



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Seventy-second session

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the
 Commission, including the work of the regional institutions**
**Summary of progress in the implementation of
 Commission resolutions**
Note by the secretariat
Summary

The present note contains a summary of the progress made in the implementation of Commission resolutions on which the secretariat is required to report to the Commission at its seventy-second session.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and to provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance for the effective implementation of the resolutions.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development.....	3
A. Resolution 70/1: Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific	3
B. Resolution 71/2: Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in Asia and the Pacific	4
C. Resolution 71/3: Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024	8
D. Resolution 71/5: Implementing the outcome of the Asia-Pacific High-level Consultation on Financing for Development.....	14
II. Trade and investment	15
A. Resolution 70/4: Promoting sustainable agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific through technology transfer	15

* E/ESCAP/72/L.1.

B.	Resolution 70/5: Strengthening regional cooperation and capacity for enhanced trade and investment in support of sustainable development.....	17
C.	Resolution 70/6: Implementation of the decision of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade	21
III.	Transport.....	21
	Resolution 71/6: Maritime transport connectivity for sustainable development	21
IV.	Environment and development	22
	Resolution 70/12: Strengthening efforts on human settlements and sustainable urban development for the Asia-Pacific region	22
V.	Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction and management	24
A.	Resolution 68/5: Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017.....	24
B.	Resolution 69/10: Promoting regional information and communications technology connectivity and building knowledge-networked societies in Asia and the Pacific.....	26
C.	Resolution 69/11: Implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017	29
D.	Resolution 69/12: Enhancing regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific.....	31
E.	Resolution 70/2: Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific.....	33
F.	Resolution 71/11: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management	34
VI.	Social development.....	35
A.	Resolution 68/7: Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.....	35
B.	Resolution 69/13: Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.....	35
VII.	Statistics	38
A.	Resolution 67/11: Strengthening statistical capacity in Asia and the Pacific	38
B.	Resolution 71/14: Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024	40

I. Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development

A. Resolution 70/1 Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

1. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/1, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the recommendations of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) To assist members and associate members in setting up and supporting the work of the four area-specific expert working groups in accordance with section II, paragraphs 3 and 6 (b), of the Bangkok Declaration;

(c) To convene in 2015 the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings for the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific mentioned in section II, paragraph 3, of the Bangkok Declaration;

(d) To convene the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific in 2015 to review the progress on the agenda of regional economic integration outlined in section III of the present Declaration, consider the recommendations of the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings and decide on follow-up actions, as expressed in section II, paragraph 6 (d), of the Bangkok Declaration;

(e) To report to the Commission at its seventy-first and seventy-second sessions on the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

2. In response to paragraph 2 (a), the Executive Secretary continued making regional economic cooperation and integration a key priority in the strategic direction of ESCAP.

3. In response to paragraph 2 (b), the secretariat continued to support the four area-specific expert working groups established in accordance with section II, paragraphs 3 and 6 (b), of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, for the finalization of their reports.

4. The secretariat's response to paragraphs 2 (c) and 2 (d) was postponed to 2016. The reason was to ensure coherence between the ESCAP programme of work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015.

5. In response to paragraph 2 (c), the secretariat will convene preparatory meetings for the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific prior to the Conference in 2016.

6. In response to paragraph 2 (d), the secretariat will convene the second Ministerial Conference in Bangkok in the second half of 2016.

**B. Resolution 71/2
Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in Asia and the Pacific**

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

7. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 71/2, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To transmit the Siem Reap Angkor Outcome Document as the input to the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, to be held in Antalya, Turkey, in June 2016;

(b) To prepare and publish *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report* on an annual basis as one of the secretariat's publications and report the main findings and key messages of that report to the annual sessions of the Commission;

(c) To continue to assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries, in cooperation with other international entities and taking into account their respective mandates, in building their capacity to undertake appropriate policy responses to accelerate their structural transformation and to achieve other internationally agreed development goals, including the post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be adopted at the United Nations Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda in September 2015;

(d) To submit to the Commission at its seventy-second session a report on the progress achieved in implementing the present resolution.

2. Progress made

8. Through the implementation of the resolution, the following outcomes in the Asia-Pacific least developed countries are expected: (a) a review of the progress in implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) by these countries; (b) enhanced capacity of policymakers in these countries to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action; and (c) enhanced capacity of policymakers in these countries to adopt policies aimed at reducing poverty by promoting growth and inclusive development in support of internationally agreed development goals.

9. In response to paragraph 1 (a), the secretariat submitted the Siem Reap Angkor Outcome Document to the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States as the input to the forthcoming Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020.

10. In response to paragraph 1 (b), the secretariat is preparing *Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2016*, the theme of which is "Towards an implementation strategy to reach the Sustainable Development Goals in countries with special needs". The report will contain a discussion of possible implementation strategies for the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific. In this regard, it will provide an analytical framework based on the so-called method of reflections and a survey of expert opinion from a representative sample of Asia-Pacific countries with special needs.

11. In response to paragraph 1 (c), the secretariat plans to organize a high-level policy dialogue on transport connectivity and border development zones in the eastern portion of South Asia; that meeting was scheduled to be held in Shillong, India, in February 2016. A study was conducted by ESCAP to provide background for the policy dialogue. The main objective of the dialogue is to discuss potential opportunities, challenges and measures to enhance connectivity in South Asia, particularly with least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and northeastern states of India.

12. The secretariat organized a policy dialogue on strengthening transport connectivity in southern Asia, which was held in Tehran in December 2015. The purpose of the policy dialogue was to support the strengthening of regional transport connectivity across South and South-West Asia through extended transport corridors.

13. The secretariat organized a trade capacity development workshop for South Asia; it was held in New Delhi in September 2015. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of policymakers and trade ministry officials, especially in least developed countries, to take advantage of opportunities arising in global and regional markets, including through preferential trading arrangements.

14. The secretariat will organize: a subregional consultation on the Millennium Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; launch the Asia-Pacific Millennium Development Goals report and a policy dialogue on national planning and policies to address the challenges facing least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in the South and South-West Asian subregion in 2016.

15. The secretariat organized policy dialogues on regional cooperation for inclusive and sustainable development in South and South-West Asia at a number of locations in the subregion. The dialogues took place in December 2015 and in the first half of 2016. Such dialogues are aimed at advocating for and discussing with policymakers policies and recommendations based on analysis and conclusions contained in various reports in order to overcome development challenges in the South and South-West Asian subregion through regional cooperation for inclusive and sustainable development. Such events are used to advocate for recommendations on regional partnerships for least developed countries in the subregion.

16. The secretariat will organize a policy dialogue on regional cooperation for energy security in South Asia in conjunction with the nineteenth summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which will take place in Islamabad in 2016, to discuss and advocate for policies and recommendations to carry forward the ESCAP and subregional mandates on energy cooperation and energy security for countries in South Asia, with emphasis on stronger regional cooperation and enhancing the capacity of least developed countries in the subregion.

17. The secretariat organized a session on sustainable financing for development during a least developed country graduation workshop in Bhutan in November 2015 to share analysis and policy advice on financing for the graduation of Bhutan from least developed country status and to contribute towards enhancing the capacity of policymakers to create innovative strategies for resource mobilization through the sharing of experiences from other countries and subregions.

18. Under a three-year collaborative programme from 2015 to 2017, the secretariat and the Korea Expressway Corporation are implementing a project on the development of technical standards on road infrastructure safety facilities and model intelligent transport system deployments for the Asian Highway Network. The project is aimed at improving road safety and road traffic management and will, in its initial phase, target member countries along Asian Highway routes AH1 and AH6, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Nepal.

19. The third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development, held in Bangkok in December 2015, had an agenda item on countries with special needs, including least developed countries. The document prepared by the secretariat for the agenda item provided an overview of progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, an evaluation of specific indicators pertaining to the three global programmes of action for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, namely the Istanbul Programme of Action, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, and a preliminary discussion of the preparedness of these countries to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

20. The secretariat organized a workshop on macroeconomic modelling in Asia and the Pacific in December 2015 to provide policymakers from developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region with a peer learning platform to exchange knowledge and share experiences on building macroeconomic monitoring and forecasting analysis and methodological tools; enhance their understanding of data management of macroeconomic and financial indicators, including training on the development of data analysis modules; and support a number of selected countries in setting up annual or high-frequency national macroeconomic forecasting models. The workshop provided policymakers from Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Nepal with an opportunity to learn about national level macroeconomic policy monitoring and forecasting, and simulation. That workshop was, among others, one of the initial ESCAP activities for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional and national levels.

21. The secretariat's analytical work, which includes the preparation of reports, policy briefs and technical papers, also covered issues in support of the least developed countries. For example, *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2016* monitors development progress and evaluates new challenges for Asia-Pacific countries, including the least developed countries.

22. The secretariat conducted a series of trainings and workshops to enhance the capacity of least developed countries and landlocked developing countries on geospatial data management. These included a capacity-building programme on space technology for flood hazard mapping in Bangladesh, held in Dhaka in April 2015, and a technical assistance programme on geo-referenced information systems for disaster risk management, held in Thimpu in June 2015, to build a national geo portal for disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, ESCAP promoted a regional drought mechanism in the region through capacity-building programmes, such as the national implementation meeting on the regional drought mechanism, which was held in Kathmandu in March-April 2015. Additionally, through its Regional Space Application Programme for Sustainable Development, ESCAP also furnished countries with more than 150 near real-time satellite images and damage maps,

including least developed countries and landlocked developing countries that were affected by severe disasters. The information and data contributed to impact assessment and recovery planning in disaster-affected countries by providing precise pictures of the places affected.

23. A regional dialogue on earthquake recovery, based on the concept of “building back better”, was jointly organized by ESCAP together with the SAARC Disaster Management Centre and the National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, in Kathmandu in October 2015, to support the country in its recovery efforts from the severe earthquake that occurred in April 2015. The dialogue served as a platform for sharing best practices and the lessons learned in resilient recovery and reconstruction. ESCAP, together with the SAARC Disaster Management Centre, in December 2015 organized two national workshops for policymakers from Nepal to learn from the experiences with the recovery processes following the Sikkim and Bhuj earthquakes in India.

