regional ownership, access to governments and staff resources.

Although ESCAP is not a financing agency, its normative and analytical work can help to support decisions by financing agencies such as ADB. The link between ESCAP’s work and the United Nations work at the country level needs to be strengthened. An effective system should be established in this regard.

ESCAP faces a challenge in working effectively with civil society, although it has taken a number of initiatives in this regard. Some ESCAP member governments frequently emphasize that governments are ESCAP’s primary stakeholders and that civil society organizations should play at most a secondary, supporting role. As such, ESCAP needs to follow a carefully balanced approach.

### Visibility

ESCAP's work is not well known and understood for several reasons. First, ESCAP can never receive the same attention as financing institutions, which can support policy advice and technical assistance with funds. Second, ESCAP works mostly with government policymakers; it rarely works at the grassroots level, and its funding resources and coverage allow it to do so only in the context of a few, selected demonstration projects. As such, ESCAP is poorly known among the general public. To address this problem, ESCAP needs to have a more active media programme.

The nature of ESCAP's regional- and policy-level work will always make it difficult for ESCAP to demonstrate the impact of its work. However, some successful initiatives have been realized over the course of ESCAP's history, including establishment of institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and programmes such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment in Asia and the Pacific, on the basis of ESCAP's normative and analytical work.





## Annex 2: List of Member States from which Feedback was Obtained

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No.	Country	Embassy Interviews (Bangkok or Fiji)	In-Country Interviews (of focal point and line ministries)	Written Response to Survey (by seats of government)
1.	Australia			X
2.	Bangladesh		X	X
3.	Brunei Darussalam			X
4.	Cambodia		X	
5.	China		X	
6.	Democratic People's Republic of Korea			X
7.	Fiji		X	
8.	France	X		
9.	India	X	X	
10.	Indonesia		X	
11.	Islamic Republic of Iran	X		X
12.	Japan	X	X	X
13.	Kazakhstan		X	
14.	Kiribati	X		
15.	Lao's People Democratic Republic		X	
16.	Malaysia	X		X
17.	Federated States of Micronesia			X
18.	Mongolia		X	
19.	Pakistan		X	
20.	Philippines	X		
21.	Republic of Korea	X		X
22.	Russian Federation	X		X
23.	Samoa			X
24.	Thailand	X		X
25.	Tuvalu	X		
26.	United States of America	X		X
27.	Viet Nam	X		



## Annex 3: Questions to Member States Soliciting Written Feedback

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1. What impact has ESCAP had in the Asia-Pacific region over the past decade?
2. What ESCAP service or product does your country value most? To what extent can this service or product be obtained through alternative means?
3. What does your country consider to be ESCAP's primary comparative advantage? What other organizations are there that could do this work more effectively?
4. Bearing in mind ESCAP's comparative advantage (as suggested by you under question "3" above), how could ESCAP's programme of work achieve better results? What should ESCAP do more? What should it do less?
5. What role should ESCAP play in the Asia-Pacific region vis-à-vis other United Nations entities?



# Annex 4: Interview Guides for Focal Point Ministries

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## A. INTRODUCTION BY ESCAP: CONTEXT

At the 2005 World Summit Outcome last September, Member States of the United Nations decided to launch a far-reaching reform effort to further strengthen the United Nations system. Some issues that are of particular relevance to ESCAP relate to the call from Member States to streamline and coordinate the work of UN entities that deal with development issues, including economic and social development.

ESCAP recognizes the need to respond to this call and to adjust to the changing requirements of its member States. It is for this reason that the current evaluation has been commissioned by the Executive Secretary. The secretariat wishes to seek the views of member States on ESCAP's strategic role in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, the evaluation seeks to identify ESCAP's comparative advantages in the eyes of its member States, as well as ways and means to further strengthen such advantages as part of a more responsive and coherent UN system. This evaluation is thus intended as an input to reform efforts not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also to the United Nations system as a whole.

## B. QUESTIONS:

### 1. ESCAP's *raison d'être* in the context of UN reform

- a. ESCAP's primary goal is to support economic and social development at the regional level, or from a regional perspective.
  - i. *In which ways is ESCAP visible in the Asia-Pacific region? What is ESCAP known for?*
  - ii. *What do you think is the value addition of ESCAP as a regional UN organization compared with UN agencies operating at the national level, such as the ones based in your country?*
- b. In response to the question "what do we do best", ESCAP usually refers to a number of "comparative advantages" which makes it unique vis-à-vis other UN agencies.

