



Model UN of the Russian Far East

ANNUAL

CONFERENCE 2018

ESCAP

BACKGROUND

GUIDE

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Welcoming letter

Dear delegates of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at the MUNRFE Annual Conference 2018!

Let me express my deepest appreciation to you for joining ESCAP. Operating for more than 70 years, the Commission has largely contributed to boosting the region and contributing to the well-being of its population. It constantly strives to adjust to the needs of present generations and conduct relevant initiatives that will mitigate current negative development tendencies in the Asia-Pacific.

Topics related to human rights and economic and social stability have always been vital for observation by the global community as far as they are primarily oriented on people and their prosperity. Since the establishment of the United Nations, world leaders have been united by the idea of building stable societies without any prejudices, conflicts or poverty. With further proliferation of the sustainable development concept, all organizations, including ESCAP, have focused their efforts on ensuring a system of decision-making that does not undermine the possibilities of advancement for further generations. All of the abovementioned ideas are focal points to realize while researching your agenda items and introducing your Member State's position at the Conference.

Appropriate solutions depend on appropriate attitudes. In this regard, may I wish you to strive for coherent and well-elaborated proposals within the Commission, display your professionalism and crisis-management skills and be brave in proposing innovative ideas.

See you at the MUNRFE Annual Conference 2018!

Respectfully,

Anna Timokhina,

ESCAP Chairperson.



1. Committee Overview

1.1 History

Possessing seventy-one years of experience in the promotion of sustainable development, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) serves as a center for ensuring cohesive economic cooperation between its Member States.¹ During the first session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA), Resolution 46 (1946), titled *Economic Reconstruction of Devastated Areas*, was adopted.² This document created the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) with the purpose of ensuring effective aid provision to war-affected states. The organization based its headquarters in Shanghai, China until 1949, when it moved to Bangkok, Thailand. Understanding the primary significance of countries' geographical position and prospects for social and economic development, in 1974 ECAFE was renamed ESCAP by the Economic and Social Council Resolution 1895.³ Consequently, in response to the rapid process of regional economic and social development, the UN GA adopted Resolution A/RES/32/197 (1977), titled *Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations System*, which led to the expansion of ESCAP's mandate⁴. Later, in commemoration of its 50th anniversary, ESCAP, in its paper titled *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 1997: Asia and the Pacific into the Twenty-first Century: Development Challenges and Opportunities*, outlined a rapid shift in the globalization process, with just twelve economies accounting for 97 per cent of the exports of developing economies of the region and 98 per cent of foreign direct investment inflows.⁵

The current immense contribution of ESCAP to fostering regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific is the result of its previous processes and initiatives. The region is transforming into the world's largest trading region. Based on 2017's data, the Asia-Pacific possesses 40% of the world's imports and exports. Additionally, the improvement of transport channels, including building a Trans-Asian railway, and ensuring energy connectivity using the example of the TAPI gas pipeline serve as successful actions undertaken by the Commission. Due to its effective

¹ UN ESCAP, "About ESCAP," accessed 23 September 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/about>

² UN GA, *Economic Reconstruction of Devastated Areas*, A/RES/46, 11 December 1946, accessed September 23, 2018, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/032/97/IMG/NR003297.pdf?OpenElement>

³ UN ECOSOC, *Change of the name from "Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Far East" to "Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific"*, E/RES/1895, 1 August 1974, accessed September 23, 2018, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/1895\(LVII\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/1895(LVII))

⁴ UN GA, *Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations System*, A/RES/32/197, 20 December 1977, accessed 23 September 2018, <http://www.un-documents.net/a32r197.htm>

⁵ UN ESCAP, "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 1997: Asia and the Pacific into the Twenty-first Century: Development Challenges and Opportunities," 1997, accessed 23 August 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/publications/economic-and-social-survey-asia-and-pacific-1997-asia-and-pacific-twenty-first-century>

analysis of economic and social situations in countries of the region along with witnessing emerging trends, the organization's evolution has always been coherent with the process of boosting the economy of states and the proliferation of new challenges.

1.2 Mandate, Functions and Powers

ESCAP defines itself as the “regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region”.⁶ The organization is aimed at contributing to economic and technical development including capacity-building of Asia-Pacific countries with a special focus on the following areas:

- Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development;
- Trade, Investment and Innovation;
- Transport;
- Environment and Development;
- Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction;
- Social Development;
- Statistics;
- Sub-regional activities for development;
- Energy.⁷

Conceptually speaking, the vision of the Commission reflects an idea of creating a resilient Asia and the Pacific region based on integrating economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability into sustainable development policies and practices. Its mission is to be a multilateral platform for Member States to “achieve inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific.”⁸ This is best captured in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs outline both substantive areas for the UN and member states to work on, and means of implementation to achieve the SDGs, such as financing for development, trade, data and statistics, and science, technology and innovation.⁹

One of the key functions of ESCAP is the production of research and policy analysis based on current data and emerging issues to assist member states to consider policies that can further sustainable development. Moreover, there are also issues that are regional or transboundary in

⁶ UN ESCAP, “About ESCAP.”

⁷ UN ESCAP, “About ESCAP.”

⁸ UN ESCAP, “About ESCAP.”

⁹ UN ESCAP, “2030 Agenda,” accessed 23 September 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/2030-agenda>.

nature, where ESCAP provides independent analysis to enable Member States to address shared challenges.

Capacity Development is also considered to be a key focus of the Commission. ESCAP aims to raise the “technical, managerial and institutional capacities” of Member States to implement result-oriented policies with special attention to Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and their progress in reaching sustainable development.¹⁰ Implemented initiatives include a Disaster Risk Management E-Learning Platform, an online-platform called *SDG Help Desk*, web-based trainings on Business Process Analysis, Public-Private Partnerships and an academy of Information and Communication Technologies.

Importantly, ESCAP also serves as an intergovernmental platform that covers the entirety of the Asia-Pacific region, giving each Member State a voice and the opportunity to collaborate. The work can be seen in international treaties and agreements on trade, transportation and other issues, which uses ESCAP as a platform to address common challenges through multilateralism.

1.3 Structure and Membership

The Secretariat is headed by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, who also holds the rank of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Executive Secretary is supported by two Deputy Executive Secretaries and 10 Directors in Bangkok, plus 4 Directors in sub-regional offices. These 10 directors each head the following divisions: Strategy and Programme Management Division, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division, Environment and Development Division, Statistics Division, Social Development Division, Energy Division, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division, Division of Administration, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, and Transport Division. Additionally, there are four Directors in the subregions, who oversee ESCAP’s substantive divisions and offices.¹¹

Sub-regional offices of the Commission are divided into East and North-East Asia (Incheon, Republic of Korea), North and Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan), The Pacific (Suva, Fiji), and South and South-West Asia (New Delhi, India). This division of regions considers the diverse representation of the Commission. Under their auspices, there is comprehensive technical assistance aimed at underlining the state of affairs in the region. With a Member State’s

¹⁰ UN ESCAP, “ESCAP Learning and Training Programmes,” accessed 23 September 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/learning-training>.