24. A training workshop on rapid assessment of damage and loss using innovative technology and space applications was jointly organized with the Disaster Management Centre, in Kathmandu in September-October 2015. Participants were trained to utilize advances in space applications, geographical information systems, crowdsourcing and modelling in order to assess damage and loss of sectors critically affected by a natural disaster. The training targeted countries in South and South-West Asia, including the least developed countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

25. The secretariat continued the development of guidelines on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into multisectoral development planning under the United Nations Development Account project entitled, “Enhancing knowledge and capacity for the management of disaster risks for a resilient future in Asia and the Pacific”. The project targets vulnerable developing countries, including least developed countries, such as Bhutan, Cambodia and Nepal.

26. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar were supported by the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries in convening regular meetings of the Monsoon Forum, which brings together a range of stakeholders from economic, development and disaster management sectors to discuss preparedness and risk reduction.

27. The secretariat, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, the Ministry of Commerce of China, the China International Electronic Commerce Center, Hubei Province of China and a number of other partners, organized the seventh Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum in Wuhan, China, in October 2015. The Forum was attended by participants from 62 countries, including 11 least developed countries. Held under the theme of “Deepening regional integration through trade facilitation”, the Forum was focused on, among other things, discussions on the integration of least developed and landlocked developing countries into the global market.

28. The secretariat has intensified its efforts in assisting the least developed countries in the region to further advance trade facilitation through various capacity-building activities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce of Myanmar, the secretariat organized a national training workshop on trade facilitation and implementation of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, in Nay Pyi Taw in June 2015, which drew participation from officials in the Ministry of Commerce and the

Ministry of Industry, as well as representatives of the customs office, industry and the private sector. The secretariat intends to offer training on participation in global value chains and policies to support regional integration in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce of Cambodia.

29. The secretariat, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, has been assisting Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, to establish a trade and transport facilitation monitoring mechanism to enable these countries to enhance and monitor trade facilitation in a sustainable and continuous manner. A meeting to discuss the actual implementation of the mechanism was held in Wuhan, China, in October 2015 as a side event of the seventh Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum. The secretariat and the Asian Development Bank, as well as the countries concerned, in January 2016 started a baseline study for implementation of the mechanism.

30. The secretariat has continued to produce, both through its own research and in collaboration with scholars from, among others, the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade, policy-relevant publications to enhance capacity and understanding of issues of interest to least developed countries. These include: (a) a publication on the challenges faced by least developed countries in implementing the “Bali package” of reforms agreed by WTO members in 2013; (b) policy briefs on the utility of preferential trade schemes for least developed countries; and (c) research on non-tariff measures and their impacts on trade in least developed countries.

C. Resolution 71/3 Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

31. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 71/3, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action into the programme of work of the Commission, as appropriate and within its respective mandate, and submit annual analytical reports on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, as called for in paragraph 75 of the Programme of Action, to the Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries;

(b) To provide all possible assistance to the Asia-Pacific landlocked developing countries in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action;

(c) To carry out relevant activities to ensure effective realization of the road map of the secretariat for implementing the Vienna Programme of Action as contained in document E/ESCAP/71/2.

2. Progress made

32. In response to operative paragraphs 8 (a) and (c) of the resolution, the secretariat has continued to conduct a number of activities to build the capacity of landlocked developing countries in the area of transport to achieve the shared vision of a sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region in line with the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016).

33. For development and operation of transport infrastructure, including the Asian Highway, trans-Asian railway and dry ports of international importance, capacity-building activities were implemented and technical assistance was provided under several projects.

34. In recognizing the benefits of intercountry connectivity and the need to integrate transport infrastructure networks, representatives from the region, including from the landlocked developing countries, attended the fourth meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, and the first meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports, both held in Bangkok in November 2015. The participants expressed their views and described the challenges they faced in developing integrated transport and logistics.

35. Further, the secretariat has implemented a project funded by the Russian Federation on the planning, development and operation of dry ports of international importance. In this context, several missions were undertaken to many countries undergoing the process of developing dry ports. The lessons learned were shared at the meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports in order to assist policymakers in the region, in particular from the landlocked developing countries, to develop a policy framework conducive to the successful establishment of dry ports, thereby enhancing their capacity to develop and operationalize an integrated regional transport network.

36. With regard to transport connectivity, the secretariat organized the second meeting of the Working Group on the Development of Seamless Connectivity, which was held in Bangkok in March 2015, to review the draft report on the current state of connectivity in the transport, energy, and information and communications technology sectors and identify priority areas, major issues and challenges to regional connectivity as well as present recommendations on areas where actions should be focused. The secretariat also implemented a research project entitled, "Role of border special development zones in regional connectivity"; it was aimed at assisting member States in developing border areas and enhancing cross-border connectivity.

37. To discuss opportunities, challenges and measures to enhance connectivity in South Asia, particularly with least developed and landlocked developing countries, such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and northeastern states of India, a high-level policy dialogue on transport connectivity and border development zones in the eastern portion of South Asia was planned to be held in Shillong, India, in February 2016. The secretariat conducted a study to serve as background for the dialogue.

38. The secretariat organized a policy dialogue on strengthening transport connectivity in southern Asia, which was held in Tehran in December 2015, to advocate for strengthening regional transport connectivity in South and South-West Asia through extended transport corridors.

39. Under a United Nations Development Account project on strengthening transport connectivity between South and Central Asia, with special reference to landlocked developing countries, and in the context of agreements reached at the Eighteenth SAARC Summit in Kathmandu in 2014, the secretariat is preparing a comprehensive transport connectivity master plan for South Asia, envisioning a subregion that is not only connected with itself but also with its neighbouring subregions, a situation that would help it to utilize its strategic location so that it could emerge as a hub for Asia-Europe trade.

40. The secretariat continued to assist member States in formulating sustainable and inclusive transport policies and strategies through sharing policy innovations, best practices and successful interventions. Regional and subregional seminars and national workshops were organized to raise awareness and understanding of policymakers and to expose them to various policy options for sustainable and inclusive transport development. Such activities included a national stakeholders' consultation and capacity-building workshops on the development of sustainable and inclusive transport policy in Thimphu in April 2015, a subregional seminar on sustainable and inclusive transport development in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in September 2015, and a regional seminar on safe, climate-adaptive and disaster-resilient transport for sustainable development, in Kathmandu in November 2015, in addition to a forum on environmentally sustainable transport in Kathmandu in November 2015. The capacity and awareness of policymakers from the region, in particular from the landlocked developing countries, was enhanced through their participation in these events.

41. The secretariat continues to implement activities to support infrastructure development through private sector financing. These activities are aimed at building the capacity of government officials to identify, develop and manage public-private partnership projects, advising selected countries on establishing effective public-private partnership policy frameworks and promoting best regional practices on public-private partnership. With regard to capacity-building activities, the secretariat in 2015 launched the ESCAP e-learning series on public-private partnerships, which has since been accessed by about 14,000 people. In addition, a workshop was organized in Vientiane in August 2015 to enhance the capacity of national government officials concerning public-private partnerships. With regard to public-private partnership policy frameworks, the secretariat supported selected countries, including Bhutan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, through a United Nations Development Account project on building capacity and facilitating private sector involvement in infrastructure development in selected countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Bhutan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Road maps have been developed to guide these countries with their public-private partnership agenda, and consultants have been recruited to implement priority actions. The secretariat also undertook missions to Bhutan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic in March and August 2015, respectively, to augment and follow up on these activities.

42. To promote best practices, the secretariat conducted research on private financing of infrastructure. Furthermore, regional events were organized to facilitate the sharing of experience and to develop policy recommendations. These included the Asia-Pacific Forum on Public-Private Partnerships for Transport Infrastructure Development in Bangkok in January 2015; the Policy Dialogue on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in South Asia in Kathmandu in September 2015; and the Expert Group Meeting on Financing Sources for Public-Private Partnerships in South-East Asia in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015. These regional events have all been evaluated as being very effective in increasing the knowledge of participants, including those from landlocked developing countries.¹

43. With regard to transport facilitation and logistics, the secretariat implemented a project funded by the Russian Federation on enhancing the operationalization of trans-Asian railway costing, marketing and facilitation

¹ Resources and documents on public-private partnership are available from www.unescap.org/our-work/transport/financing-and-private-sector-participation/resources.

of railway services. In addition, an ad hoc expert group meeting on the regional cooperation framework for facilitation of international railway transport was held in Bangkok in March 2015, and a seminar jointly organized by ESCAP and the International Union of Railways on facilitation and costing of railway services along the trans-Asian railway was held in Bangkok in December 2015; both meetings enabled discussions on various aspects related to facilitation of railway transport in the region. Through resolution 71/7, the Commission at its seventy-first session adopted the regional cooperation framework developed under this project. The framework will benefit landlocked developing countries immensely by increasing their access to regional and global markets as a result of the operationalization of railway networks and the promotion of sustainable modes of transport.

44. Furthermore, under projects funded by the Russian Federation on establishment of a regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation and on harmonization of the legal environment for operation of international road transport in the ESCAP region, a regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation has been established to assist member States, especially landlocked developing countries, such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal, to enhance the capacity of their officials in planning and implementing transport facilitation initiatives to strengthen regional connectivity. A meeting of the regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation and a regional meeting on harmonization of legal instruments and documentation for cross-border and transit transport by road were held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in March 2015 and in Bangkok in December 2015, respectively.

45. To enhance the efficiency of transit operations between Bhutan and India, the secretariat, together with the Asian Development Bank, held a workshop on finalizing the feasibility study on the pilot implementation of the ESCAP Secure Cross-border Transport Model along the Bhutan-India transit corridor; the workshop was held in Cebu, Philippines, in October 2015. The feasibility study was jointly prepared by ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank. The pilot implementation of a tracking system for vehicles and goods based on a secure cross-border transport model that uses new technologies to secure and facilitate transit operations will benefit Bhutan as well as other landlocked developing countries. A national workshop to enhance the understanding of participants concerning ESCAP tools and recommendations to facilitate cross-border and transit transport was organized in Baku in November 2015. The secretariat also developed a study and a guide on paperless transit under a United Nations Development Account project that would facilitate cross-border and transit transport in landlocked developing countries.