These "potential" comparative advantages include the following:

- A. *Regional convening power:* ESCAP has access to the highest political levels of the diverse line ministries and brings them together to discuss and formulate key policies affecting the region;

- B. *Regional consensus-building* on critical emerging issues that need the urgent attention of its membership, including transboundary issues that know no boundaries and issues of a sensitive nature;
- C. *Regional policy research and analysis* of an interdisciplinary and comparative nature, which provides member States with the required knowledge base for decision-making on the range of economic and social issues covered by ESCAP;
- D. *Regional knowledge networking* linking policy research and analysis to practice;
- E. *Regional norm and standard setting* through definition of policy recommendations, norms and standards at the intergovernmental level, and their promotion by the secretariat;
- F. *Regional technical cooperation activities* aimed at strengthening the capabilities of its membership, through training, advisory services and technical assistance for wider regional replication of good practices;
- G. *Regional advocacy* of global and regional commitments and of emerging issues that need the urgent attention of its membership.
  - i. *Among these “potential” comparative advantages, which ones is ESCAP using most effectively? Which ones are not effectively utilized by ESCAP?*
  - ii. *In which of these areas are ESCAP’s products and services most needed by your government?*
  - iii. *If ESCAP were to focus on only a few of these potential comparative advantages, which ones would you choose?*

## 2. Conference structure

- a. ESCAP’s conference structure comprises the Commission as well as its three Thematic Committees on, respectively, Managing Globalization, Poverty Reduction and Emerging Social Issues. They all meet annually.
  - i. *To what extent do you think that the resolutions and decisions adopted by the annual Commission sessions reflect the views, inputs and priorities of your government? What steps could be taken to ensure that these are better reflected?*
  - ii. *What, in your view is the value of the Thematic Committees?*
  - iii. *How do they contribute to the Commission sessions?*
- b. ESCAP has received a large number of mandates from its member States over the past decades. These mandates reflect the member States’ changing priorities and needs over the years.

- i. *What is the value of having mandates at the regional level, over and above those agreed by member States in global forums, such as the General Assembly or ECOSOC?*
- ii. *A fundamental and recurring challenge has been the implementation of ESCAP mandates, within resources constraints. Would you agree that if a mandate has not been reaffirmed within the last five years, priority should be given to the recently adopted mandates (within five years) to enable the organization to respond to more contemporary issues?*

### 3. Programme planning and implementation

- a. Every two years, ESCAP's strategic priorities and programme budget are newly decided and approved by the Commission through the adoption of the strategic framework, and the programme of work.
  - i. *To what extent are your country's needs reflected in these processes?*
  - ii. *To what extent do you feel that your country has some "ownership" of ESCAP's priorities and work programme?*
  - iii. *What scope is there to make the consultation process towards setting ESCAP's objectives more participatory? How could this be achieved?*
- b. ESCAP has three thematic areas that guide its planning of the work programme. These are: "Poverty Reduction", "Managing Globalization" and "Addressing Emerging Social Issues".
  - i. *To what extent do you think that these three thematic areas are the most relevant for ESCAP?*
  - ii. *What alternative theme areas, if any, might you suggest?*
- c. Under these thematic areas ESCAP is structured around the following subprogramme areas: (a) poverty reduction, (b) statistics, (c) development of Pacific island countries and territories, (d) transport and tourism, (e) trade and investment, (f) environment and sustainable development, (g) information, communication and space technologies and (h) social issues, such as gender, health, disability, ageing and migration.
  - i. *What do you consider to be ESCAP's most successful programme areas?*
  - ii. *What evidence of ESCAP's impact in these successful areas is there in your country?*
  - iii. *What programme areas do you consider to be the least successful?*
  - iv. *Which programme areas, if any, that are not currently included in ESCAP's work programme, would ESCAP be well placed to take on?*
  - v. *To what extent do you think that ESCAP should, in the future, represent the three pillars of the United Nations in the Asia-Pacific region? i.e., in addition to handling development-related*