¹¹ UN ESCAP, “Secretariat,” accessed 23 September 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/about/secretariat>.

proposal, ESCAP may ensure advisory needs and implement special trainings in order to provide experience-exchange.¹²

The organization ensures the work of six regional institutions which provide substantive assistance to other projects and initiatives of ESCAP:

- Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (New Delhi, India);
- Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (Incheon, Republic of Korea);
- Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (Makuhari, Chiba Prefecture, Japan);
- Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (Beijing, China);
- Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran).¹³

In addition to the Secretariat, ESCAP also has numerous intergovernmental platforms, they can be regular platforms such as the annual Commission Session or ad hoc platforms such as Ministerial Conferences that are called as needed. The regular platforms include:

- Annual sessions of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Commission Session) held in May.
- Annual Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development held in March
- Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development;
- Committee on Trade and Investment;
- Committee on Transport;
- Committee on Environment and Development;
- Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation;
- Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction;
- Committee on Social Development;
- Committee on Statistics;
- Committee on Energy.

¹² UN ESCAP, “Sub-regional offices,” accessed 23 September 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/subregional-office>.

¹³ UN ESCAP, “Regional institutions,” accessed 24 September 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/about/regional-institutions>.

ESCAP has a large and diverse membership with 53 member states, ranging from developed economies to Small Island Developing States, and whose population exceeds two-thirds of the worldwide rating. There are also nine Associate Members who are not member states of the United Nations but remain as actors in terms of Asia Pacific Region (APR) development.¹⁴

In this regard, ESCAP illustrates a clear entity that unites nations from the Asia-Pacific region simultaneously providing them with equal opportunities for self-expression and contributing to the removal of current obstacles. In light of the sustainability agenda, all activities of the Commission are aimed at this sphere in order to provide comprehensive resolutions for regional and global problems.

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¹⁴ UN ESCAP, “Member States and Associate Members,” accessed 24 September 2018, <https://www.unescap.org/about/member-states>.

UN GA. *Economic Reconstruction of Devastated Areas*, A/RES/46(I). 11 December 1946. Accessed 23 September 2018. <https://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/2182978.98769379.html>.

UN GA. *Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations System*, A/RES/32/197. 20 December 1977. Accessed 23 September 2018. <http://www.un-documents.net/a32r197.htm>.

2. Strengthening Regional Cooperation to Tackle Inequality in all its Forms in Asia and the Pacific

2.1 Main terms and definitions

Inequality - the difference in social status, wealth or opportunity between people or groups.¹⁵

Inequality of outcome - inequality in material spheres what can be assessed by income of consumption.⁶

Inequality of opportunity - unequal disparity in access to human services such as education, health care, water and sanitation, energy, information and communications technology, as well as finance.⁶

Regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI) – the strategy that holds that deepening economic integration and cooperation in the region could be mutually beneficial to all countries and instrumental in the achievement of key developmental goals.¹⁶

Gender equality – means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike.¹⁷

2.2 Introduction

Due to the recent economic boost in Asia, there has been a significant disparity in terms of level of prosperity within its populations, even though economic advancement has positively contributed to the region's welfare. Considering the period from 1990-2010, the region's average Gross Domestic Product increased from \$1,602 to \$4,982.¹⁸ Also important is the Gini index, which represents the most exact measurement of inequality.¹⁹ In 1990, the index was 32.7 in the Asia-Pacific region, whereas in 2014 this indicator grew to 38.1 points, which represents a tremendous growth of inequality.²⁰ At the same time, 400 million people still live in conditions

¹⁵ UN ESCAP, "Inequality in Asia and the Pacific", accessed 24 September 2018.

<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/02Introduction.pdf>

¹⁶ UN ESCAP "Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration", accessed 24 September 2018.

<https://www.unescap.org/our-work/macroeconomic-policy-financing-development/regional-economic-cooperation-and-integration/about>

¹⁷ UNICEF "Promoting gender equality - an equity-focused approach to programming", accessed 24 September 2018. https://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Overarching_2Pager_Web.pdf

¹⁸ *Inequality in the Asia and the Pacific: trends, drivers and policy implications*, accessed 25 September 2018.

<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/41630/inequality-asia-and-pacific.pdf>

¹⁹ UN DESA "World Economic Situation And Prospects: April 2018 Briefing, No. 113", accessed 24 September, 2018. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-april-2018-briefing-no-113/>

²⁰ *Inequality in Asia and the Pacific*, accessed 25 September 2018.

https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/presentations/sl_3_pandersson.escap.pdf

of extreme poverty, having no more than \$1.90 per day, along with 1.2 billion people facing a vulnerable situation (no more than \$3.20 per day).²¹

Poverty is not the only way to illustrate inequality in the region. Within the Asia-Pacific, according to information released in 2017, in South-East Asia “less than 5 per cent of women from poor, rural households complete secondary education, compared with 50 per cent of women in richer urban households.” In turn, East and North-East Asia are leaders in responsible consumption and production but have a rate of air pollution higher than the average regional indicator. North and Central Asia are actively performing in the aspects of quality education, sustainable cities and communities, but has little or no progress in the reduction of inequalities.

ESCAP defines inequality to be “the difference in social status, wealth or opportunity between people or groups”.²² This definition is divided into inequality of outcome along with inequality of opportunity. The first term means “disparities in material dimensions of income and wealth”. Inequality of opportunities represents “disparities in access to basic opportunities and services, such as education, health care and clean energy”.²³ There is a set of implications this process causes in society, including not only poverty proliferation and economic downfall, but also the undermining of social security and stability and represents a severe threat to sustainability and environmental protection.

Tackling all forms of inequality is of special importance when it concerns sustainability and regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI), while at the same time paying attention to the balance between economic and social sectors. Unequal political and economic states of affairs in APR states, special vulnerability of SIDS and landlocked countries, and different levels of attention to these problems at the national level currently undermines stability of any kind in the region and allows for new types of inequality and discrimination particularly affecting the poorest sectors of the population.

2.3 International and regional framework

The international community plays a key role in resolving questions of inequality via providing multilateral involvement, capacity-building and analysis. The aspiration of building a society that lives in the same conditions without any prejudices at the global level is stated in Article 1 of the

²² UNESCAP “Inequality in the Asia and the Pacific in the era of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, accessed September 24, 2018.

<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ThemeStudyOnInequality.pdf>

²³ UNESCAP “Inequality in the Asia and the Pacific in the era of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948.²⁴ This document is still vital for any issue concerning human rights since it represents an international obligation to protect human dignity and is directly connected with goals of the United Nations. The adoption of the Declaration has also led to the elaboration of other concepts and documents addressing these rights.