46. Under a project funded by China on the regional development of efficient and effective logistics systems, the secretariat organized an expert group meeting on logistics information service systems in Bangkok in July 2015, and a regional meeting on the development of efficient and effective logistics systems in Bangkok in December 2015. The meetings were aimed at building the capacity of member countries in terms of best practices for the development of the logistics industry through the use of logistics information systems. It was proposed at the meetings that the regional standard model of logistics information service systems be put forward for adoption by the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session in 2016.

47. Furthermore, the secretariat implemented a project funded by China on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-border transport on the Asian Highway Network. The project takes stock of existing cross-border

processes and procedures at border crossing points in 32 countries along the Asian Highway, including in landlocked developing countries.

48. The secretariat is undertaking a survey to collect information on requirements for cross-border transport by road in all countries along the Asian Highway Network. Based on the information collected, a handbook for policymakers, transport operators, freight forwarders and logistics service providers will be prepared that will strengthen the capacity of member countries, particularly the landlocked developing countries, to undertake cross-border transport by road and take measures to improve operational conditions for cross-border transport as well as to plan and implement transport facilitation measures successfully in collaboration with adjacent countries.

49. Furthermore, the secretariat has taken steps to strengthen resilience in multidimensional ways. ESCAP, through its Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP), places high priority on building capacity in landlocked developing countries to effectively use space and geographic information systems applications. The secretariat has provided trainings and workshops for approximately 400 policymakers and practitioners from more than 30 member States, with particular focus on landlocked developing countries.

50. Although the benefits of applications of space technology and geographic information systems for disaster risk reduction have been recognized by some landlocked developing countries, and such countries have made progress in disaster risk management through regional cooperation, there is a lack of capacity to use geographic information and data, a situation that severely limits the benefits of disaster risk reduction, preparedness and early recovery efforts. Furthermore, disaster management authorities in least developed countries and landlocked developing countries currently have insufficient capacity in terms of policy and technical aspects to integrate into main policy agendas technology tools for disaster-related data and information and communications.

51. At the onset of a disaster, decision makers need to quickly grasp the overall extent of the disaster to determine both the type and scale of assistance needed, as well as to assess the individual needs of each community affected. Despite the urgent need for supporting information, even basic data, such as population figures in the affected areas, are frequently missing. Without crucial supporting data or access to such data, decisions, assessments and responses concerning the allocation of relief efforts would be slow and could even turn out to be inadequate or incorrect, not recognizing those communities most in need of help.

52. To support landlocked developing countries, including Afghanistan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Nepal, ESCAP has taken a leading role at the regional level to provide policy guides and to enhance the capacity of member States. In particular, ESCAP has worked on: (a) institutional capacity-building to promote the use of space technology and geographic information systems for disaster risk reduction; (b) operationalization of the regional "drought mechanism"; (c) timely provision of regional support, in particular near real-time satellite imagery, through RESAP to the countries affected by severe disasters; and (d) research and policy analysis for identifying emerging needs and challenges through the development of a regional inventory.

53. ESCAP has conducted a series of trainings and workshops to enhance the capacity of landlocked developing countries. These included: an expert group meeting on space technology and applications of geographic information systems for urban disaster management in Mongolia, which was held in Ulaanbaatar in May 2015; technical assistance on geo-referenced information systems for disaster risk management in Bishkek and Osh, Kyrgyzstan, in May 2015; technical assistance on geo-referenced information systems for disaster risk management, held in Thimphu in June 2015; and support for two participants from Fiji and Kyrgyzstan to study for a nine-month master's degree in geographic information systems at the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, in July 2015 in Dehradun, India.

54. ESCAP promoted the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning in selected landlocked developing countries, namely Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Nepal. In this process, ESCAP facilitated the provision of space-based data/products and services provided by the regional service nodes in China and India, and strengthened the capacity of landlocked developing countries in addressing droughts affecting agriculture.

55. The pilot project on drought monitoring in Mongolia has made good progress in improving the technical capacity of key personnel of the National Remote Sensing Center of Mongolia through training provided by the regional service nodes. The project included capacity-building components, such as compiling and analysing space-derived data, developing and assessing indices appropriate for Mongolia, and field validation of those indices. The Center is now utilizing the new methodology itself to monitor the drought which is currently affecting the country. The Center will continue to undertake further validation of the methodology's accuracy over the next two to three years.

56. The status, gaps and institutional arrangements related to drought in Nepal were also discussed during a technical advisory mission in early 2015. The establishment of a country team is under way along with the development, with the assistance of the secretariat, of a country profile for each country. The April 2015 earthquake, however, caused some delays. The secretariat is discussing the next steps with national focal points; such steps are likely to begin with a multi-stakeholder meeting in early 2016. Implementation in Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan will begin upon confirmation of funding.

57. In the field of disaster risk reduction, ESCAP provides policy guidance and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of member States, including landlocked developing countries, in addressing disaster risks.

58. In October 2015, ESCAP, the National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, and the SAARC Disaster Management Centre jointly organized a regional dialogue on earthquake recovery, employing the concept of "building back better". Held in Kathmandu in October 2015, the dialogue contributed to the recovery process from the destructive April 2015 earthquake. The dialogue served as a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned in resilient recovery and reconstruction. ESCAP, together with the SAARC Disaster Management Centre, organized two national workshops in December 2015 for policymakers from Nepal to learn from experiences with the recovery processes following the Sikkim and Bhuj earthquakes in India.

59. ESCAP also organized a training workshop on rapid assessment of damage and loss using innovative technology and space applications, jointly

with the SAARC Disaster Management Centre, in Kathmandu in September and October 2015. The training was held to impart knowledge on utilizing advances in space applications, geographical information systems, crowdsourcing and modelling in order to assess damage and loss of sectors critically affected by a natural disaster. The training was focused particularly on countries in South and South-West Asia, including the landlocked developing countries of Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal.

60. ESCAP continued the development of guidelines on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into multisectoral development planning under the United Nations Development Account project entitled, “Enhancing knowledge and capacity for the management of disaster risks for a resilient future in Asia and the Pacific”. The project is focused on vulnerable developing countries, including the least developed and landlocked developing countries of Bhutan, Mongolia and Nepal.

61. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic was supported by the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries in convening regular Monsoon Forums, which bring together a wide range of stakeholders, including relevant ministries, local government officials and user agencies, to discuss disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

**D. Resolution 71/5
Implementing the outcome of the Asia-Pacific High-level
Consultation on Financing for Development**

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

62. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 71/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To transmit, as the region’s input, the Chair’s summary of the High-level Consultation to the organizers of the third International Conference on Financing for Development;

(b) To continue to mainstream financing for development into its programme of work, as appropriate and in accordance with its mandate;

(c) To provide all possible assistance to the member States in implementing the recommendations contained in the Chair’s summary of the High-level Consultation;

(d) To report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the progress made in implementing the present resolution.

2. Progress made

63. In response to paragraph 3 (a), the Chair’s summary of the High-level Consultation was shared with the organizers of the third International Conference on Financing for Development and was used as a background document for the conference.

64. In response to paragraph 3 (b), the secretariat has included financing for development as a key aspect of its programme of work for 2016-2017. The activities involving financing for development include technical research in the form of periodic publications and working papers, substantive services for regional and international conferences and capacity-building. In addition, the new conference structure of the Commission that was mandated under

Commission resolution 71/1 resulted in reconstitution of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development as the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development.

65. In response to paragraph 3 (c), the secretariat continued to expand and plans to magnify further its support for member States in the areas of policy research, regional coordination and capacity-building in terms of financing for development. The secretariat launched a comprehensive technical report entitled, “Financing for transformation: from agenda to action on sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”, during third International Conference on Financing for Development and organized on the sidelines of the conference a high-level panel to discuss the Asia-Pacific region’s strategy to finance sustainable development.

66. The secretariat took steps to organize the first regional high-level follow-up dialogue on financing for development in Asia and the Pacific, which was scheduled to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in March 2016. It is also working closely with member States in establishing a forum for cooperation on tax matters in the Asia-Pacific region; that forum would serve as the key regional platform for research, peer-learning and capacity-building on tax policies and administration. A primary focus of the forum would be to support countries so that they could increase their tax-to-GDP ratio and municipal finances for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. ESCAP has conducted a feasibility study on the tax forum and organized a meeting of high-level tax experts to discuss the proposal in November 2015.

67. In addition, the secretariat continues to support infrastructure financing of member States in the form of public-private partnerships, in particular through capacity-building for project preparation and management; advisory services on effective public-private partnership policy frameworks; and promoting best regional practices. These activities include the launch of the ESCAP e-learning series on public-private partnerships, further development of the ESCAP case study series on public-private partnerships, capacity-building workshops in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar, as well as policy advisory services for Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

68. Regional events were also organized to facilitate the sharing of experience and to inform policymakers about public-private partnerships, including the Asia-Pacific Forum on Public-Private Partnerships for Transport Infrastructure Development, which was held in Bangkok in January 2015; the Policy Dialogue on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in South Asia, held in Kathmandu in September 2015; and the Expert Group Meeting on Financing Sources for Public-Private Partnerships in South-East Asia, held in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015.

II. Trade and investment

A. Resolution 70/4

Promoting sustainable agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific through technology transfer

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

69. In paragraphs 4 and 5 of its resolution 70/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to support knowledge- and information-sharing and capacity development for member States to pursue sustainable agricultural development;

(b) To continue to assist members and associate members in undertaking North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation to facilitate and expedite technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and the uptake of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable technologies;

(c) To continue to support and facilitate, for example through the substantive divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions of ESCAP, regional cooperation in the innovation, development and application of sustainable agricultural technologies, including technologies for agricultural mechanization, and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in order to achieve intensification of sustainable food and agricultural production and to reduce rural poverty;

(d) To continue to encourage public-private partnerships and devise creative approaches, such as the organization of dialogue and advocacy activities together or in conjunction with exhibitions and fairs, for the promotion of knowledge- and information-sharing, policy dialogue, joint and collaborative research and development, technology transfer on mutually agreed upon terms, as well as business development;

(e) To report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

70. In response to paragraph 4 (a), the Executive Secretary requested the relevant regional institutions, particularly the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) and the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA), and substantive divisions to strategize with a view to raising funds and implementing projects and activities to support knowledge- and information-sharing and capacity development.