*issues, what potential role could ESCAP have in also covering human rights and peace and security? This could cover, for example, issues of democratic governance, human security and peace-building.*

- d. ESCAP maintains a number of regional institutions. These are: the United Nations Asia and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (UNAPCAEM) in Beijing; the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) in New Delhi; the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crop Development (CAPSA) in Bogor, Indonesia; the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) in Chiba, Japan; and the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), to be established in Incheon, the Republic of Korea.
  - i. *How has your country benefited from the work of any of these regional institutions?*
  - ii. *To what extent do you think that the work of the regional institutions adds value to the work of ESCAP?*
  - iii. *Should the regional institutions be further strengthened or given less prominence?*
- e. Given the limited resources of the UN, including ESCAP:
  - i. *To what extent do you think that the overall work programme of ESCAP is too ambitious?*
  - ii. *What programme areas, if any, could be more effectively delivered by other UN entities?*
- f. What would your country miss the most if ESCAP ceased to exist?

**C. THANK YOU.**

## Annex 5: List of Stakeholders Met

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### MEMBER COUNTRIES

#### BANGLADESH

##### Ministry of Agriculture

- Md. Nurul Alam, Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
- S.M. Khalilur Rahman, Director (Manpower and Training), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
- Wais Kabir, Chief Scientific Officer, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
- Engr. Sultan Ahmmed, Principal Scientific Officer, Agricultural Engineering Division, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council

##### Ministry of Communication

- Md. Shahidullah, Joint Chief

##### Ministry of Finance

- Md. Ismail Zabihullah, Secretary, Economic Relations Division
- Mizanur Rahman, Senior Assistant Chief, Economic Relations Division

##### Ministry of Planning

- Aym Akramul Haque, Director General, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
- Abdur Rashid Sikder, Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
- Md. Zobdul Hoque, Director, Planning Division, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

##### Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology

- Mesbah ul Alam, Joint Secretary

#### CAMBODIA

##### Ministry of Environment

- Sin Khandy, Under-Secretary of State (and Secretary-General, Cambodian National Committee for ESCAP)

##### Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy

- Tun Lean, Director-General, General Directorate of Energy

##### Ministry of Planning

- Heang Siekly, Deputy Director-General, General Directorate of Planning

##### Ministry of Public Health

- Sok Touch, Director, Communicable Disease Department

Ministry of Rural Development

- Mour Kimsan, Deputy Director-General for Technical Affairs

National Institute of Statistics

- San Sy Than, Director-General

**CHINA**

Ministry of Agriculture

- Mu Jianhua, Deputy Director, Green Food Development Centre

Ministry of Commerce

- Chen Jing, Deputy Director, International Department

Ministry of Communication

- Zhang Xiaojie, Director, International Department

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Gao Mingbo, Deputy Director, Department of International Organizations and Conferences

Ministry of Health

- Xing Jun, Director, Division of International Organizations, Department of International Coordination

Chinese Academy of Engineering

- Ren Hongtao, Deputy Director, Multilateral Cooperation, Department of International Cooperation
- Wang Maohua, Professor and Member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering

China Council for the Promotion of International Trade

- Qu Pengcheng, Deputy Director, Division for International Organizations, Department of International Relations

National Development and Reform Commission

- Wu Hongliang, Desk Officer, Division of International Organizations, Department of Foreign Affairs

National Population and Family Planning Commission

- Chen Bingshu, Deputy Director, International Department

**FIJI**

Ministry of Commerce

- Pita Wise, Director of Business Development and Investment (Former Director of Economic Planning, Ministry of National Planning)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade

- Veretariki Longalagi, Senior Economic Planning Officer, Department of Economic Affairs

Ministry of Women

- Deputy Permanent Secretary, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation

Fiji Bureau of Statistics

- Timoci Bainimarama, Chief Statistician

Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons

- S. Setareki, Executive Director

**FRANCE**

Embassy of France, Bangkok

- Thierry Schwarz, Regional Adviser, Cooperation and Cultural Activity and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP

**INDIA**

Planning Commission

- B.N. Yugandhar, Member, Government of India

Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- P.K. Dash, Joint Secretary, Government of India - Nodal Officer for ESCAP