The United Nations considers inequality to be one of the sharpest questions in the international arena. In 1966 after a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/2142, titled *Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination*, with further establishment of March 21st as an international day for the elimination of racial discrimination, which is celebrated annually.²⁵ The topic for the year 2018 is assigned as the 70th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Furthermore, an international commitment to decrease inequalities by means of poverty reduction was reflected by UN GA Resolution A/RES/47/196, called *Observance of an international day for the eradication of poverty*, of 22 December 1992 that declared October 17th as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.²⁶ Regarding current deliberations, UN GA Resolution A/RES/71/186 (2016) titled *Human rights and extreme poverty* underlines the connection between social advancement, inequality in all its forms and human dignity.²⁷

At the 2001 World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, Member States adopted the key document in terms of eradicating all forms of racial discrimination and related intolerances, called the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which represents the idea of universal non-discrimination and combating racism in fields of education, health care and housing. Its Article 36 identifies that “people of Asian descent face barriers as a result of social biases and discrimination prevailing in public and private institutions.”²⁸

From the regional perspective, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) plays an active role in reducing inequalities in the Asia-Pacific region via conducting relevant research and studies. For example, its study issued in 2017 titled *Education, Globalization, and Income Inequality in Asia* estimates income and education inequalities in the region, identifies the Gini coefficient of states

²⁴ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), accessed September 24, 2018.

http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf

²⁵ UN GA, *Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination*, A/RES/2142, 26 October 1966, accessed September 24, 2018. [http://undocs.org/A/RES/2142\(XXI\)](http://undocs.org/A/RES/2142(XXI))

²⁶ UN GA, *Observance of an international day for the eradication of poverty*, A/RES/47/196, 22 December 1992, accessed September 24, 2018. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r196.htm>

²⁷ UN GA, *Human rights and extreme poverty*, A/RES/71/186, 2 February 2017, accessed September 24, 2018. <https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/186>

²⁸ Durban Conference Outcome Document, 8 September 2001, accessed September 24, 2018. <http://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf>

meaning their national rate of inequality as well as elaborates an economic model of further development. Its main conclusion includes the idea that the “increasing degree of globalization results in increasing inequality in income distribution”.²⁹ The United Nations Development Program also plays a special role in stimulating equality in the APR and supports regional and national efforts to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment. A note by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) secretariat of 2014 titled *Tackling inequality through trade and development in the post-2015 development agenda* states that “equality is compatible with strong economic performance”.³⁰ Furthermore, the note outlines the trend of the Asian region of self-employment as well as provides information about wage earners.

Disability is also a pressing issue and an example of unequal treatment that people receive. With the purpose of international elimination on inequalities in this field, the UN GA adopted Resolution A/RES/61/106 in 2007 in which Annex I and II contain the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and its *Optional Protocol*.³¹ These documents are based on the following guiding principles including, but not limited to: “respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons, non-discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion in society, respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, equality of opportunity, accessibility, equality between men and women, respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities”.³² Paying special attention to regional issues connected with disabled persons, in 2012 ESCAP Member States gathered in Incheon, Republic of Korea with the further adoption of the *Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*. Goals which the strategy sets include the creation of comparable data,

²⁹ Asian Development Bank “Education, Globalization, and Income Inequality in Asia”, accessed 25 September 2018. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/301271/adbi-wp732.pdf>

³⁰ Note by the UNCTAD secretariat “Tackling inequality through trade and development in the post-2015 development agenda”, accessed 25 September 2018. https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/tdb61d7_en.pdf

³¹ UN GA, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, A/RES/61/106, 24 January 2007, accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/general-assembly/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-ares61106.html>

³² UN DESA “Guiding principles of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/guiding-principles-of-the-convention.html>

early interventions with disabled children as well as access to information, modern technologies and transportation.³³

As ESCAP states, “one in four people in the Asia-Pacific region will be 60 years old or older by 2050.”³⁴ Consequently, discrimination based on age is unacceptable for the society. That is why, as a result of Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing conducted in 2017, the Commission issued a Working Paper entitled *Addressing the Challenges of Population Ageing in Asia and the Pacific: Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*. It is stated that ageing can result in inequality of outcome that may be illustrated by weak pension systems, lack of social protection and a retirement process. The report suggests recommendations for broadening the existing system of support of elderly people and enhancing adherence to SDGs.

In parallel with unequal treatment for pensioners, the issue of discrimination against youth remains crucial. In one third of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, less than 30 per cent of the poorest population attends secondary school, whereas the same indicator stands for 80 percent when it covers children of the APR that belong to a wealthy population group.³⁵ Under the auspices of the UN, the World Programme of Action for Youth, adopted by UN GA Resolution A/RES/50/81 titled *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, Member States and the related agencies are provided with the framework aimed at the empowerment of youth in the field of employment, health, education, access to technological services along with other aspects positively contributing to the issue.³⁶

Being committed to the mitigation of risks caused by climate change, the rapid increase of environmental problems such as greenhouse gas emission, air and water pollution, sea-level rise and others is one of the direst situations for the APR. ESCAP notes that around 92 percent of pollution-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. Moreover, there are a number of implications that happen as a result of unequal efforts:

³³ UN ESCAP Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific”, accessed November 11, 2018. <https://www.unescap.org/resources/incheon-strategy-%E2%80%9Cmake-right-real%E2%80%9D-persons-disabilities-asia-and-pacific>

³⁴ UN ESCAP, *Addressing the Challenges of Population Ageing in Asia and the Pacific: Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*, accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.unescap.org/publications/addressing-challenges-population-ageing-asia-and-pacific-implementation-madrid>

³⁵ UN ECOSOC, “7th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum Concept Note”, accessed November 11, 2018. <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2018doc/YF-Asia-Pacific%20RBS-2018.pdf>

³⁶ UN GA, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, A/RES/50/81, 13 March 1996, accessed September 24, 2018. <https://undocs.org/A/RES/50/81>

- Lower access to infrastructure;
- Disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on the poor and vulnerable groups;
- Natural resource degradation;
- Climate change and natural disasters;
- Conflicts.³⁷

All of the abovementioned consequences lead to loss in productivity, which can be estimated as a percentage of GDP due to pollution sources. In developing countries, it is 0.25 per cent of the GDP whereas in industrialized countries it is only 0.03 per cent of GDP. That leads to a conclusion that developing states experience more severe aftereffects of pollution even though main leaders of production are developed economies. Moreover, around 96 per cent of the region's annual productivity loss that is caused by pollution is influenced and experienced by developing countries, which also shows precarious outcomes of economy.

Another issue also of special importance for the Asia and the Pacific is gender equality. The main document within the international framework is the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution A/RES/34/180 of 18 December 1979. Moreover, the Beijing Declaration adopted in September 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women also serves as a tool to achieve equal opportunities for women along with peace and prosperity.³⁸

2.4 Current actions and planed initiatives

ESCAP is firmly committed to the current development of equality within the region, as evidenced in its Resolution ESCAP/RES/74/11 (2018) titled *Strengthening regional cooperation to tackle inequality in all its forms in Asia and the Pacific*. The main ideas included are to undertake actions for poverty alleviation, emphasize social support to youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and migrant workers and women and girls.³⁹

Mentioning UN GA Resolution A/RES/70/1 (2015) titled *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the issue of reduction of inequalities is embedded in many SDGs, including specifically SDG 10. However, there is a problem of a lack of indicators to

³⁷ *Asia and The Pacific SDG Progress Report 2017*, accessed 25 September 2018.

