



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
5 May 2016

Original: English

---

## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

### Seventy-second session

Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016

Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*

### Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-third session of the Commission (2017)

## Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-third session of the Commission (2017)

### Note by the secretariat\*\*

#### *Summary*

The present note contains information on the possible dates and venue of the seventy-third session of the Commission, which is to be held in 2017, and a proposal for a theme topic for that session.

The Commission may wish to make a decision on these matters.

## I. Introduction

1. The present note contains suggestions made by the secretariat for the consideration of the Commission at its seventy-second session. The Commission may wish to consider the dates, venue and theme topic for its seventy-third session, to be held in 2017, and to provide the secretariat with guidance in this regard.

## II. Dates and venue

2. Rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the Commission requires it to recommend the dates and venue for its next session, subject to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and in consultation with the Secretary-General. In accordance with established practice, at each session, the Commission recommends the convening of the next session. The actual dates and venue are then determined by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the members and the Chair of the Commission.

---

\* E/ESCAP/72/L.1.

\*\* The present note was submitted late owing to the need to take into account the views of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, which were expressed at its 364th session and during informal consultations on 21, 26 and 28 April 2016 and on 4 May 2016.

3. In addition, in rule 1 of the rules of procedure it is stated that sessions of the Commission shall ordinarily be held at the office of the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific, unless the Commission recommends otherwise.

### **III. Theme topic**

4. The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission at its 364th session held on 24 March 2016 and the Committee's Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions at its sessions held on 21, 26 and 28 April 2016 and on 4 May 2016 considered proposals for a theme topic for the seventy-third session of the Commission and decided to submit the following proposal for consideration by the Commission: "Regional cooperation for sustainable energy".

#### **A. Introduction**

5. Increasing energy access, together with adopting renewable energy and energy efficiency, are important aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 7.

6. The future development of the energy sector is one of the most critical issues facing the Asia-Pacific region. Energy underpins economic growth and social well-being and is a key factor in poverty eradication. It is also a key driver of climate change, with energy-related greenhouse gases accounting for approximately 80 per cent of the global total, and of chronic air pollution, which is emerging as a major hazard in many Asian cities. In 2016, 455 million people in the region are without access to electricity and some 2 billion people rely upon solid fuels for cooking. Already, the region accounts for 53 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, with this share set to increase if the growing economies of the Asia-Pacific region continue the current fossil fuel-dominated energy paradigm. Progress in implementing sustainable energy, comprising renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, across the Asia-Pacific countries is uneven. This underscores the need for collective action to enable the success of the region's leading countries to be more widely replicated in the developing countries.

7. The developing world, and in particular the Asia-Pacific region, is the growth engine of the clean energy sector worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Some 54 per cent of the global clean energy investments were made in the region, totalling \$179 billion last year. Investment in renewables has overtaken investment in fossil fuels in our region and globally. Coal use has peaked in China and is in decline. Despite these encouraging trends, the gaps are large and the rate of implementation of sustainable energy is below its full potential.

8. Under the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, Governments, the business sector and other actors made a strong commitment to accelerate the transition to renewable energy and promote energy efficiency. The Lima-Paris Action Agenda is a joint undertaking of the Peruvian and French presidencies of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It aims to strengthen climate action through

---

<sup>1</sup> This includes renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy storage. See the clean energy fact pack issued by Bloomberg New Energy Finance; available from [www.bloomberg.com/company/clean-energy-investment](http://www.bloomberg.com/company/clean-energy-investment).

mobilizing robust global action towards low carbon and resilient societies. A number of renewable energy initiatives led by Governments, businesses and civil society have been put in place recently. These include the International Renewable Energy Agency/Global Renewable Energy Islands Network, the Global Geothermal Alliance, the International Solar Alliance, the Small Islands Developing States Lighthouses Initiative and the Breakthrough Energy Coalition.

## **B. Purpose**

9. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has a wealth of experience and expertise in fostering regional cooperation and identifying the challenges of the region across a number of sectors, including in energy. ESCAP has a ministerial-level platform – the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum – to formulate policies and share knowledge to help address these challenges. Pursuant to its resolution 71/1, entitled “Restructuring the conference structure of the Commission to be fit for the evolving post-2015 development agenda,” the Commission will establish a committee on energy as part of its subsidiary structure.