Department of Scientific and Industrial Research

- R.M. Mashelkar, Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India (and Director General, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research)

Embassy of India, Bangkok

- Vivek Katju, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative to ESCAP
- T.P. Seetharam, Deputy Chief of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP
- Anandi Venkateswaran, Attaché and Assistant Permanent Representative to ESCAP

**INDONESIA**

Ministry of Agriculture

- Emilia Harahap, Director for International Cooperation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Salman Al Farisi, Director for Economic Development and Environment, Directorate General of Multilateral Affairs

Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources

- Thamrin Sihite, Head of Bureau of Planning and Cooperation

State Secretariat

- Suprpto, Head of Bureau of Foreign Technical Cooperation

National Statistical Agency

- Sihar L. Tobing, Head of Bureau of Program Management

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bangkok

- Esmaeil Sadat, Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP

**JAPAN**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Yukio Takasu, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Human Security, Science and Technology Cooperation, and Special Envoy for United Nations Reform
- Toshihiro Aiki, Director, United Nations Administration Division, Global Issues Department
- Katsumi Moriyasu, Deputy Director, United Nations Administration Division, Global Issues Department
- Norio Ehara, Principal Deputy Director, Country Assistance Planning Division I, Economic Cooperation Bureau
- Shigeru Matsuda, Staff, Country Assistance Planning Division II, Economic Cooperation Bureau
- Nobuko Iwatani, Staff, United Nations Administration Division, Global Issues Department
- Chie Nakajima, Staff, United Nations Administration Division, Global Issues Department

Ministry of Finance

- Koichi Hasegawa, Director, International Coordination Office, International Bureau
- Takashi Miyahara, Director, Development Issues, International Bureau

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

- Shuji Miyazaki, Director-General, Training Institute of Economy
- Shiro Hori, Director, New Energy Source Promotion Office, Energy Saving and New Energy Source Department, Resources and Energy Agency

Ministry of the Environment

- Kazuhiko Takemoto, Director-General, Water , Air and Environment Bureau
- Naoya Tsukamoto, Director, Office for Research and Information on Global Environment
- Yasushi Tanaka, Director, Environmental Cooperation Office, Global Environment Issues Division, Global Environment Bureau

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

- Hiroshi Omura, Deputy Director, International Affairs Division, Minister's Secretariat

Embassy of Japan, Bangkok

- Yoshi Hiraishi, Minister, and Permanent Representative of Japan to ESCAP
- Jiro Usui, Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to ESCAP

**KAZAKHSTAN**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Murat S. Tashibaev, Director of the Department of International Organizations and Multilateral Cooperation
- Almas Disyukov, Attaché, United Nations Division, Department of International Organizations and Multilateral Cooperation

Ministry of Transport and Communication

- Zukhra Abisheva, Head of Section, Department of Transport Policy and Foreign Relations

**KIRIBATI**

High Commission of Kiribati to Fiji

- Tetaua Taitai, High Commissioner of Kiribati to Fiji

**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

Ministry of Commerce

- Banesati Thephavong, Deputy Director-General, Foreign Trade Department

Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction

- Khammoun Bouaphanh, Head of the Office of the National Secretariat on Transport

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Saleumxay Kommasith, Deputy Director-General, Department of International Organisations

Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

- Sommay Xaysongdeth, Deputy Permanent-Secretary

Department of Planning and Investment

- Phoykham Houngbounnuang, Director

Committee on Planning and Investment

- Phonevanh Outhavong, Director, Division of Poverty Eradication, Department of General Planning
- Chanthanet Boualapha, Deputy Director-General, National Statistics Centre

Science and Technology and Environment Agency

- Ponechaleun Nonthaxay, Director, Water Resource Coordination Committee Secretariat

**MALAYSIA**

- Umardin Hj. Abdul Mutalib, Deputy Chief of Mission and Permanent Representative to ESCAP

**MONGOLIA**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Purevjav Gansukh, Deputy Director, Multilateral Cooperation Department
- Damdin Gansukh, First Secretary, Multilateral Cooperation Department

Ministry of Finance

- Jambyn Jargalsaikhan, Deputy Director, Department of Economic Policy

Ministry of Industry and Trade

- A. Erdenepurev, Deputy Director, Policy Coordination and Strategic Planning Department
- Z. Chinbazar, Officer, Trade and Economic Cooperation Department