<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Asia-Pacific-SDG-Progress-Report-2017.pdf>

³⁸ *Beijing Declaration* (1995), accessed 24 September 2018.,

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>

³⁹ UN ESCAP, *Strengthening regional cooperation to tackle inequality in all its forms in Asia and the Pacific* ESCAP/RES/74/11 (2018), 18 May 2018, accessed September 24, 2018.

https://www.unescap.org/commission/74/document/E74_RES11E.pdf

measure the goal and its implementation, as the Report of Implementation of 2018 notes.⁴⁰ Pursuant to the Report's Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030, for high income groups the actions undertaken to achieve the goal need to be reversed to meet the target whilst for upper-middle income, lower-middle income and low income the current progress needs to be boosted and accelerated.⁴¹

As another initiative to foster regional integration, Member States adopted in 2017 a Regional Road Map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and The Pacific. The 6th objective highlights inequality as a crucial issue which can be tackled by good governance as well as effective public institutions. What is more, the Road Map emphasizes the critical role of science, technology and innovation to reach sustainable development and calls upon new partnerships on national and regional levels.⁴²

In order to enhance and maintain deliberations, ESCAP organized the South East Asia Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which was held in September 2018. In its 3rd Session, the topic of empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality was discussed and a clear connection between social, economic, political, environmental realms and SDG 10 were pointed out. Within the Forum, members also selected four key elements for ESCAP to undertake in order to achieve inclusiveness and equality: protection of human rights, elimination of harmful norms and practices, ensuring participation as well as enhancing resources and capabilities. These results can be achieved via the “integration of SDGs into national development plans, institutional strengthening and coordination and involvement of NGOs”.⁴³

Currently, the World Bank actively participates towards tackling inequalities within the Asia-Pacific region. The International Development Association along with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development are conducting joint projects in Vietnam, Lao PDR, Solomon Islands and Cambodia in the sphere of gender equality that contribute to voice and participation, economic aspects, and decreased vulnerability. As an example, the project entitled “Community

⁴⁰ United Nations: “Sustainable Development Goals Report” (2018), accessed September 25, 2018, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2018/TheSustainableDevelopmentGoalsReport2018-EN.pdf>

⁴¹ UN GA, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, 21 October 2015, accessed September 24, 2018. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf

⁴² UN ESCAP, *Regional Road Map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and The Pacific* (2018), accessed 25 September 2018. <https://www.unescap.org/sites>

⁴³ UN ESCAP, “South East Asia Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”, accessed September 24, 2018. <https://www.unescap.org/events/south-east-asia-forum-implementation-sustainable-development-goals-0>

nutrition” implemented in the Lao PDR is aimed at improving the conditions of pregnant and lactating mothers in seven provinces by ensuring better infrastructure for health services.^{44 45}

In this regard, all current actions that have been introduced are mostly correlated with the activities of ESCAP, Sustainable Development Goals and topics relevant for the international community such as gender equality, accessibility for minority groups and good governance. In several countries, there is an urgent necessity of ensuring well-elaborated human services with no distinction to any social category. Moreover, as the agenda of inequality is considered to be a cross-cutting issue, the initiatives connected with many of its dimensions should act in line with one another in order to project sustainable protection of individuals and their freedoms.

2.5 Conclusion

Tackling inequalities in all its forms is an urgent agenda for ESCAP, since it involves many sectors of life and ensures social cohesion towards non-violation of human rights as it is pursued in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In this regard, the ultimate stance of the global community is to ensure that initiatives aimed at tackling inequalities are cross-cutting and act in the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Detailed observation should be given to issues of racism, other forms of intolerance, non-protection of vulnerable groups of the population such as indigenous peoples, women and girls, people with disabilities and others. The vision of gender equality should also be more precise, with the preliminary creation of all necessary facilities and objects for enjoying human rights.

The current situation with uneven development in sub-regions, unequal level of social protection within countries and almost no opportunities to target SDG 10 requires cooperative actions within the region in committing to full accessibility and balance in development. Moreover, due to little information on data and statistics, advancements in the future may be ineffective, thus, appropriate data collection should be considered as an issue by the Commission.

[/default/files/publications/SDGs-Regional-Roadmap.pdf](#)

⁴⁴ World Bank, “Toward Gender Equality in East Asia and the Pacific”, accessed 25 September 2018.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2014/04/08/toward-gender-equality-in-east-asia-pacific>

⁴⁵ World Bank “Community nutrition project”, accessed September 24, 2018.

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2.7 Further Research

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3. Emerging trends in innovation policy to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: promoting inclusive innovation and supporting social enterprises

3.1 Main terms and definitions

Artificial intelligence - the ability of machines and systems to acquire and apply knowledge, and to carry out intelligent behavior.⁴⁶

Innovation - the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations.⁴⁷

Social innovation - Social innovation can be defined similarly, with the caveat that it must simultaneously meet social needs while creating new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, social innovations change society and enhance its capacity to act. Social enterprise and impact investment are two core concepts of social innovation.

Social enterprises - A social enterprise can be defined as an organization committed to explicitly including social and/or environmental returns as part of its core business while seeking profit or return on investment.

Impact investment - Impact investments are investments made into companies, organizations and funds with the intention of generating social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.

Inclusive innovation - Inclusive innovation comprises, in its broadest sense, initiatives that serve the welfare of lower-income groups, including the poor and excluded groups. Two broad perspectives can be used to outline inclusive innovation: (a) innovations for the poor or pro-inclusive innovation, a simpler and market-based perspective that defines inclusive innovation as innovation that promotes the creation of products and services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of low-income or excluded population groups; and (b) innovation by the poor, or grass-roots innovation, a more complete notion of development and inclusion that defines inclusive innovation as innovation that is carried out by low-income or excluded groups.

Big data - data sets of increasing volume, velocity and variety.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ UN ESCAP, *Artificial intelligence for Asia and the Pacific*, accessed September 25, 2018.

https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/ESCAP_Artificial_Intelligence.pdf

⁴⁷ UN ESCAP, *Emerging trends in innovation policy to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: promoting inclusive innovation and supporting social enterprises*, ESCAP/74/32, 28 March 2018, accessed September 25, 2018.

https://www.unescap.org/commission/74/document/E74_32E.pdf

⁴⁸ UN Economic Commission for Europe, *In-depth review of big data*, accessed September 27, 2018.

3.2 Introduction

The role innovations have continually played in strengthening the capacities of all institutions is invaluable towards achieving sustainable development, thus is hereby widely discussed within the United Nations. Recalling the moment of the official elaboration of innovations in 2005, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) jointly with the European Commission (Eurostat) adopted the Oslo Manual – Guidelines for collecting and interpreting innovation data. This Manual defined innovation as “the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations”.⁴⁹ What is more, innovations can be divided into 4 categories, particularly in areas of product, process, marketing and organizational change. Product innovation is the “introduction of a good or service that is new or significantly improved with respect to its characteristics or intended uses.”⁵⁰ Moreover, process innovation means “the implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method”⁵¹. Considering marketing innovation, the term means “new marketing method involving significant changes in product design, or packing, product placement product promotion or prices” and is being widespread in business community. The main difference between innovations and ordinary upgrades should also be stated, thus, innovations represent changes that are caused by the transformation of prices or the cessation of a management or marketing model, which has occurred as a result of seasonal transformation and other directions of work in the company.