71. In response to paragraph 4 (b), the secretariat, through CSAM, continued to organize workshops, study tours and other capacity-building activities to assist members and associate members in undertaking North-South and South-South cooperation to facilitate and expedite technology transfer. Examples include: training in collaboration with China Agricultural University on agricultural mechanization for the Korean Academy of Agricultural Sciences of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; a mini-exhibition and demonstrations organized during the Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific; a study tour and workshop for agricultural machinery distributors; training and a study tour to India for extension workers and policymakers from Nepal on the custom hiring of agricultural machinery; the training of trainers for testing engineers under the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery; and trainings planned under the Myanmar-based Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund project.

72. Furthermore, the secretariat, through CAPSA, continued to support South-South cooperation and knowledge-sharing for sustainable agriculture for member States in the South and South-East Asian subregion as part of a project funded by the European Union entitled Network for Knowledge Transfer on Sustainable Agricultural Technologies and Improved Market Linkages in South and South-East Asia (SATNET Asia), with an overall

outreach touching close to 1,700 stakeholders receiving and sharing information. SATNET Asia also contributed to strengthening relevant capacities among member States. Between August 2014 and the end of the project in June 2015, four SATNET national workshops were organized in Bangladesh, Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic covering such areas as integrated pest management, agricultural technology innovation systems and facilitation of trade in agricultural and food products. The efforts to strengthen capacities, enable knowledge-sharing and undertake advocacy were further complemented through organization of a regional SATNET high-level policy dialogue on agricultural technology transfer engaging key government and civil society decision makers, convening of a regional network partners meeting and launch of a web-based portal offering learning resources, a technology database and an electronic discussion forum. In addition, at the regional and subregional level five workshops on agricultural trade facilitation, vegetable production and post-harvest and market linkages were organized apart from three field-level study tours for smallholder representatives and extension agents.

73. In response to paragraph 4 (c), the secretariat, through CSAM, continued to support and facilitate regional cooperation, including by launching and operationalizing the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery, initiating the Regional Database of Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific and launching the Regional Council of Agricultural Machinery Associations in Asia and the Pacific.

74. In response to paragraph 4 (d), the secretariat, through CSAM, continued to encourage public-private partnerships by organizing: the Roundtable of National Agricultural Machinery Associations in Asia and the Pacific, held in Wuhan, China, in October 2014; the first annual meeting of the Regional Council of Agricultural Machinery Associations in Asia and the Pacific, held in Qingdao, China, in October 2015; and the second annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Network for the Testing of Agricultural Machinery, held in New Delhi in December 2015 in parallel with major agricultural machinery exhibitions in the region. The Centre has engaged both public- and private-sector stakeholders in designing and implementing most of its projects.

75. Apart from the above-mentioned initiatives, during the reporting period CAPSA, CSAM and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) were jointly implementing a project supported by the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund to promote livelihood improvement and food security in the dry zone of Myanmar. Analytical studies and activities have been initiated to strengthen national capacities in areas prioritized by local stakeholders. In this context, CAPSA also organized a regional workshop on measuring sustainable agriculture, food security and poverty alleviation to support efforts to enhance accountability in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

B. Resolution 70/5
Strengthening regional cooperation and capacity for enhanced trade and investment in support of sustainable development

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

76. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 70/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To study the feasibility of convening every four years, starting in 2016, a conference at the ministerial level to review recent developments and adopt regional action plans in the area of trade and investment and other related areas² for implementation by Governments of ESCAP members and associate members and by the secretariat of ESCAP, and to submit to the Committee on Trade and Investment at its next session a report with recommendations on the convening of a ministerial-level conference;

(b) To expand policy-oriented and evidence-based analytical work in the area of trade and investment for sustainable development in the ESCAP region, including in order to support the normative work of ESCAP;

(c) To effectively disseminate the findings of its research and analysis through appropriate websites and publications, in particular through the annual *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report*;

(d) To continue analysis of preferential trade agreements, including through the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database;

(e) To expand technical assistance and to encourage ESCAP regional members, and where appropriate, regional associate members, in building their human and institutional capacity, in particular in the following areas:

(i) Undertaking evidence-based policy-oriented research and analysis in the area of trade and investment, including research with a view towards identifying modalities for the consolidation of regional trade agreements as building blocks of the multilateral trading system;

(ii) Negotiating, concluding and implementing trade and investment agreements, including accession to the World Trade Organization of those countries not yet members of that organization, upon request of the member countries;

(iii) Formulating and implementing policies in support of trade, investment and business development within the context of overall national sustainable development goals;

(iv) Formulating and implementing policies in support of trade facilitation, promotion and facilitation of foreign direct investment, strengthening national capacities in science, technology and innovation; strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, with special focus on such enterprises in rural areas and those owned or managed by women or youth; and the adoption of responsible business practices by businesses in accordance with the principles of the Global Compact and other internationally recognized principles of responsible business practices;

(f) To continue the promotion of regional cooperation with a view to achieve higher levels of regional economic integration through enhanced intraregional trade, investment and technology flows for sustainable development, including through the following modalities:

(i) Expanding membership and deepening and broadening commitments within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement while studying the feasibility of strengthening the linkages of that Agreement with other regional trade agreements;

² These other related areas are covered by the subprogramme on trade and investment and comprise: business and development, including responsible business practices, technology transfer and sustainable agricultural mechanization.

- (ii) Strengthening the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade and its activities;
 - (iii) Strengthening the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific and its activities;
 - (iv) Strengthening the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, with focus on its capacity to promote the development of national and subnational innovation systems and the transfer of technology, inter alia, environmentally sustainable and renewable energy technologies on mutually agreed upon terms, including with a view to supporting the existing regional technology bank;³
 - (v) Strengthening the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, including its capacity to establish and service the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery and promote the adoption and implementation at the national level of sustainable agricultural mechanization strategies;
- (g) To encourage public-private partnerships and dialogue on issues related to trade and investment for sustainable development through such modalities as the Asia-Pacific Business Forum, the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum, and the ESCAP Business Advisory Council and its Sustainable Business Network;
- (h) In undertaking trade and investment capacity-building assistance, to accord priority to the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States;
- (i) To take all necessary measures to mobilize the funds required for the implementation of the above-mentioned requests from within existing resources, supplemented as necessary by voluntary contributions and through partnerships with entities, including from the Asian Development Bank and the private sector;
- (j) To strengthen cooperation with relevant regional and global partner organizations, to the extent possible, in the implementation of the above-mentioned requests with a view to utilizing resources efficiently, achieving synergies in outputs and impacts and avoiding unnecessary duplication of work;
- (k) To report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

77. In response to paragraph 4 (a), the secretariat undertook a feasibility study concerning the convening of a periodic conference at the ministerial level in the area of trade and investment and concluded that such a conference was feasible but not desirable. The Committee on Trade and Investment discussed the feasibility study at its fourth session and decided that such a conference could be organized on an ad hoc basis according to need.

78. In response to paragraph 4 (b), the secretariat is expanding policy-oriented and evidence-based analytical work in the area of trade and investment for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, including in order to support the normative work of ESCAP, in particular through the

³ General Assembly resolution 67/220, para. 21.

Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade and Transport in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) and the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database (APTIAD) and in connection with the preparation of *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2015*. A foreign direct investment database for quickly reviewing recent trends and developments and policy/regulatory changes at the national level is under development.

79. In response to paragraph 4 (c), the findings of research and analysis have been distributed through ESCAP monographs (studies in trade and investment), policy briefs and *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2015*.

80. In response to paragraph 4 (d), analysis is ongoing and provided results for publication in *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2015* (chap. 6).

81. In response to paragraphs 4 (e) and (f), the secretariat has continued to provide ESCAP members with technical assistance for enhancing their human and institutional capacity in various areas and has continued efforts to strengthen and expand the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), ARTNeT, UNNExT and the Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment Network for Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries, as described in a background note for the Committee on Trade and Investment at its fourth session (E/ESCAP/CTI(4)/4). Selected countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion, in particular Myanmar, were provided with specialized advice on FDI and the private sector's role. Technical assistance was also provided within the framework of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network, including the preparation of a publication entitled, *Resilient Business for Resilient Nations and Communities*. The role of APCTT and CSAM is currently being reviewed within the context of overall reforms of the conference structure of the Commission pursuant to Commission resolution 71/1. The activities of these regional institutions are documented in background notes for the fourth session of the Committee on Trade and Investment (E/ESCAP/CTI(4)/6 and E/ESCAP/CTI(4)/7).

82. In response to paragraph 4 (g), the secretariat has continued to engage the business sector through the ESCAP Business Advisory Council, the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network and the Asia-Pacific Business Forum as documented in a background note prepared for the fourth session of the Committee on Trade and Investment (E/ESCAP/CTI(4)/5).

83. In response to paragraph 4 (h), the secretariat has accorded special priority to least developed countries, in particular Myanmar, in the area of the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, including the preparation of a Myanmar business survey and analysis of its findings, and the implications for policy.

84. In response to paragraph 4 (i), the secretariat is continuing to undertake resource mobilization efforts from various sources, and notes that substantive private sector support was made available for the organization of the twelfth Asia-Pacific Business Forum, held in Bangkok in November 2015.

85. In response to paragraph 4 (j), the secretariat is undertaking efforts to maintain and strengthen partnership where necessary with the Asian Development Bank (and other regional development banks), the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), International Trade Centre (ITC), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

**C. Resolution 70/6
Implementation of the decision of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade**

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

86. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support and facilitate the establishment and operation of the interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation in accordance with the terms of reference contained in section I.B of the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade.

2. Progress made

87. In response to paragraph 2, the secretariat organized the first meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation in Bangkok from 1 to 3 April 2015. The meeting, which was attended by representatives of 27 member States, revised the draft text of the regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade, and discussed the preparation of a draft road map for the implementation of its substantive provisions. The meeting also established legal and technical working groups under it to expedite the revision of the draft regional arrangement and to work on the draft road map for its implementation.