Ministry of Road, Transport and Tourism

- Baasankhuu Manduul, Director-General, Road Department
- N. Nyamdavaa, Deputy Director, Transport Department
- Kh. Munguntuya, Officer-in-Charge of Railway Issues, Transport Policy and Coordination Department
- Yo. Jargalsaikhan, Officer, Transport Policy and Coordination Department

ICT Authority

- Tsoodol Nyamkhuu, Deputy Head, Policy Planning Division

National Statistical Office

- P. Byambatseren, Chairman
- Ayush Demberel, Director-General, Statistical Planning and Policy Coordination Department
- Lingov Gansukh, Head of Foreign Relations Division

National Emergency Management Agency

- Purev Dash, Chief
- Shaazan Altanchimeg, Senior Officer, International Relations and Cooperation Division

**PAKISTAN**

Ministry of Commerce

- Muhammad Shahbaz, Deputy Chief (ITO)

Ministry of Communications

- Tahir Sharif, Director (Roads)

Ministry of Defence

- Hazrat Mir, Director, Pakistan Meteorological Department
- Ghulam Rasul, Ph.D Meteorology Director, Pakistan Meteorological Department

Ministry of Environment

- Mahboob Elahi, Director General
- K.M. Zubair, Managing Director (ENERCON)

Ministry of Railways

- S. Hussain Ahmed Abid, Director (Operations)



National Highway Authority

- S.A. Latif, General Manager

Economic Affairs Division

- Amir Tariq Zaman, Joint Secretary (UN/China)
- S.M. Hasan Akhtar, Section Officer

**PHILIPPINES**

Embassy of the Philippines, Bangkok

- Marshall Louis M. Alferez, Second Secretary and Consul

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Bangkok

- Ju-Eun Park, First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Embassy of the Russian Federation, Bangkok

- Nikolay N. Pomoshchnikov, Minister-Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP
- Marina Sirotkina, Third Secretary and Assistant Permanent Representative to ESCAP

**THAILAND**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Somsak Triamjangarun, Counsellor, Development Affairs Division, Department of International Organizations

**TUVALU**

High Commission of Tuvalu to Fiji

- Seve Paeniu, High Commissioner of Tuvalu to Fiji

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

United States Embassy, Bangkok

- Michael J. Delaney, Counsellor for Economic Affairs and Permanent Representative to ESCAP

- Aaron P. Forsberg, Economic Officer and Second Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP

#### **VIET NAM**

- Vu Thi Bich Dung, First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP and other international organizations based in Bangkok

### **UN ENTITIES AND OTHER MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **BANGLADESH**

- Renata Lok Dessallien, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

#### **CAMBODIA**

- Douglas Gardiner, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
- Ann Lund, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator

#### **CHINA**

- Khalid Malik, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
- Yasuyuki Aoshima, Director and Representative, UNESCO, Beijing Office

#### **Fiji**

- Terry Parker, Manager, Pacific Local Government Support Project, Commonwealth Secretariat
- Iosefa Maiava, Deputy Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Andie Fong Toy, Manager, Political & Security Programme, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Gary Wiseman, Coordinator, Sub-regional Centre for the Pacific Islands
- Richard Dictus, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

#### **JAPAN**

- Akiko Yuge, Director, UNDP, Tokyo Office
- Hans van Ginkel, Rector, United Nations University

#### **KAZAKHSTAN**

- Gordon Johnson, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
- Bakhyt Abdildina, Head, UNDP Astana Liaison Office
- Alexandre Zouev, Representative, UNICEF

## **KYRGYZSTAN**

- Oskombek Moldokulov, Representative, WHO

## **LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

- Finn Reske Nielsen, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
- Joanna Shaw, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator

## **MONGOLIA**

- Pratibha Mehta, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
- Davaadulam, Governance Practice Manager

## **PAKISTAN**

- Haoliang Xu, Country Director, UNDP

## **SRI LANKA**

- Manoj Basnyat, Deputy Head, UNDP
- Anuradha Rajivan, Team Leader for MDG Project, UNDP