As a result of technological changes along with an economic boost both in the international arena and the Asia-Pacific region, the term innovation policy is also emerging in its scale. Noting the 2017 Report *Innovation policy: what, why, and how* issued by the Oxford Review of Economic Policy, instruments for innovation policy include, but are not limited to, fiscal incentives for research and development, policies for training and skills, technical services and advice, public procurement policies and technology foresight.⁵²

https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2014/7-In-depth_review_of_big_data.pdf

⁴⁹ OECD, *Oslo Manual, Guidelines for Collecting and Interpreting Innovation Data, 3rd Edition*. 2005, accessed September 27, 2018. <http://www.oecd.org/science/inno/2367580.pdf>

⁵⁰ Innovation policy platform, Product and process innovation, accessed September 27, 2018.

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⁵¹ Official Journal of the European Union, *Community framework for state aid for research and development and Innovation*, accessed September 27, 2018. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:EN:PDF>

⁵² Oxford review of economic policy, *Innovation policy: what, why, and how*, 2017, accessed September 27, 2018. <https://academic.oup.com/oxrep/article/33/1/2/2972712#60249462>

Among all aspects of innovation, the attitude toward positive change in society is of utmost importance for the UN and is presented in social entrepreneurship. The history of this phenomenon dates back to the 19th century with the appearance of several entrepreneurs whose goal was the eradication of social problems and fostering positive changes in society. These examples include Vinoba Bhave who laid out the foundation of India's Land Gift Movement, and Robert Owen, establisher of the first nursing school and contemporary practices in this field. Further, in the 20th century, emerging organizations increased their attention on children's rights, the empowerment of women, protection of nature and other aspects important for communities.⁵³

Experiencing a Fourth Industrial Revolution, all spheres of life are becoming connected with the application of frontier technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, 3D printing, and the Internet of Things. The majority of technologies may refer to the group called General-Purpose Technologies (GPT), which possess a number of characteristics outlined in ESCAP's report titled *Frontier technologies for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific* published in 2018. Firstly, noticing pervasiveness, the document states that GPT should be applicable to a majority of sectors connected to human well-being. Further, improvement in terms of efficiency increase and decrease of costs is considered to be another feature of frontier technologies. What is more, opportunity to invest in new products based on existing technologies is a vital aspect in modern development, which is why "innovation spawning" is a characteristic of GPT.⁵⁴

Within this agenda item there are several main problems which need to be addressed. Firstly, economic growth hit a lot of countries in the Asia-Pacific region simultaneously, causing an increase in poverty and inequality. Nowadays, innovation strategies that are connected with skilled labor, a well-developed infrastructure as well as producing products that go in line with the requirements of the rich affect the poor population in their development and leads to social exclusion. Second of all, as it is stated by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), low-income countries have only 1.3 per cent of the world's researchers, compared with 6.4 per cent in lower middle-income countries, 28.0 per cent in upper middle-income countries and 64.4 per cent in high-income countries. These numbers represent an issue of under-

⁵³ Management Study Guide, *History of social entrepreneurship*, <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/social-entrepreneurship-history.htm>, accessed September 27, 2018.

⁵⁴ UN ESCAP, *Frontier technologies for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific*, accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Frontier%20tech%20for%20SDG.pdf>

advanced facilities in developing states and inadequate government approaches towards ensuring decent innovative growth⁵⁵.

3.3 International and regional framework

Since technological progress goes hand-in-hand with the majority of operations we undertake every day, the number of coherent documents, projects and initiatives has expanded. The Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) which has been actively used since 2015 at the International Conference on Science, Technology, Innovation and Development is operated under the auspices of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Organization gives technical advice and trainings to governments on the creation, monitoring and implementation of STI policies, integrating them into national plans. Furthermore, UNESCO sets standards for effective STI functioning along with developing tools, such as the Global Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instruments (GO-SPIN) for its further usage by policymakers.^{56 57}

Actively promoting innovations and technological progress, the United Nations General Assembly expressed its gratitude to the benefits of the STI initiative in one of its latest resolutions, Resolution A/RES/72/228 (2016), titled *Science, technology and innovation for development*. The document emphasizes the vulnerability of underdeveloped states, moreover in accordance with it, Member States are called upon to increase capacity-building measures, involve relevant UN organizations, further the usage of new technologies presented in artificial intelligence, automation and robotics.⁵⁸

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, among Sustainable Development Goals, ideas of inclusive innovation and social enterprises are represented in Goals 8 and 9, respectively. As a connection to innovation and economic growth, Goal 8 stands for promoting “sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all,” which entails targets 8.2 and 8.3 designed to facilitate economic productivity by

⁵⁵ UNCTAD, *New innovation approaches to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*, accessed September 27, 2018. https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/dtlstict2017d4_en.pdf

⁵⁶ UNESCO, *Science, Technology and Innovation Policy development*, accessed September 27, 2018. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/science-technology/sti-systems-and-governance/sti-policy-development/>

⁵⁷ Science and Technology Policy Institute, accessed September 27, 2018.

<http://www.stepi.re.kr/app/eSemina/view.jsp?cmsCd=CM0241&ntNo=19&src=&srcTemp=&currPg=1>

⁵⁸ UN GA, *Science, technology and innovation for development*, A/RES/72/228, accessed September 27, 2018. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/228

innovations.⁵⁹ Precisely considering Goal 9, which is “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”, targets 9.2, 9.5, 9.B describe the impact of both spheres mentioned above. Moreover, under the aegis of the SDGs Action Platform, UN entities, entrepreneurs and technologists are united in the Breakthrough Innovation for the SDGs which is aimed at elaborating new business models that can contribute to SDG implementation using modern practices such as Big Data and Artificial Intelligence.⁶⁰⁶¹

Together with Sustainable Development Goals, the issue of Financing for Development (FfD) was raised. It has been developed since the year 2000 and is currently illustrated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which was held in 2015. It recognizes the crucial importance of building inclusive societies and sustainable growth via improvements in the tax sector by means of making it universal and transparent.⁶²

Acting in line with concept of sustainability, UN puts a special emphasis on new technologies’ creation and usage. That is why, under the Secretary-General’s Strategy on New Technologies Organization ensures implementation of 5 principles of guidance which are “protect and promote global values, foster inclusion and transparency, work in partnership, build on existing capabilities and mandate, be humble and continue to learn” and 4 commitments for the international community, respectively.⁶³

In an effort to foster technological advancements in the Asia-Pacific region in 1988, UNESCO established the Science and Technology Policy Asian Network (STEPAN), located in Jakarta, Indonesia. The network unites researchers and relevant institutions of the APR aimed at new initiatives connected with technological growth and the creation of new innovations in human services, education, health-care, employment and other key sectors of society. For example, the initiative called Master Plan for Science and Technology for Mongolia concluded as the result of

⁵⁹ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Sustainable Development Goal 8*, accessed September 29, 2018. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>

⁶⁰ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Sustainable Development Goal 9*, accessed September 28, 2018. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg9>

⁶¹ UN Global Compact, *Breakthrough innovation for the SDGs*, accessed September 28, 2018. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action-platforms/breakthrough-innovation> ..