88. In response to an invitation issued by the secretariat for nomination of participants to the newly created legal and technical working groups, 50 officials/experts were officially nominated by 23 ESCAP members. The first and second physical meetings of those working groups were held in Bangkok in 2015, from 9 to 11 September and on 5 and 6 November, respectively. All working group and steering committee meetings were organized in conjunction with capacity-building activities to maximize benefits for participating government officials, in particular those from least developed and landlocked developing countries.

89. Working group meetings were well attended and significant progress was made towards developing consensus and improving the draft text of the regional arrangement so that it could become an intergovernmental agreement. A third meeting of the working groups will be organized back to back with the second meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation to be held in Bangkok from 30 March to 1 April 2016.

III. Transport

**Resolution 71/6
Maritime transport connectivity for sustainable development**

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

90. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 71/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To include maritime connectivity in the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 and its Regional Action Programme (2017-2021), as appropriate, to be presented to the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session in 2016;

(b) To further strengthen ways of cooperation to enhance capacities at the national and regional levels in building intermodal transport for the Asia-Pacific region, in particular maritime transport;

(c) To collaborate with relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, regional and subregional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to make necessary efforts in maritime cooperation in achieving sustainable development;

(d) To report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

91. In response to paragraph 3 (a), the secretariat has been according high priority to support the development and integration of archipelagic countries and Pacific island countries into the region's economic growth pattern through enhanced transport connectivity between them as well as with infrastructure networks that have already been established on the mainland in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Activities to be implemented are included in the proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017 under "expected accomplishments" of the secretariat (EA (b)) for subprogramme 3, increased capacity of ESCAP member States to plan, develop and implement international intermodal transport linkages, including the Asian Highway Network, the trans-Asian railway network, inter-island shipping and dry ports of international importance. The secretariat will also include specific activities in the next Regional Action Programme (2017-2021) that will be presented for adoption at the Ministerial Conference on Transport, to be held in 2016.

92. In response to paragraphs 3 (b) and 3 (c), at the request of the Government of Indonesia, a national seminar on integrated intermodal transport connectivity was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in September 2015. More than 200 officials and transport operators took part in the seminar. In addition, officials from China, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Asia-Pacific Cooperation spoke at the seminar and briefed participants on their respective experience in planning and implementing transport connectivity in their respective countries. The secretariat has liaised actively with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to address needs in a coordinated and impact-oriented manner. The secretariat organized a meeting with the Korea Maritime Institute, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and senior officials of Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands to review issues of maritime connectivity and maritime safety among Pacific island countries, and develop a strategy to address identified issues. The meeting was held in December 2015.

IV. Environment and development

Resolution 70/12

Strengthening efforts on human settlements and sustainable urban development for the Asia-Pacific region

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

93. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 70/12, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and other concerned bodies and agencies:

(a) To continue to analyse conditions and trends regarding human settlements and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific across

all three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as identify strategies to address persistent and emerging challenges;

(b) To continue facilitating regional understanding and action on issues critical to housing and sustainable urban development through, among other modalities, sharing of good practices and lessons learned, and the convening of expert group meetings and regional multi-stakeholder dialogues, including the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum.

94. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/12, the Commission also requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and other concerned bodies and agencies, to organize the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum back-to-back with the high-level regional preparatory meeting in Indonesia in 2015 in order to provide substantive input to its deliberations, and to support the Government of Indonesia in the regional preparations for Habitat III, in particular through organizing the high-level regional preparatory meeting in 2015 with the participation of member States as an intergovernmental process and the involvement of other stakeholders.

95. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 70/12, the Commission further requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate substantive inputs inclusive of the diverse urban experiences and needs of the Asia-Pacific region, as well as encourage broad, high-level participation from across the region in Habitat III and its preparatory processes.

96. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 70/12, the Commission invited members States, international organizations, civil society and the private sector, and other multi-stakeholders, as appropriate, to participate actively in both the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum and the high level regional preparatory meeting to be held in Indonesia in 2015.

97. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 70/12, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

98. In response to paragraph 1 (a), the secretariat continued to analyse conditions and trends regarding human settlements and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific across all three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as identify strategies to address persistent and emerging challenges. The secretariat developed a number of key analytical products, including the following: the report “*State of Asian and Pacific Cities 2015: Urban Transformations – shifting from quantity to quality*”, developed in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); the *Quick Guide for Policy Makers: Pro-poor Urban Climate Resilience in Asia and the Pacific*, developed in partnership with UN-Habitat and the Rockefeller Foundation; and *Valuing Waste, Transforming Cities*, developed in partnership with Waste Concern. The secretariat also contributed to the preparation of the Habitat III Regional Report for Asia and the Pacific, in partnership with the Habitat III secretariat and UN-Habitat. For the seventy-first session of the Commission, the secretariat prepared the issue paper entitled, “Towards a sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban future for Asia and the Pacific” (E/ESCAP/71/13).

99. In response to paragraphs 1 (b) and 2, the secretariat held the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in Jakarta in October 2015. The Forum was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing of

Indonesia, and included more than 30 partners. The Forum was guided by the theme “Sustainable urban development in Asia-Pacific: towards a new urban agenda”; it was held back to back with the High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting to Habitat III for Asia-Pacific, which was convened by the Government of Indonesia and the Habitat III secretariat also in October 2015. Moreover, the secretariat convened two expert group meetings in preparation for the Forum, in Bangkok in December 2014 and July 2015, as well as the Urban Partners Workshop, organized in partnership with UN-Habitat in July 2015.

100. The Forum brought together more than 900 participants, including ministers, mayors and other government officials, representatives from academia, urban professionals, the private sector, civil society, grass-roots leaders, older persons, youth and international organizations, to discuss persistent and emerging issues related to sustainable urban development in the Asia-Pacific region, and in particular priority issues for the region to be considered in the “new urban agenda” to be adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum adopted a “Call for Action” on sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development, which was presented at the High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting to Habitat III for Asia-Pacific. The declaration adopted at the meeting recognized the Forum’s outcomes and reinforced many of the recommendations included in the “Call for Action”.

101. In response to paragraph 3, the secretariat provided direct substantive inputs to the High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting to Habitat III for Asia-Pacific through the delivery of a keynote speech by the Executive Secretary and the presentation by the Chair of the outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum. The secretariat also facilitated the participation of high-level government officials and other key stakeholders, including members of the General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III, by sponsoring their participation in both the Forum and the High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting to Habitat III for Asia-Pacific.

V. Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction and management

A. Resolution 68/5 Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

102. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 68/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the organization of activities associated with the Asia-Pacific Years of Action in collaboration with other regional initiatives.

103. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 68/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution and at its seventy-fourth session on the progress made in the attainment of the objectives of the Asia-Pacific Years of Action.

2. Progress made

104. In order to enhance efforts to broaden and deepen the contribution of space technology and geographic information systems to address issues related to disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management, as well as environment and development, the Intergovernmental Meeting on Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017 was held in Bangkok in December 2012. Representatives of member States, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations and other stakeholders, participated actively in the Meeting and its preparatory process.

105. The Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017, prepared by the secretariat and member States, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations, was discussed and adopted during the Meeting, which recommended endorsement of the Plan of Action by the ESCAP Commission at its sixty-ninth session.

106. In May 2013, through resolution 69/11 the Commission at its sixty-ninth session endorsed the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017.

107. Since the end of 2012, the secretariat has made concerted efforts, at the national and regional levels, to assist developing countries in Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with international and regional organizations, in particular the long-standing network RESAP. The efforts in providing assistance include analytical research, regional workshops, institutional training, specialized capacity development programmes, regional advisory services and technical assistance. The purpose of those efforts has been to encourage member States to mainstream space and geographic information system applications into their national development strategies, policies and implementation and regulation plans; strengthen mutual understanding and coordination across relevant government agencies, that is, promote dialogue between disaster management authorities and space agencies to reduce information gaps, system incompatibilities and duplication; and improve and ensure wider access to, and use of, geospatial information and space-derived data, products and services in a timely and affordable manner, in order to address emerging issues related to disaster risk reduction, disaster risk management and sustainable development.

108. In order to implement the resolution, the secretariat has been promoting a number of programmes that are centred on advances in science, technology and innovation, with particular focus on space technology applications and geographic information systems, through the following core activities: (a) supporting member States on timely access to and effective use of near real-time satellite imagery for countries affected by severe disasters; (b) facilitating the operationalization of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning (the “drought mechanism”) in drought prone countries; (c) strengthening institutional capacity-building to address gaps and emerging challenges; and (d) conducting research and policy analysis in identifying emerging needs and challenges.

109. All work delivered has been in collaboration with: the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT); United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD); Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management; FAO; WMO; Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum and Sentinel Asia; Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization; International Charter Space and Major Disasters; Group on Earth Observations; ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management; SAARC; Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific; Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia; Applied Geoscience and Technology Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community; Asian Institute of Technology; Chinese University of Hong Kong; and Global Water Partnership.

B. Resolution 69/10
Promoting regional information and communications technology connectivity and building knowledge-networked societies in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

110. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 69/10, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To explore ways to strengthen the role and capacity of the secretariat in the area of information and communications technology for development;

(b) To promote, in collaboration with national, regional and international development partners, civil society and the private sector, the exchange of best practices and experiences and knowledge related to the development of information and communications technology infrastructure, including in-depth analysis of the policy and regulatory barriers that may impede efforts to synchronize the deployment of infrastructure across the region in a seamless manner;

(c) To assist member States, through the provision of policy studies and capacity-building activities, in their efforts to integrate information and communications technology into national development processes;

(d) To pursue the facilitation and coordination of the regional review of progress in implementation of the targets set out in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society;

(e) To continue to strengthen the programmes of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development through inclusive and participatory approaches involving strategic collaboration with partners, enhancement of knowledge sharing among member States, and adoption, adaptation and integration of those approaches into national capacity-building frameworks in line with national budgetary requirements;

(f) To work towards a regional framework for action, guided by the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, that

strengthens regional policymaking processes related to information and communications technology for inclusive and sustainable development;

(g) To report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

2. Progress made

111. In response to paragraph 2 (a), the secretariat continued efforts to strengthen its role and capacity in promoting information and communications technology for development. The secretariat strived to find synergies to expand its scope of work through interdivisional projects and activities, including in the areas of strengthening information and communications technology connectivity by harnessing cross-sectoral synergies with other infrastructures, including roads and railways; and promoting the use of information and communications technology in statistics, disaster risk reduction and paperless trade and transport facilitation systems.