## **THAILAND**

- Jean-Pierre A. Verbiest, Country Director, Thailand Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank
- Hiroyuki Konuma, Deputy Regional Representative, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO
- Revathi Balakrishnan, Senior Officer, Gender and Development, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO
- Alex Heikens, Water Quality and Water Resources Management, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO
- Purushottam K. Mudbhary, Senior Policy Officer, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO
- Kenta Goto, Technical Officer, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization
- Irena Vojackova-Sillorano, Chief of Mission and Representative for Southeast Asia, International Organization for Migration, South East Asia Regional Office
- Elizabeth Fong, Regional Manager, UNDP Regional Centre
- Hiroshi Nishimiya, Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP
- G. Giridhar, Director, Country Technical Services Team for East and South-East Asia and UNFPA Representative in Thailand

- Ghazy Mujahid, Adviser on Population Policies and Development, Country Technical Services Team for East and South-East Asia, UNFPA
- Jayunti Tuladhar, Adviser on RH/FP Management Information Systems and Logistics, Country Technical Services Team for East and South-East Asia, UNFPA

## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### BANGLADESH

#### International Chamber of Commerce

- Mahbubur Rahman, President (Member of Business Advisory Council)
- Ataur Rahman, Secretary

#### National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled

- Khandaker Jahurul Alam, President
- Faisal Bin Majid, Associate Co-Ordinator and Team Leader Programme

### CHINA

#### China Disabled Persons Federation

- Xu Ling, Desk Officer, International Department

#### All-China Women's Federation

- Cai Sheng, Deputy Director General, International Department

#### The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

- Hideaki Koyanagi, Director, Beijing Office

### INDONESIA

#### Institute Bisnis dan Ekonomi Kerakyatan (IBEKA)

- Tri Mumpuni, Executive Director

### JAPAN

#### Universities and research institutions

- Yozo Yokota, Professor, Law School, Chuo University, and Special Adviser to Rector, United Nations University
- Masaaki Ohashi, Professor, Keisen University
- Yukio Sato, Ambassador/Chairman of the Board, Japan Institute for International Affairs

Non-governmental organizations

- Yoshitaka Funato, Chairperson, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)
- Michia Kumaoka, President, Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)
- Tatsuya Hata, Executive Director, Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA)

**MONGOLIA**

Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- Jigjid Oyunchimeg, Head of Business and Investment Support Centre
- Lundaa Odonchimeg, Assistant to the Chairman

Universities and professional bodies

- Dabvadorjiin Tserendorj, President, Mongolian Management Association
- M. Oyunchimeg, Chair, Vocational Committee, Rotary Club of Ulaanbaatar
- Dagvadorj, Dean, Faculty of Economics, Mongolian National University

**PAKISTAN**

Attock Refinery Limited

- M. Ilyas Fazil, Assistant General Manager (Technical Services & Engineering)
- Irshad Ahmad, National Consultant, National Cleaner Production Centre Foundation (an initiative of Attock Refinery Limited)

## Annex 6: Terms of Reference

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### **Background**

On 28 March 1947, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) was established as a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). ECAFE, which, following a change of name and orientation in 1974, came to be known as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), was established along with other regional commissions in Africa, Europe, Latin America and Western Asia, which were to perform similar functions in their respective regions. Some of these functions included (a) promoting economic and social development within the region; (b) conducting research on economic and social issues; (c) analysing research results and disseminating findings to member States.

While retaining their orientation towards these central tasks, the regional commissions have, over the years, developed in different ways, in line with the wishes of their member States. ESCAP, for instance, has moved away from its traditional focus on normative and analytical work, to also providing technical assistance to its member States funded, primarily, through extrabudgetary means. Moreover, over the years, ESCAP has periodically undergone reforms of its programme, conference and secretariat structures in order to be able to respond better to the changing needs of its member States. One of the most fundamental reengineering exercises was launched by ESCAP's present Executive Secretary, Kim Hak-Su, upon taking office in June 2000. This reform effort has resulted in many changes, not only in the programmatic orientation of the organization, but also in its management culture and practices, which have won the recognition of United Nations Headquarters, committees of the General Assembly such as CPC and ACABQ, as well as other development partners and donors.

