

UNESCAP REPRESENTATIVE PROGRESS REPORT 2022

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The 78th Commission session (CS78) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was held online and on site at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok on 23rd-27th May 2022. Theme of the session was "A Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific." Due to pandemic, Dr.Chonchanok Viravan, Ms. Chularat Israngkool Na Ayutthaya, and I attended online.

There has been the Bangkok Declaration to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The 78th Commission session described pathways to achieve more inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic recovery and identified elements for a common agenda for present and future generations centered on protecting people and the planet, leveraging digital opportunities, trading and investing more together, raising financial resources and managing debt. It underlined the need to listen and work with young people, placing women at the center for crisis-prepared policy action and new people-centric partnerships.

The recognition has been called for the need to address outstanding and emerging development challenges of persisting poverty and inequalities, vulnerability to shocks, natural disasters and climate change and environmental degradation, and reaffirm the commitment to accelerate progress towards a more equal, more resilient, and more sustainable world and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

There is a commitment to reiterate the need to ensure universal and equitable access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics, particularly in developing countries and least developed countries, recognizing the role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good to get the pandemic under control and invest in people and the planet to build resilience against future pandemics, natural disasters, climate change and other shocks.

In recognition of the unique challenges of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in the region, who are among the most affected, there is a commitment to resolve, to accelerate the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, which will further enhance the overall connectivity of such countries.

They recognize that ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions, among others, play an essential role in the overall global effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, it is also needed to take urgent actions to enhance international collaboration for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources and reduce pollution of air, oceans, and fresh water, mitigate the impacts of pollution on human health and halt the global decline of biodiversity.

They commit to place all women and girls at the centre of development as they play a vital role as agents of development. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. They will accelerate action to achieve women's active, equal, and equitable participation and the empowerment of women and girls in all domains and to strengthen policies and legislation for the promotion of gender equality.

They commit to improve digital cooperation and recognize that science, technology, and innovation, including information and communications technology, are critical in the pursuit of sustainable development and are among the key driving forces of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative be one of the useful regional platforms for the promotion of digital cooperation.

As an international trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, they commit to keep markets open and will continue to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, with special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries. They note the significance of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

They reaffirm the importance of financing for development as a critical means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in this regard the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

They will listen to and work with youth, who are essential to sustainable development and will have to live with the consequences of all action and inaction.

They recognize the value of an integrated One Health approach that fosters cooperation on issues relevant to human health, animal health and plant health, as well as environmental and other relevant sectors.

The 79th session will be held from 15th -19th May 2023. The theme of CS79 will be, "Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development" For more information, please visit: <https://www.unescap.org/events/commission79>

Report submitted: 24th January 2023 by MomLuang Preeyapun Sridhavat, Chularat Israngkool Na Ayutthaya, and Dr. Narudee Kiengsiri