112. In response to paragraph 2 (b), to promote the exchange of best practices, experiences and knowledge related to the development of information and communications technology infrastructure, including in-depth analysis of the policy and regulatory barriers that may impede efforts to synchronize the deployment of infrastructure across the region, the secretariat has published reports entitled, “An in-depth study of broadband infrastructure in the ASEAN region” and “An in-depth study of broadband infrastructure in North and Central Asia”. Similar reports are being prepared for other subregions.

113. Several expert group meetings were also held, providing a forum for the exchange of national experiences on regional connectivity and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, including in Manila in September 2013, and in Paro, Bhutan, in October 2014. A high-level regional round table on telecommunications connectivity in Central Asia was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in June 2014, and the first meeting of the newly established Open-ended Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in September 2015.

114. In response to paragraph 2 (c), the secretariat prepared a number of information materials, such as “Bridging transport, ICT and energy infrastructure gaps for seamless regional connectivity” and “Harnessing cross-sectoral infrastructure synergies”, to assist member States in their efforts to integrate ICT into national development processes through the provision of policy studies and capacity-building activities.

115. The secretariat also conducted a number of capacity-building activities on the role of information and communications technology as critical infrastructure to enhance e-resilience and disaster risk management as well as the importance of regional and global cooperation on issues related to Internet security and digital inclusion. These activities included: an expert consultation on e-resilience, Internet security and digital inclusion, held in Bangkok in October 2014; a workshop on improving broadband connectivity at the subregional level, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in September 2015; and a workshop on promoting information and communications technology for inclusive and disaster-resilient development, held in Bangkok in October 2015.

116. In response to paragraph 2 (d) requesting the facilitation and coordination of the regional review of progress in implementation of the targets set out in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society, the secretariat has contributed to a number of activities as a member of the

Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development. The secretariat participated in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, the largest annual gathering of the “ICT for development” community, through the WSIS+10 High-Level Event in Geneva in June 2014 and the WSIS Forum in Geneva in May 2015.

117. The secretariat also prepared a working paper entitled, “Progress towards the WSIS targets in ESCAP and regional perspectives on measuring information and communications technology development objectives”, which contained an examination of survey data collected in 2013 from ESCAP countries to present an overview of the regional progress that had been made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

118. In response to paragraph 2 (e), the secretariat, through its regional institution, the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), has continued to strengthen the institutionalization of information and communication technology capacity development in human resources development frameworks of countries in Asia and the Pacific. Its capacity-building programme for civil servants – the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders – has been expanded to 11 training modules and is available in 16 languages, developed through a participatory and inclusive approach. In the region, 30 countries have officially adopted and institutionalized the Academy programme. For students and youth, the Primer Series on Information and Communications Technology for Youth, which includes 5 primer issues available in 7 languages, is being used as a valuable learning resource in more than 130 universities and colleges in 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific.

119. The Centre has also fostered knowledge-sharing through its publications and their dissemination via the Centre’s online portal. These new publications include: Case Study Series issue on open and distance learning in Asia and the Pacific; two Knowledge Sharing Series issues on the topics of government chief information officer in developing countries and enterprise architecture; and Brief on ICT Trend: Big Data. The e-Collaborative Hub, an online repository of information and communication technology resources and materials for information and communication technology for development stakeholders in the region, provides more than 1,000 knowledge resources. To help national Governments and universities assess the impact of their ICT capacity development efforts, the Centre produced Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkits for the Academy and Primer Programmes.

120. As a regional hub on information and communications technology capacity development, the Centre fosters regional dialogue, strategic cooperation and exchange of experiences on information and communication technology capacity development among countries through the annual Regional Partners Meeting.

121. In response to paragraph 2 (f), to work towards a regional framework for action that strengthens the regional policymaking processes related to ICTs, the secretariat has provided ongoing support to member States in establishing the Open-ended Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, as decided by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology at its fourth session (E/ESCAP/CICT(4)/9) and subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its seventy-first session (resolution 71/10). The purpose of the Working Group is to develop the

principles and norms, as well as a master plan, covering both the policy and technical aspects of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway.

122. In an effort to also enhance cooperation among regional stakeholders, the secretariat also convened meetings of the Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and Communications Technology in Bangkok in October 2014 and December 2015.

C. Resolution 69/11
Implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

123. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 69/11, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to the implementation of the Plan of Action and to report to the Commission as requested in resolution 68/5.

2. Progress made

124. The secretariat is tasked by the member States, through the resolution, to harmonize and enhance existing regional initiatives and pool expertise and resources at regional and subregional levels; act as a clearing house for good practices and lessons; and take the lead at the regional level in implementing the Plan of Action. In this regard, the Executive Secretary has made regional cooperation a key priority in promoting the applications of space technology and geographical information systems to address issues related to disaster risk reduction and management as well as sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

125. The secretariat, through its long-standing Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, which is a unique regional cooperative platform, called on all national space agencies in the Asia-Pacific region to work together to help disaster-affected countries through the provision of regional support in space-based information. Since 2013, the secretariat has provided more than 450 satellite imagery and damage maps to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Viet Nam for early warning, response and damage assessment of earthquakes, floods, typhoons, cyclones and landslides. These space-based data, products and services, equivalent in value to approximately \$1.5 million, were provided free of charge by the member States in the region, through the regional cooperation mechanism and in partnerships with other United Nations agencies and international and regional initiatives.

126. Given the fact that agricultural drought is a complex but often overlooked transboundary disaster, the secretariat, through the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning, brings together regional resources in space and geographic information system applications and enhances the capacities for integrated analysis of space and in-season ground data and information, in order to build the resilience of agrarian communities in developing countries that are perennially affected by drought. Under that “drought mechanism”, two regional service nodes have been put into place in China and India; furthermore, most drought prone countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka, have requested to become pilots. The participating pilot countries have been benefiting from enhanced access

to space-based data, products and services; institutional capacity-building in drought preparedness and response; strengthened institutional coordination and policies at the country level; and enhanced regional and South-South cooperation and support.

127. Since 2014 a series of regional forums, workshops, institutional capacity-building trainings and inter-agency briefings have been organized by the secretariat together with the two regional service nodes. The experiences of the pilot countries and other drought-prone countries were shared, work plans were finalized, terms of reference for a thematic working group to review and guide the work of the regional service nodes was endorsed and strategic partnerships with key international organizations important for agriculture, irrigation and drought monitoring were established and enhanced. The pilot project on drought monitoring in Mongolia and Sri Lanka has made good progress. The secretariat is also in discussions with various initiatives, such as the Group on Earth Observations Global Agricultural Monitoring Initiative and Asia-RiCE, on the possibility of extending drought monitoring to crop monitoring, as a number of countries have requested assistance on this matter.

128. The secretariat has worked with least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Asia and the Pacific to develop a geo-referenced information system for disaster risk management (Geo-DRM), which combines socioeconomic data with satellite imagery and other disaster-related data, providing the right information to the right people at the right time. Such action creates a highly effective tool to support evidence-based decision-making for essential disaster preparedness, response and impact assessment from one online platform. With capacity development and technical assistance provided by the secretariat, Bangladesh, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Nepal have established Geo-DRM portals in their respective national authorities for disaster management. Since 2013, the secretariat has organized more than 30 specialized trainings and workshops for approximately 500 policymakers, officials, planners, professionals, researchers and project managers from 30 countries, in particular countries with special needs, such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, as well as the Cook Islands.

129. The secretariat, through its flagship publication, *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2015*, has outlined the current state of resilience in the region and provided policy guidance on how to integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development. With regard to space and applications of geographic information systems, the report highlights their key role for effective disaster risk reduction and provides regional examples of good practices for addressing disaster risk management and how such innovative technologies can facilitate regional cooperation in addressing transboundary risks.

130. Furthermore, the secretariat, in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, UNOSAT and UN-SPIDER, is developing standard operating procedures for improving operations in ASEAN countries for effective and efficient acquisition and utilization of satellite imagery during emergency response and relief episodes. This product will be shared with the rest of Asia and the Pacific and customized to satisfy the needs of other member States. Since 2014, the secretariat has been working with SAARC Disaster Management Centre to facilitate the development of a manual on rapid assessment for resilient recovery. That manual provides

guidance for enhancing the capacity of practitioners in government agencies to conduct rapid post-disaster needs assessments; it illustrates how to utilize space applications, geographic information systems, geospatial databases and crowdsourcing for collecting and analysing data for specific sectors.

3. Issues for consideration of the Commission

131. Through the Plan of Action (contained in resolution 69/11), the Commission recommended that a ministerial conference on space applications for disaster risk reduction and management and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific should be organized. In this regard, the Commission may wish to invite member States hosting this ministerial conference in 2016 or 2017 to evaluate the progress made in implementing the Plan of Action, provide further guidance for its successful implementation and build stronger political support and ownership among all stakeholders.

D. Resolution 69/12 Enhancing regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

132. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 69/12, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to further strengthen the capacity of the secretariat in building resilience to disasters in the region in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Development Programme as well as other relevant United Nations agencies.

133. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 69/12, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as they pertain to disaster risk reduction in the region, and to work with relevant United Nations entities to encourage appropriate consideration of disaster risk reduction and, including as related to climate change adaptation, in discussions of the post-2015 agenda as it may pertain to disaster risk reduction;

(b) To provide a platform for the members and associate members of the Commission to articulate a strong regional voice in favour of giving due consideration to disaster risk reduction in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, emphasizing the view that sustainable development cannot be achieved without disaster risk reduction considerations and measures, based on the experience of the region;

(c) To enhance regional knowledge-sharing and, in particular, strengthen the capacity of member States, especially the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, to design and implement strategies and policies that mainstream disaster risk reduction into all sectors and levels of government;

(d) To provide substantive support, in cooperation with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, to the organization of the sixth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be hosted by Thailand in 2014, and subsequent biennial Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of the ministerial conferences within the framework of the mandate and programme of work of the Commission;

(e) To continue to ensure that the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries contributes effectively to the Commission's goal of achieving inclusive, resilient and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific;

(f) To support the implementation at the regional level of the World Meteorological Organization Global Framework for Climate Services by, inter alia, providing assistance to member States in developing national capacities in the fields of meteorology and hydrology.