### **Introduction**

ESCAP is keenly aware that, as frequently reiterated by United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, reform is a process, not an event. As such, it is essential to keep reviewing the performance of the organization in light of changing requirements of member States. At the global level, such requirements have recently been defined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (GA resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005), covering a wide range of issues pertaining to the role and performance of the United Nations as a whole. As Member States of the United Nations and the Secretariat further deliberate the implications of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, a range of reviews have been initiated by Member States focusing on the organization's mandates, its programmatic focus as well as its governance and administrative structures.

It is in this context that ESCAP is launching an external evaluation, to be conducted through its member States, the purpose of which is to assess ESCAP's

strategic role in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, the evaluation will seek to ascertain ESCAP's comparative advantage and value added in providing relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable and, ultimately, results-oriented development services and products to its members.

### **Objectives of the Evaluation**

The objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of ESCAP in the light of ongoing global reform initiatives;
- To identify ESCAP's comparative advantages and disadvantages;
- To identify key programmatic and organizational areas requiring further reengineering in line with ESCAP's comparative advantages and in support of the ongoing global reform initiatives.

### **Scope of the Evaluation**

In conducting the evaluation, the evaluators should consider the following issues and questions:

#### Relevance

- To what extent do ESCAP's programmatic objectives reflect the needs of its members?
- To what extent are ESCAP's programmatic objectives owned by its members?
- To what extent do ESCAP's mandates reflect the requirements of the Summit Outcome, the MDGs and other major global commitments?
- To what extent are ESCAP's mandates and objectives clear to its members, partners and other stakeholders?
- To what extent are ESCAP's comparative advantages clear to its members, partners and stakeholders?
- What is the perception of ESCAP's role, strengths and weaknesses, compared with other development actors in the region, including other United Nations entities, the development banks or bilateral agencies?
- What is the perception of ESCAP's value added in the eyes of its members, other United Nations entities, the development banks or bilateral agencies?

- How can the relevance of ESCAP be enhanced?

#### Effectiveness and efficiency

- How effective is ESCAP in delivering the objectives set in its programme of work? Does ESCAP achieve what it sets out to achieve? What are the views of different stakeholders in this regard?
- How effective is ESCAP's conference and secretariat structure in supporting the achievement of ESCAP's objectives?
- To what extent is the budget allocated to ESCAP to deliver its programme of work appropriate?
- To what extent does the programme of work, bearing in mind the United Nations budgetary constraints, reflect a realistic assessment of ESCAP's capacity to deliver?
- How cost-effective is ESCAP, bearing in mind the scope of the programme of work and the budget (both regular budget and extrabudgetary) allocated to deliver it?
- To what extent is the participatory consultation process in formulating the programme of work considered to be appropriate?
- How appropriate and effective are the modalities selected by ESCAP to deliver its normative, analytical and operational (technical cooperation) work?
- To what extent is ESCAP perceived as having appropriate quality standards pertaining to its planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes?
- To what extent is ESCAP perceived as working well in coordination with its partners and stakeholders, including other United Nations entities, the development banks or bilateral agencies?
- To what extent is ESCAP perceived to have forged strategic partnerships with its stakeholders, including other United Nations entities, the development banks or bilateral agencies, in support of its members' development efforts?
- How efficient is ESCAP in providing services to its members?
- How can the effectiveness and efficiency of ESCAP be enhanced?

#### Sustainability

- To what extent is ESCAP perceived as contributing to the development of its members in a sustainable manner?



- Do the implementation strategies and modalities chosen by ESCAP focus on building sustainable capacities of its members?
- Does ESCAP's technical cooperation approach focus on building sustainable capacities of its members? If so, is this approach seen as being consistently implemented?
- How can the sustainability of ESCAP's programme of work be enhanced?

#### Impact

- To what extent do ESCAP's members have a clear sense of the organization's impact over the past decades?
- To what extent do ESCAP's stakeholders, including other United Nations entities, the development banks or bilateral agencies, have a clear sense of the organization's impact over the past decades?
- How can ESCAP achieve greater impact?

#### **Methodology**

The evaluation will be conducted by a team of three high-level experts, selected by the Executive Secretary, taking into account geographical representation of Asia and the Pacific.