⁶² *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (2015), accessed September 29, 2018. http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

⁶³ UN, Secretary-General’s Strategy on New Technologies, accessed November 11, 2018. <http://www.un.org/en/newtechnologies/images/pdf/SGs-Strategy-on-New-Technologies.pdf>

the Science and Technology Master Plan (2007-2020) of Mongolia which forecasted innovative development of the state.⁶⁴

In turn, Small Island Developing States and landlocked countries are experiencing obstacles connected with the little or no number of inclusive innovations the most. As a response to this issue, the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) developed in the year of 2011 the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, alternately called the Istanbul Declaration, placing technology innovation and transfer to be the key deliverable.⁶⁵ This initiative brought an essential outcome, the Technology Bank, which will influence the 47 least developed countries' innovative ecosystems and foster Research and Development.⁶⁶

It is important to note the significant attention of the international community on the influence of technology. Highlighting negative consequences which may result because of the improper purpose of applying science, the international approach lays in social protection and equal accessibility hereby shifting and reforming existing and further initiatives to these values.

3.4 Current actions and planned initiatives

Currently, all trends accelerating the achievement of SDGs may be divided into four international approaches: mission-oriented policies, pro-poor innovation, grass-roots innovations and social innovations. Regarding mission-oriented policies, it is necessary to define them as “measures targeted at the resolution of crucial societal obstacles.”⁶⁷ While applying this approach, governments should take into consideration the inclusivity of all policies with the purpose of ensuring that no one is left behind. In regard to Asia-Pacific states, there are a number of effective implications of the given policy. For instance, Japan's Science and Technology Basic Plan (2016–2020) is aimed at the promotion of inclusive innovation in ensuring dialogue between society and science, promoting a smart society, women empowerment, equality and diversity in terms of enjoying technological changes and regional integration innovation systems. It is noteworthy to stress attention to the interconnection of cyberspace and reality via the

⁶⁴ UNESCO, *Science, Policy and Society the Science and Technology Policy Asian Network (STEPAN)*, accessed September 29, 2018.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/science-technology/sti-policy/asia/asia-stepan/>

⁶⁵ UN-OHRLLS, *Istanbul Program of Action*, accessed September 29, 2018.

<http://unohrlls.org/about-ldcs/istanbul-programme-of-action/>

⁶⁶ UN-OHRLLS, *Technology Bank*, accessed September 29, 2018.

<http://unohrlls.org/technologybank/>

inclusion of artificial intelligence and big data applicable with non-distinction to sex, race, religion, language and other criteria.⁶⁸

One more approach is referred to as pro-poor innovations. Involvement of marginalized groups of the population through the actions of transnational corporations and large representatives of business is conducive to better societal inclusion and reduction of inequality. As an example, there is a project in India organized in conjunction with large enterprises in the sphere of home technologies' production that is aimed at sharing technology-based solutions connected with SDG implementation.⁶⁹

In order to pay attention to excluded groups of society, the grass-roots innovations concept was defined meaning "innovative product or process created at the bottom of the pyramid, usually due to necessity, hardship and challenges" in the report of the Non-Governmental Organization "Current Opinion in Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship" titled *Grassroots Innovation from the Bottom of the Pyramid of 2012*.⁷⁰ This idea means projects should be led by local communities and firmly attached to local needs. There are numerous emerging grass-roots organizations such as the National Innovation Foundation established in 2000 in India with the goal to initiate grassroots technological innovation. The Foundation has contributed to the realization of thousands of grass-roots technologies through collaboration with research and development and academic institutions.

Another type of policy is social innovation, which is initiated within entrepreneurial activities, organizations and other influential stakeholders. There are a lot of similar functions with grass-root innovation; however, the main feature of social innovation is the concentration on issues of social practices. Examples may include the creation of time banks, which are systems of exchange. For every hour of help provided, members can deposit time credits in a time bank, and they are able to withdraw equivalent support later when they are in need of help from another member. One of the best applications worldwide, Give and Take Care, was founded in the United Kingdom in 2016 and is aimed at the well-being of elderly people. The main rule is that

⁶⁸ UN ESCAP, *Mainstreaming inclusive technology and innovation policies that leave no one behind*, accessed September 30, 2018.

https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/CICTSTI_2018_6%20Inclusive%20technology%20and%20innovation%20-English%20reissue%2020%20July.pdf

⁶⁹ UN ESCAP, *Emerging trends in innovation policy to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: promoting inclusive innovation and supporting social enterprises*, ESCAP/74/32, 28 March 2018, accessed September 25, 2018. https://www.unescap.org/commission/74/document/E74_32E.pdf

⁷⁰ Grassroots Innovation from the Bottom of the Pyramid, accessed September 30, 2018. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1fae/92a603bb4e7091a2b720530185b9df0eec8a.pdf>

every hour of voluntary work may be added to the time bank and be exchanged for some care later.⁷¹

ESCAP's commitment to developing inclusive innovation is reflected in the *Asia-Pacific Declaration on Social Enterprise and Impact Investment* adopted at the Social Enterprise and Impact Investment Policy Dialogue in New Zealand on 28 September 2017. The main ideas include the establishment of a leaders and advisers' community across the Asia-Pacific, learning and experience-sharing between countries along with multi-stakeholders' involvement.⁷²

The vision of ESCAP concerning STI development along with further actions and priorities of the organization are addressed in its 2016 report called *Harnessing science, technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific*. With the purpose of increasing the transparency towards STI and its acceleration of SDGs, there is a proposal of regular reports and monitoring of STIs among Member States. What is more, distance learning is being placed as a special sphere which will be conducive for the proliferation of knowledge about STI. Acquiring all aspects of innovation and digital economy, the Commission is also focused on vocational trainings, opportunities for workers to reskill and adjust to STI-oriented projects, wider involvement of women into this sphere and fostering technological inclusion by means of national policies and documents.⁷³

3.5 Conclusion

Highlighting the overwhelming role of technology in every aspect of life, the necessity of innovations for all members of society is vital. At the same time, there are still cases of increasing inequality with regard to access to social services. Thus, the concepts of inclusive innovation and social enterprises serve as focal points in accelerating Sustainable Development Goals and shifting the society towards unlimited access to technologies and services they make. At the same time, policymakers along with other stakeholders still experience issues with different definitions of terms and identifying priority areas in this field. That is why the regional community of the Asia-Pacific region needs to carefully identify vulnerable populations based on different criteria and apply specific approaches of inclusive innovation. Furthermore, cooperation remains to be a vital source of the generation of ideas – Member States, academic

⁷¹ UN ESCAP, *Emerging trends in innovation policy to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: promoting inclusive innovation and supporting social enterprises*, ESCAP/74/32, 28 March 2018, accessed September 25, 2018. https://www.unescap.org/commission/74/document/E74_32E.pdf

⁷² UN ESCAP, *Asia-Pacific Declaration on Social Enterprise and Impact Investment*, 2017, accessed September 30, 2018. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/asia-pacific-declaration-on-social-enterprise-and-impact-investment.pdf>

⁷³ UN ESCAP, *Harnessing science, technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific*, accessed September 30, 2018. https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/STI_Theme_Study.pdf

institutions, science parks, researchers and other involved actors should be engaged in multilateral dialogue including the exchange of best practices. Identifying the current state of affairs, progress should be reached at all levels, hence the international community is requested to analyze current state of affairs and fulfill all existing gaps in the national legislation of countries, entrepreneurship, awareness and economic aspect including revenue management and financing for development. What is also important, there is an urgent need to form a portfolio of vulnerable groups of population identifying the most important technologies for their use and further adjusting it into their daily routine. All in all, with society-oriented usage of technologies and science, there is an expectedly high impact for not only fostering economic growth, but also reducing inequalities, stabilizing the social sector and providing a platform for further inventions.