2. Progress made

134. In response to paragraph 3, the secretariat continued to implement substantive activities in disaster risk reduction. In addition, with the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management (through resolution 71/11) as a subsidiary body of the Commission, subprogramme 5 on information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction will include in its programme of work addressing the gaps in information management and knowledge-sharing. The secretariat has also coordinated its efforts with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant United Nations agencies through the Thematic Working Group on Environment and Disaster Risk Management of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism.

135. In response to paragraph 5 (a), the secretariat organized conferences and expert group meetings on disaster risk assessment and resilience building in Asia and the Pacific to facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development pertaining to disaster risk reduction in the region, developed analytical and policy studies on disaster risk reduction and building resilience to disaster risks at the regional level taking into account the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the goals and targets that pertain to disaster risk reduction and building resilience contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

136. In response to paragraph 5 (b), the secretariat provided an intergovernmental platform for member States to discuss and foster a regional voice to integrate disaster risk reduction considerations into the sustainable development agenda through the third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and the respective sessions of the Commission. The fourth session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, held following the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provided a platform to deliberate on strategies towards the implementation of the new frameworks.

137. In response to paragraph 5 (c), the secretariat continued to assist member States in addressing disaster risks in Asia and the Pacific through policy analysis, analytical studies, regional advisory services and capacity-building initiatives to raise awareness and build knowledge on regional issues of member States. The secretariat published the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2015*, which placed disaster risk reduction at the heart of sustainable development. It contains an overview of the state of disaster resilience in the Asia-Pacific region and identifies emerging new risks in the region and the sectors that are most at risk. The secretariat will inform member States, through regular publication of that report, on the status and progress made by countries in the region in achieving the goals and targets under the Sendai

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

138. The secretariat, in implementation of the United Nations Development Account project entitled, “Enhancing knowledge and capacity for the management of disaster risks for a resilient future in Asia and the Pacific”, has launched a regional programme on the integration of disaster risk reduction into development planning to support the efforts of member States to create more disaster-resilient economies and societies. The programme is targeted at key ministries with mandates in national development planning.

E. Resolution 70/2 Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

139. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/2, the Commission decided to establish an expert group comprising statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts to work towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics to be approved by the Commission.

140. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 70/2, the Commission decided that the expert group shall report on the progress made in developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics to the Committee on Statistics in 2014 and the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015.

141. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 70/2, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support the work of the expert group, including by soliciting nominations from Governments, and convening and servicing the meetings of the expert group.

142. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 70/2, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to inform the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction of the work initiated by ESCAP towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics.

2. Progress made

143. In response to paragraph 2, the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was established in October 2014; it comprises national disaster experts and statisticians nominated by member States, and international and regional experts from the fields of disaster risk management and statistics.

144. In reference to paragraph 3, the Expert Group reported on its progress to the fourth session of the Committee on Statistics in March 2015 and the fourth session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction in October 2015. The Committees expressed support and appreciation of the progress made, and noted the importance of developing robust disaster-related statistics to establish the baseline for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and to inform policymaking processes as well as to guide planning and decision-making in disaster risk management.

145. The Committees further highlighted the importance of the normative work to develop the basic range of disaster-related statistics to be complemented by guidelines and other support for country-level implementation. In this regard, the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

recommended that guidance be sought from the Commission at its seventy-second session on the continuation of the work of the Expert Group.

146. Pursuant to operative paragraph 4, the secretariat facilitated the nominations to the Expert Group, in close collaboration with the Chair of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Chair and Bureau of the Committee on Statistics. Subsequent to the establishment of the Expert Group, the secretariat during the period from October 2014 to October 2015 organized three meetings of the Expert Group as well as inter-meeting electronic communications. During this period, the Expert Group agreed on the scope of a basic range of disaster-related statistics, discussed principles and criteria for defining and classifying disaster events as well as human and socioeconomic impacts and developed a technical paper on disaster occurrences and immediate, direct impacts of disasters. The technical paper has been further elaborated into the Disaster-related Statistics Framework, which is being pilot-tested for relevance and feasibility in four volunteer test countries, namely Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia and the Philippines.

147. During the process, the Expert Group took due note of related and complementary regional and international initiatives, in particular the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals.

148. In response to paragraph 5, the second meeting of the Expert Group was organized as a side event at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015, to inform the Conference concerning the work initiated towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics.

**F. Resolution 71/11
Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development
of disaster information management**

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

149. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 71/11, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To take all the necessary measures to ensure that the centre is established promptly, including the conclusion of a headquarters agreement between the host country and the United Nations;

(b) To report on the progress made in implementation of this resolution to the seventy-second session of the Commission.

150. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 71/11, the Commission decided:

(a) To assess the performance of the centre, on the basis of the findings of an independent, comprehensive review at its seventy-sixth session, and to determine continuation of operations of the centre as a regional institution of the Commission thereafter.

2. Progress made

151. In response to paragraph 5 (a), the secretariat and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed on a broad road map for the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management in accordance with resolution 71/11 and the recommendations of the evaluation of the centre. The key elements of the

road map included: setting up the centre's management team; signing of the headquarters and administrative and financial agreements on the establishment of the centre; setting up and organizing the launch of the centre's office in Tehran and making it operational; and organizing a regional conference on disaster information management in Tehran, engaging member States and key stakeholders.

152. The secretariat and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have initiated negotiations on the headquarters and administrative and financial agreements on the establishment of the centre. Through the headquarters agreement, the centre will be formally established as a United Nations office in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The administrative and financial agreements stipulate how the financial contribution from the host Government will be managed by ESCAP.

153. In line with the centre's evaluation recommendation 4, the secretariat will establish a dedicated management team for the centre, responsible for fine-tuning and implementing its programme of work and supporting the necessary steps for the establishment of the centre. The team will include international and national staff to be recruited by ESCAP and funded by the host Government through extrabudgetary contributions.

154. The secretariat has developed a technical cooperation project on the centre to implement priority technical cooperation activities under its work plan for the period 2016-2017 and for supporting the necessary steps for officially establishing the centre.

155. A mission to Tehran was undertaken in November 2015 to discuss the agreements related to the establishment of the centre and the arrangements for an interim management team for the centre and to carry out initial assessments of office space and facilities, information and communications technology requirements and security aspects.

156. In response to paragraph 6, the secretariat will organize an independent comprehensive review and report on the centre for the consideration of the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.

VI. Social development

A. Resolutions 68/7

Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022;

B. Resolution 69/13

Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

157. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 68/7 on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support members and associate members upon request, including through capacity-building and technical assistance, in developing and pursuing national programmes and international cooperation during the forthcoming Decade.

158. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 69/13 on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and the Incheon Strategy;

(b) To submit a road map for the implementation of the Incheon Strategy to the Commission at its seventieth session for endorsement;

(c) To submit the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, to be convened by the General Assembly on 23 September 2013, through the President of the General Assembly.

2. Progress made

159. The paragraphs below provide an update on the progress made in implementation of the two Commission resolutions (68/7 and 69/13⁴) pertaining to the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.

160. In response to paragraph 3 (b) of resolution 69/13, the secretariat developed a road map for the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, which was endorsed by the Commission at its seventieth session. Following the endorsement, the secretariat disseminated copies of the road map and the Incheon Strategy to disability focal points of member States.

161. In response to paragraph 4 of resolution 68/7 and paragraph 3 (a) of resolution 69/13, the following activities were undertaken. The second session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, was convened by the secretariat in New Delhi in March 2015; the session, which was hosted by the Government of India, served as an effective platform to discuss the implementation of the Incheon Strategy and the importance of disability-mainstreaming into the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. After the session, the Government of India submitted the Incheon Strategy to the General Assembly for its consideration as a reference for the development of the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals.

162. To enhance technical knowledge of member States on the Incheon Strategy Goal 1 on reducing poverty and enhancing the work and employment prospects of persons with disabilities, the secretariat published *Disability at a Glance 2015: Strengthening Employment Prospects for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*, which provides statistical data related to disability, analysis of barriers to employment of persons with disabilities and recommendations to enhance the employment prospects of persons with disabilities.

⁴ See also E/ESCAP/69/4 and E/ESCAP/70/6. The Commission reviewed progress made in the implementation of resolution 68/7 at its sixty-ninth session and of resolution 69/13 at its seventieth session.

163. To support the realization of goal 3 of the Incheon Strategy on accessibility, the secretariat organized two workshops: one on the ESCAP South-South Cooperation Programme on accessibility for persons with disabilities in December 2014; the other, on accessible knowledge, information and communication for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific in December 2015.⁵ The secretariat compiled good practices presented at the workshops, and is currently developing an accessibility audit checklist to help member States to develop appropriate accessibility policies. To make the text of the Incheon Strategy more accessible to a wider audience, including those with intellectual disabilities, the secretariat in 2014 developed *We Want to be Counted!: Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific* in an easy-to-understand version. Furthermore, to assist member States in organizing accessible meetings for participants with disabilities, the secretariat in 2015 published *Disability Inclusive Meetings: An Operational Guide*.

164. To enhance regional cooperation on the Incheon Strategy goal 6 to ensure gender equality and women’s empowerment, the secretariat organized a side event on the subject of women with disabilities during the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review, in November 2014. The event highlighted the voices of women with disabilities. The final outcome document of the Conference made an unprecedented 29 references to disability.

165. In support of the Incheon Strategy Goal 7 to ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management, the secretariat advocated for mainstreaming disability into disaster risk reduction in the region and beyond, including through the organization of an expert group meeting in Sendai, Japan, in April 2014, and disseminating its outcome document, the Sendai Statement.⁶ Unlike its predecessor, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, references to persons with disabilities were successfully included in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted in 2015. The secretariat is also developing a learning tool to assist member States in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, particularly on integrating the disability perspective into disaster risk reduction at the national level.