10. Renewable energy technologies have declined in cost and are increasingly seen as a viable alternative to conventional fossil-based technologies. Renewables have passed price parity with conventional energy sources both at utility scale and in distributed applications in an increasing number of countries and locations across the Asia-Pacific region. Having moved through the price barrier, it is important to consider the remaining barriers to the expansion of renewables and the application of greater energy efficiency, particularly through global and regional cooperation.

11. Given these developments and the growing momentum in this area, this theme study (followed by a dedicated high-profile session at the seventy-third session of the Commission) could provide an important input into regional and global discussions on energy and sustainable development for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as examine opportunities for collective action to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goal 7.

## **C. Topics covered by the theme study**

12. The principal areas the theme study will address, as part of Goal 7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are as follows:

(a) What is the current status of implementation of sustainable energy in member States and what are the projected growth trends? Where are the gaps and opportunities in implementation of sustainable energy? This will include an assessment of how sustainable energy can play a role in meeting the future energy needs of the region, while at the same time meeting the emission reduction targets set by the Paris Agreement and ensuring energy affordability, security and greater access;

(b) What innovative policy and financing measures have been utilized by member States to increase the use of sustainable energy and harness the co-benefits that can be realized across the three dimensions of sustainability?

(c) What is the role of enhanced Asia-Pacific energy connectivity in achieving the sustainable energy goals?

(d) What forms of regional or South-South cooperation and partnerships, including with the private sector and subnational governments, will be needed to realize the full potential of sustainable energy?

#### **IV. Previous theme topics**

13. For reference, a list of the theme topics of previous Commission sessions is contained in the annex to the present note.

## Annex

### List of theme topics of previous Commission sessions

<i>Session<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme topic</i>
40	1984	Technology for development
41	1985	Technology for development
42	1986	Human resources development
43	1987	Human resources development
44	1988	Human resources development
45	1989	Restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s
46	1990	Restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s
47	1991	Industrial restructuring in Asia and the Pacific, in particular with a view to strengthening regional cooperation
48	1992	Regional economic cooperation in the ESCAP region: prospects, priorities and policy options
49	1993	Expansion of investment and intraregional trade as a vehicle for enhancing regional economic cooperation and development
50	1994	Infrastructure development as key to economic growth and regional economic cooperation
51	1995	Strengthening of regional cooperation in human resources development with special reference to the social implications of sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific
52	1996	Sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Asia and the Pacific
53	1997	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: opportunities and challenges for ESCAP
54	1998	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: status of and prospects for social development
55	1999	Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: information technology, globalization, economic security and development
56	2000	Development through globalization and partnership in the twenty-first century: an Asia-Pacific perspective for integrating developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system on a fair and equitable basis
57	2001	Balanced development of urban and rural areas and regions within the countries of Asia and the Pacific
58	2002	Sustainable social development in a period of rapid globalization: challenges, opportunities and policy options
59	2003	Integrating economic and social concerns, especially HIV/AIDS, in meeting the needs of the region
60	2004	Meeting the challenges in an era of globalization by strengthening regional development cooperation
61	2005	Implementing the Monterrey Consensus in the Asian and Pacific region: achieving coherence and consistency

<i>Session</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme topic</i>
62	2006	Enhancing regional cooperation in infrastructure development, including that related to disaster management
63	2007	Development of health systems in the context of enhancing economic growth towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific
64	2008	Energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific
65	2009	Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in the Asia-Pacific region
66	2010	Addressing challenges in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: promoting a stable and supportive financial system; and green growth or environmentally sustainable economic growth, including through technology and financing
67	2011	Beyond the crises: Long-term perspectives on social protection and development in Asia and the Pacific
68	2012	Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific
69	2013	Opportunities to build resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises
70	2014	Regional connectivity for shared prosperity
71	2015	Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation
72	2016	Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development

<sup>a</sup> From the fortieth to the seventy-second session.