The primary deliverable of the evaluation will be a report of not more than 25 pages (excluding annexes), containing an executive summary, covering the issues identified in the scope of work, and providing recommendations for further action. The draft table of contents will be proposed by ESCAP and agreed upon by with the evaluators. The evaluation report will reflect the overall consensus of the three evaluators.

The evaluation will be conducted as follows:

- Desk review of key UN background documents;
- Interviews of the ESCAP Executive Secretary and staff;
- Interviews of ESCAP members, using a standard set of questions;
- Interviews of selected ESCAP stakeholders;
- Interviews of selected ESCAP partners.

## Annex 7: Conference Structure

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### **Committee on Poverty Reduction:**

**Subprogramme 1: Poverty and development**

**Subprogramme 2: Statistics**

**Subprogramme 3: Development of Pacific island countries  
and territories**

### **Committee on Managing Globalization:**

#### **Part I:**

**Subprogramme 4: Trade and investment**

**Subprogramme 5: Transport and tourism**

#### **Part II:**

**Subprogramme 6: Environment and sustainable  
development**

**Subprogramme 7: Information, communication and space  
technology**

### **Committee on Emerging Social Issues:**

**Subprogramme 8: Social development, including persistent  
and emerging issues**

**Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries**

**Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing  
Countries**



# Annex 8: ESCAP Secretariat Structure

**Executive Direction and Management**

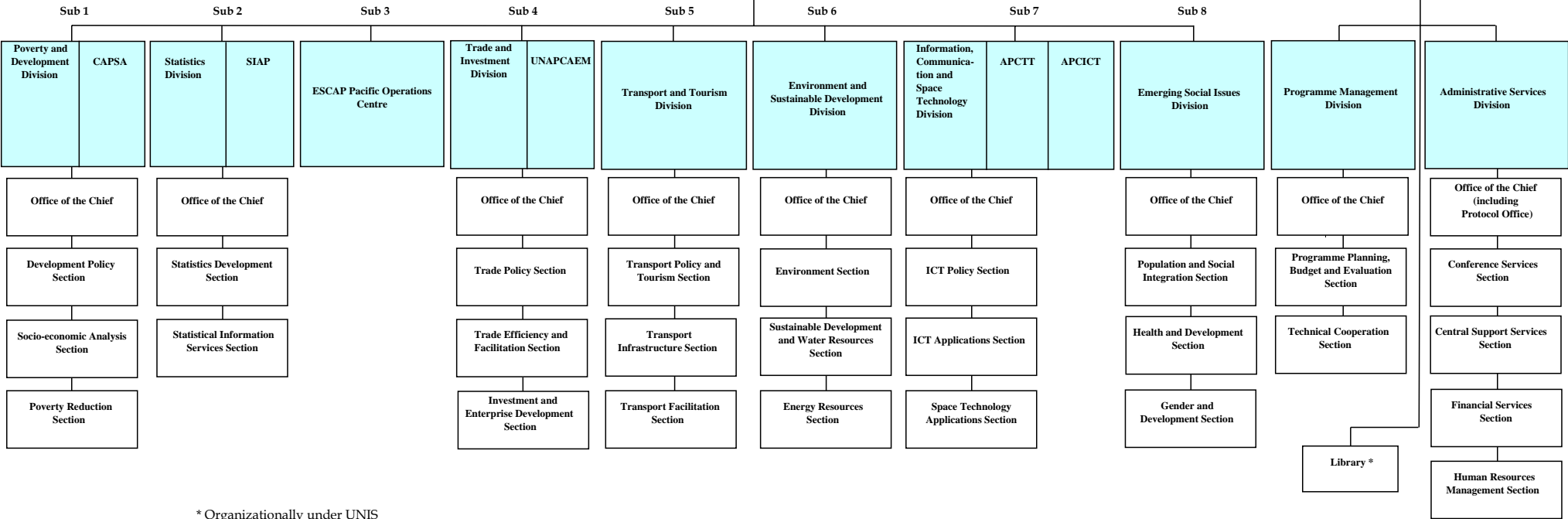
**Executive Secretary**

**Deputy Executive Secretary**

Office of the Executive Secretary  
LDC Coordination Unit  
United Nations Information Services (excluding Library)

**Programme of Work**

**Programme Support**



\* Organizationally under UNIS