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<https://socialenterprise.us/about/social-enterprise/>

4. Implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

4.1 Main terms and definitions

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) - distinct group of developing countries facing specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities;⁷⁴

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises - non-subsidiary, independent firms which employ fewer than 250 employees.⁷⁵

Climate change - a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.⁷⁶

Disaster Risk Reduction - is the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and reduce the causal factors of disasters.⁷⁷

Sustainable development - development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.⁷⁸

4.2 Introduction

Voice on the international arena along with tendencies of development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) has been discussed in the UN since the end of the 20th century. The first outcomes were reached at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States held in Bridgetown, Barbados, in 1994. The Conference's document, titled the *Barbados Programme of Action* (A/CONF.167/9), identified 14 priority areas for further development in the spheres of climate change, waste management, resources protection, science and technology, human resources development and others.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the document highlighted the vulnerability of SIDS to natural catastrophes, lack of options to be involved in international trade and weak economic advancement.

⁷⁴ UN-OHRLLS, *Small Island Developing States*, accessed October 2, 2018.

http://unohrlls.org/UserFiles/File/UN_SIDS_booklet_5x6-5_062811_web.pdf

⁷⁵ OECD, *Glossary of statistical terms*, accessed October 2, 2018.

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⁷⁷ UNISDR, *What is Disaster Risk Reduction*, accessed October 2, 2018.

<https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/what-is-drr>

⁷⁸ UN GA, *Sustainable development*, accessed October 2, 2018.

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/sustdev.shtml>

⁷⁹ UN, *Barbados Programme of Action*, accessed October 2, 2018.

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_sids/sids_pdfs/BPOA.pdf

Continuing intensive discussions of the SIDS agenda, the international community decided to reassess the *Barbados Programme of Action* in 2005, simultaneously adopting the *Mauritius Declaration* and the *Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development* of SIDS provided in the Report A/CONF.207/11.⁸⁰ The Strategy stated the trend of decrease of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and underlined a necessity of decent financing for SIDS development. Noting further, as the statistics of 2015 recall, development aid totaled USD 131.6 billion in 2015 with an increase of 6.9 per cent from 2014.⁸¹

Along with the 14 priority areas set in Barbados Programme, these documents add such issues as graduation from least developed country status, trade, sustainable production and consumption, health, knowledge management, and culture. The main successes of the Mauritius Strategy are considered to be increased transport volumes, growth in tourism receipts and a higher level of education. Regarding disadvantages, issues of natural vulnerability, lack of freshwater resources, and no electrification in rural areas were emphasized.⁸²

Realizing the current state of affairs concerning SIDS, as well as a sharp necessity of decision-making on an international level, in 2014, in Apia, Samoa the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States took place. Its outcome document, *Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway* was adopted in frames of UN GA Resolution A/RES/69/15 titled in accordance with the name of the document. In turn, the pathway is considered to be the major document within the SIDS agenda which focuses on 18 thematic areas including the Post-2015 Agenda and contributing to achieving sustainable development. Exact actions which lay behind thematic areas include developing of environmentally sound technologies, limiting carbon dioxide emission, elaborating vocational trainings for raising the employment rate, developing culture and creative industries and many others. The aspect which differs from the Pathway is its strong orientation on partnership, which

⁸⁰ UN GA, *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, A/CONF.207/11, 10 January 2015, accessed October 2, 2018.

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.207/11&Lang=E

⁸¹ UN, *International Action Task Force on Financing for Development: Official Development Assistance*, accessed October 2, 2018.

http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ODA_OECD-FfDO_IATF-Issue-Brief.pdf

⁸² UN GA, *Five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, A/65/115, 6 July 2010, accessed October 2, 2018. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/115

is being implemented under the aegis of the SIDS Partnership Framework that presents more than 300 collaborations at multiple levels.⁸³

Four years have passed since the document's implementation, and the international community is aspired to evaluate the progress of realization along with updating currently existing initiatives in accordance with the results of analysis. Main cornerstones are forecasting the possibility of implementation of all priority areas, precisely analyzing each of them and identifying trends and actions especially in areas of climate change, economic advancement, human services and others which positively or negatively impact on the Pathway's ideas.

4.3 International and regional framework

Following the principle of “leaving no one behind”, the international community raises the participation of SIDS and creates favorable conditions for their presence in the international arena. Recalling the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals concept including the principle of inclusivity and special attention on SIDS, it started in the year of 2012 as a result of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, ideas of which were outlined in UN GA Resolution A/RES/66/288 entitled *The future we want*. It was the first official proclamation of conducting the Third Conference on SIDS in 2014. The document mentioned the necessity of providing Small Island Developing States with equal participation on international arena.⁸⁴

There are several aspects which significantly affect SIDS development and integration. In accordance with the current situation, climate change and related issues belong to the most severe and urgent problems due to the risks of SIDS of being washed away. On the international level, this concept is addressed by the Paris Agreement of 2015 elaborated by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Particular attention is paid to SIDS in this document – articles 4, 9, 11 and 13, respectively state the special necessities of these nations such as national plans to lower greenhouse gas emissions adjusted to states' specifics, scaled-up financing, access to resources to mitigate climate change and increased transparency for financial support.⁸⁵

Natural disasters go in line with climate change since they all represent environmental challenges. Addressing earthquakes, they constitute “one fifth of the annual losses due to natural

⁸³ UN GA, *SAMOA Pathway*, A/RES/69/15 ,15 December 2014, accessed October 2, 2018.

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/15&Lang=E

⁸⁴ UN GA, *The future we want* , A/RES/66/288, 11 September 2012, accessed October 2, 2018.

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E

⁸⁵ UNFCCC, *Paris Agreement* (2015), accessed October 3, 2018.