166. The secretariat published the “ESCAP guide on disability indicators for the Incheon Strategy” to build the capacity of member States to collect reliable and comparable data for the Incheon Strategy indicators, in pursuance of goal 8 of the Incheon Strategy. Furthermore, the secretariat organized national advisory consultations in Bangladesh, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam to assess the status of data collection for the core Incheon Strategy indicators. As a result of these consultations, national action plans on data collection for the Incheon Strategy indicators are under development.

⁵ The ESCAP South-South Cooperation Programme on Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities was held from 10 to 19 December 2014 in Guangzhou, China; Macao, China; and Hong Kong, China. The Information for All: ESCAP-CDPF Workshop on Accessible Knowledge, Information and Communication for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific was held from 15 to 17 December 2015 in Shanghai, China.

⁶ Sendai Statement to Promote Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilient, Inclusive and Equitable Societies in Asia and the Pacific, outcome document of the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction: Changing Mindsets through Knowledge, organized by ESCAP and held in Sendai, Japan, on 22 and 23 April 2014.

VII. Statistics

A. Resolution 67/11 Strengthening statistical capacity in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operation paragraphs

167. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 67/11, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist members and, as appropriate, associate members, upon request, in developing their statistical systems and strengthening their capacity with a view to achieving the two goals for statistics development in Asia and the Pacific referred to in paragraph 1 above, by 2020;

(b) To promote the importance of developing the capacity of not only national statistical offices but also, where appropriate, other parts of national statistical systems across the region;

(c) To provide members and, as appropriate, associate members with assistance in strengthening their capacity to monitor the progress made in achieving development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals;

(d) To facilitate the cooperation of international capacity-building activities related to the development of official statistics in the region, including cooperation among the national statistical offices of developing countries;

(e) To raise awareness of the significance of enhancing the use of administrative data as a means of increasing the effectiveness of the production of official statistics.

2. Progress made

168. In response to paragraph 4 (a), the secretariat in close collaboration with member States and development partners put into place capacity development programmes to focus efforts and coordinate donor support towards achieving the goals for statistics development that had been established by the Committee on Statistics, namely the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific; the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics 2013-2017; the regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific; and the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

169. Within these programmes, the secretariat mobilized funds, provided advisory services and organized expert meetings and seminars to assist countries in producing a basic range of population, economic, social and environmental statistics, in fulfilment of the first goal set by the Committee in 2010.

170. In recognizing the importance of modernizing statistical services, which was the second goal of the Committee, the secretariat organized a series of expert dialogues to create awareness and build knowledge in the region concerning the use of newly developed tools and standards which are critical for modernizing statistical production and dissemination, as well as access to and exchange of data and information. To galvanize chief statisticians to take action, the secretariat established the Strategic Advisory Body for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services in Asia and the Pacific.

171. The secretariat, through its regional institution, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), increased the knowledge and skills of more than 2,500 government statisticians and officials in these priority areas and strengthened national statistical training institutes to deliver training on a sustainable basis through 109 training courses, workshops and seminars. Through management seminars, chief statisticians shared experiences, discussed and debated issues touching on leadership in the context of innovating for statistics development and modernization processes.

172. In response to paragraph 4 (b), the secretariat in 2010 established the Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific, a network of development partners engaged in statistics capacity development in the region. The Partnership engages Governments across line ministries and strengthens the role of the national statistical offices as the leader of national statistical systems. The Partnership has catalysed close collaboration on initiatives that are focused on statistics traditionally produced outside national statistical offices, such as agricultural and rural statistics and vital statistics.⁷

173. The Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics brought together central banks and other members of national statistical systems to coordinate efforts to close statistical capacity gaps. The secretariat organized meetings of senior managers from various parts of national statistical systems to advocate for the coordinated implementation of key macroeconomic statistical frameworks, the System of National Accounts 2008 and SEEA.

174. The work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, established by the secretariat in 2014 to develop a basic range of disaster-related statistics, serves as a platform for connecting national statistical offices with national disaster management authorities.

175. For capacity-building on gender statistics, the work has systematically incorporated national women's machineries and other organizations outside national statistical offices.

176. Through system-wide assessments in support of the preparation of road maps or review of implementation for national strategies for statistical development, the secretariat promoted the integration and coordination of institutions in national statistical systems. For example, to diagnose and address institutional weaknesses in national statistical systems, the secretariat applied a global assessment tool in Mongolia, which led to changes to the national statistics law and to revised national strategies for statistical development. In Myanmar, the secretariat led an informal partnership during the period 2011-2013 on strengthening the coordination of the Myanmar national statistical system. Reviews of the capacity of national statistical systems in Bhutan and the Philippines to produce a core set of population and social statistics resulted in identification of system-wide capacity-building priorities.

177. In response to paragraph 4 (c), as part of its broad support, the secretariat organized a regional consultation on the Sustainable Development Goals and targets that assessed readiness and capacity needs for the production of national, regional and global indicators.

178. A multi-year SIAP training programme and advisory services were focused on producing data for compiling and analysing indicators for the Millennium Development Goals.

⁷ For a full account of the implementation of the resolution as it pertains to civil registration and vital statistics, please refer to section VI.B of the present document.

179. Through expert groups, the secretariat contributed to the development of a basic range of disaster-related statistics and a draft statistical framework and guidelines, and the development of international guidelines under the purview of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources.

180. In response to paragraph 4 (d), the secretariat has established expert groups comprising member States and development partners that led the formulation and implementation of the above-mentioned capacity development initiatives and function as platforms for country-to-country cooperation and coordination with other partners. To address the particular requirements of a coordinated approach to training, a common modality for all capacity development initiatives, the secretariat in 2014 established the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific.

181. To facilitate alignment with global initiatives, the secretariat participates actively in the global statistical community, including the United Nations Statistical Commission, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and a number of global expert communities.

182. In response to paragraph 4 (e), the secretariat has developed or applied technical and institutional frameworks and guidelines that enhance the use of administrative data in the following statistical areas: environment (for example, SEEA); vital statistics (through civil registration systems); agriculture; and disasters. SIAP provided training on the development and use of statistical registers to systematize the use of administrative data for producing population-based statistics and economic statistics.

B. Resolution 71/14 Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

183. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 71/14, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and Regional Action Framework;

(b) To continue collaborating closely with relevant donors and other development partners to assist country actions by strengthening technical support available at the national, subregional and regional levels, facilitating regional and interregional cooperation, undertaking advocacy campaigns and helping countries to mobilize resources and access financing options;

(c) To actively promote a holistic approach to civil registration and vital statistics as these systems have a critical role in achieving inclusive and people-centred development, particularly in achieving the post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be adopted at the United Nations Summit in September 2015, including by exploring means to strengthen collaboration and coordination among development partners at all levels;

(d) To support the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific in performing its oversight and strategic guidance functions for the Regional Action Framework and custodianship of the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade;

(e) To report to the Commission on progress in implementation of the present resolution at its seventy-second, seventy-sixth and eighty-first sessions, in accordance with the reviews timetabled in the Regional Action Framework.

2. Progress made

184. In response to paragraph 5 (a), the secretariat accorded priority in its programme of work to the implementation of the recommendations of the Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific. Under the ESCAP programme of work, the secretariat has aligned the civil registration and vital statistics activities of subprogramme 7 on statistics; subprogramme 5 on information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction and management; and subprogramme 6 on social development.

185. In response to paragraphs 5 (b) and (c), the secretariat continued to actively engage with development partners in supporting Asian and Pacific countries to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems through the CRVS Partnership in Asia and the Pacific. This collaboration has been strengthened, and ESCAP has enrolled several new members in the partnership, including the International Organization for Migration, the Data for Health initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies, and World Vision. The secretariat chaired the Partnership on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, which is aimed at supporting countries in the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, the secretariat collaborated with similar regional initiatives in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia, as well as partners at the global level, to promote interregional cooperation and to support the growing global momentum for civil registration and vital statistics. Examples of collaborative activities undertaken by the secretariat in 2014 and 2015 include:

(a) Implementing a joint United Nations Development Account project with the Economic Commission for Africa, which is an active member of the Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Group, which was established by the ESCAP secretariat;

(b) Ensuring the use of the “Get Every One in the Picture” branding by partners and countries in collaboration with the subgroup of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific on communications;

(c) Supporting CRVS activities through cooperation and input on issues related to the use of ICTs, including data warehousing and privacy issues;

(d) Promoting increased funding for national CRVS systems and regional support for making CRVS improvements through collaboration with several international donors;

(e) Implementing activities under a partnership with Data2x, an initiative of former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to advance the gender dimension of civil registration and vital statistics, forming a partnership with several foundations to collaborate on activities to improve CRVS in the region;

(f) Developing training materials together with Statistics Norway and the Economic Commission for Africa;

(g) Developing a new website, getinthepicture.org, to function as an interactive knowledge hub on CRVS for Asia and the Pacific;

(h) Becoming an active member of the Brisbane Accord Group, which works to improve CRVS systems in the Pacific subregion.

186. In response to paragraph 5 (d), the secretariat, with guidance from the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics and from the Commission, established the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific in May 2015. The Regional Steering Group is composed of representatives of 22 members and associate members of ESCAP, and 8 international organizations, spanning the civil registration, health, statistics and planning sectors. The secretariat organized the first meeting of the Regional Steering Group in Bangkok from 28 to 30 July 2015. During the meeting, the group agreed on a detailed workplan, elected a chair and vice-chairs of the group and established three subgroups, which are focused on communications, research and monitoring and reporting on the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. The Regional Steering Group provided strategic guidance for the implementation of the Regional Action Framework and oversaw the development of guidelines for countries to set and monitor the goals and targets of the Regional Action Framework and other materials assisting countries in implementing the commitments agreed at the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok in November 2014. The Regional Steering Group further guided the compilation of the draft reporting template to be used by countries in preparing their baseline reports for 2015. This report is expected to contain a review the current situation of CRVS in the Asia-Pacific region, based on countries' reporting of national targets and baseline data for the 15 targets of the Regional Action Framework.