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

disasters, with an average death toll of over 25,000 people” as the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction estimates.⁸⁶ That is why, aspiring to prevent negative effects originated by natural disasters, in 2015 at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction countries adopted the Sendai Framework 2015-2030, which represents a comprehensive plan for the prevention of natural disasters along with increased dialogue between governments and stakeholders. By the year of 2030 Framework sets targets to “reduce global disaster mortality per 100,000 global mortality rate, substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030, increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020”.⁸⁷⁸⁸

At the same time, with the purpose of supporting relevant initiatives, the concept of Financing for Development is being operated and represents an essential process for ensuring sustainable development for the SAMOA Pathway. A recent document designed for FfD-related topics is the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* of the year of 2015 that names SIDS as a “special case for sustainable development in view of their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, and exposure to global environmental challenges”.⁸⁹ The document emphasizes actions to be implemented in areas of domestic capital markets, non-communicable diseases, investments in the energy sector and debt sustainability.⁹⁰

Focusing further on business development, as the realization of priority areas related to partnership, Small Island Developing States Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) was launched under the leadership of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The network is divided into 2 categories, the first one of which entails a SIDS-GBN Forum that unites the private sector, governments, UN system and other stakeholders. Having 3 events in 2014, 2016 and 2018, respectively, the Forum has discussed approaches to tourism, public-private partnerships and SIDS development with dedication to further involve the ideas into private sector’s initiatives. Second part of Network is a SIDS-GBN Online Platform launched in 2016 at the Aruba Private Sector Partnerships (P3a) forum. It

⁸⁶ UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Earthquake Hazard and Risk Assessment*, accessed October 4, 2018. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/52828_01earthquakehazardandriskassessment.pdf

⁸⁷ UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Sea-level rise*, accessed October 4, 2018. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/52828_08sealevelrise.pdf

⁸⁸ UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* (2015), accessed October 3, 2018. <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

⁸⁹ UN, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, accessed October 3, 2018. http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

provides business alliances with an opportunity for ideas exchange and further collaboration with the purpose to raise economic attractiveness of SIDS.⁹¹

4.4 Current actions and planned initiatives

In the year of 2016, the United Nations General Assembly designated 2019 to be the period of international assessment of the SAMOA Pathway. Prior to this process, regional commissions, particularly Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS), Caribbean region, SIDS GBN and Pacific region are requested to conduct preparatory meetings with further inter-regional events. While the last one is to be conducted in Samoa in November 2018, several regions have concluded their analysis.⁹²

Regional AIMS events outlined all ideas in its Outcome Document. The region identified its key areas to be further included in the MidTerm Review such as climate change, Disaster Risk Reduction and resilience building, water and sanitation, data collection and interpretation gaps, means of implementation including financing for development, capacity building, gender equality and women empowerment and food security. There is also a request to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to elaborate a new category of countries “which are or have graduated from LDCs”.⁹³ AIMS is also concerned with the process of supervising the realization of the Pathway, thus, proposed to set up a relevant Coordination Mechanism operated under the premises .

The results of the Caribbean regional meeting are presented in the *San Pedro Declaration of 2018*. The actions proposed to reform SIDS development in frames of the SAMOA Pathway include work with Vulnerability Resilience Country Profiles, provision with environmental statistics, establishment of a global disaster fund, national budgetary changes in order to create new Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and others.⁹⁴

UN ESCAP is contributing a lot towards ensuring sustainable development of SIDS therefore the Asia-Pacific region is one of leading stakeholders in carrying out the SAMOA Pathway’s principles. In 2017 during the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Samoa, deliberations resulted in the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD). The document is based

⁹¹ *SIDS Global Business Network*, accessed October 4, 2018.

<https://sidsgbn.org/who-we-are-3/>

⁹² Sustainable development knowledge platform *UNGA to conduct a High-Level Review of the SAMOA Pathway in 2019*, accessed October 4, 2018, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sids/samoareview>

⁹³ UN, *Outcome AIMS Regional Preparatory Countries for the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway*, accessed October 4, 2018,

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18949Final_Outcome_AIMS_Meeting_.pdf

⁹⁴ UN, *San Pedro Declaration*, accessed October 3, 2018,

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20630San_Pedro_Declaration_Revised_AT.pdf

on principles of “leaving no one behind” and national ownership and aimed at accomplishing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by means of national plans in accordance with SAMOA Pathway and Framework for Pacific Regionalism - a program that defines regional values including integrity, heritage, unity, equity and inclusivity.^{95 96}

Member States of the Pacific region gathered at Nukualofa, Tonga on 19-21 June 2018 to discuss prospects of the transformation of the SAMOA Pathway. Main statements concerning the SAMOA Pathway include advantageous progress “in the areas of social inclusion, environmental integrity and equitable economic growth”.⁹⁷ The region also expressed its concern towards weak climate resilience with further aspirations to follow the commitments of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In regards to partnerships, nations agreed on clarifying partnership status and providing access to expired cooperation initiatives by the SIDS Action Platform.

Aligning the SAMOA Pathway with SDGs, UN ESCAP does a special analysis of trends emerging in the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, the 2017 Report *Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Pacific* published by the Commission states that SIDS take an active part in global negotiations aimed at accomplishing the post-2015 development agenda. Moreover, from a regional perspective, such thematic areas of the SAMOA Pathway as persons with disabilities, oceans, and regional mobility and harmonization of business practices are the ones of special importance in order to achieve the SAMOA Pathway.⁹⁸

As it was stressed above, partnership plays a special role in ensuring implementation of the SAMOA Pathway’s provisions. It also has a clear connection with SDG 17, “Partnership for the Goals”, with target 17.18 in particular since it involves multilateral cooperation between states, NGOs, academia members and regional institutions.⁹⁹ Currently, the SIDS Partnership Framework accounts for hundreds of initiatives in all priority areas between nations, private and public sector, representatives of relevant organizations and other stakeholders. It is noteworthy to mention that every project is checked on compliance with SMART criteria (SIDS-specific,

⁹⁵ UN ESCAP, *Regional Meeting of Pacific SDG Coordinators and Agencies on Implementation of the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development*, accessed October 4, 2018.

<https://www.unescap.org/events/regional-meeting-pacific-sdg-coordinators-and-agencies-implementation-pacific-roadmap>

⁹⁶ ADB, *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*, accessed October 13, 2018.

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⁹⁷ UN, The Nuku’alofa Outcome Document *Monitoring Accountability And Transformation*, accessed October 4, 2018.

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⁹⁸ UN ESCAP, *Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Pacific*, accessed November 11, 2018.

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⁹⁹ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Sustainable Development Goals*, accessed October 4, 2018.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

measurable & monitorable, achievable & accountable, resource-based & results focused, with timelines for implementation & transparency by all parties).¹⁰⁰

The current concerns of regional agencies include weak coordination of implementation process, increasing consequences of climate-related issues and natural disasters, inequalities in health-care, entrepreneurship, and necessities for further partnership under the auspices of SIDS Partnership Framework. The ideas are to be presented during the UN GA Session in 2019 and will be further deliberated upon by the global community.

4.5 Conclusion

The SAMOA Pathway is a new trend and simultaneously the core document which envisions development of SIDS during the next five years. There are a lot of areas in which the international community undertakes actions in, however, severe consequences of climate change, ineffective governance, proliferation of diseases and inequality still remain to be up-to-date. In the light of a global review process, numerous issues should be put into consideration: can priority sectors be prioritized one over another, is there enough attention to this agenda item on national level, are all processes of implementation transparent and well-elaborated? Inclusivity of these states and their empowerment will serve as a tool for the international community to enrich economic connection, mitigate climate change and ensure social stability.

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