



# ASIA-PACIFIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

Vol. 29, No. 2, November 2022

## Editorial

Asia-Pacific Social Outlook 2022: strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and the Pacific  
ESCAP secretariat

## Special theme: from Labs to Jobs: ensuring access and equity in Covid-19 vaccination

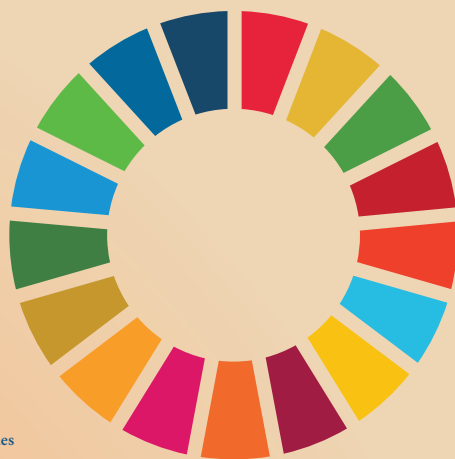
Solidarity as a practical craft: cohesion and cooperation in leveraging access to medical technologies within and beyond the TRIPS Agreement  
Antony Taubman

Trade measures on pharmaceutical products: can they promote local production and public health?  
Padmashree Gehl Sampath

Trade in vaccines and related inputs: a study of the Asia-Pacific region  
Pralok Gupta and Ayona Bhattacharjee

Strengthening the health system to address inequalities in COVID-19 vaccine access in the Asia-Pacific Region  
Valerie Gilbert Ulep and Beverly Lorraine Ho

Financing research and development for new vaccines in developing Asia-Pacific countries  
Gavin Yamey, Kaci Kennedy McDade, Wenhui Mao and Ekene Osakwe



## Invited paper

Can Asia assure social insurance for all its informal workers?  
Santosh Mehrotra

## Policymakers' corner

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Mariângela Simão, Allison Colbert, Christophe Rerat and Deirdre Dimancesco

Ensuring supply chain connectivity and resiliency in the post-pandemic recovery: the case of ASEAN  
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## Book reviews

The World Trade Organization needs to prepare better for future pandemics  
Xiankun Lu

*Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Central Asia* (eds. Rico Isaacs and Erica Marat)  
Zulfan Tadjoeddin

## Obituary

Professor Clement Allan Tisdell (1939-2022): A tribute  
Mohammad Alauddin



*The shaded areas of the map indicate ESCAP members and associate members.\**

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) serves as the United Nations' regional hub, promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. As the largest regional intergovernmental platform with 53 member States and 9 associate members, ESCAP has emerged as a strong regional think-tank, offering countries sound analytical products that shed light on the evolving economic, social and environmental dynamics of the region. The Commission's strategic focus is to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which it does by reinforcing and deepening regional cooperation and integration in order to advance connectivity, financial cooperation and market integration. The research and analysis undertaken by ESCAP coupled with its policy advisory services, capacity building and technical assistance to governments aims to support countries' sustainable and inclusive development ambitions.

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**United Nations**  
New York, 2022

# ASIA-PACIFIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

Vol. 29, No. 2, November 2022

United Nations publication

Sales No. E.22.II.F.17

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Printed in Thailand

ISBN: 9789211208498

e-ISBN: 9789210022941

ISSN (print): 2617-8400

ISSN (online): 2617-8419

ST/ESCAP/3056

Cover design: Nina Loncar

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The Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Journal (APSDJ) is published twice a year by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It is the continuation of ESCAP's Asia Pacific Development Journal (APDJ) with an explicit recognition of sustainable development in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

APSDJ welcomes submissions of original contributions on themes and issues related to sustainable development that are policy-oriented and relevant to Asia and the Pacific. Articles should be centred on discussing challenges pertinent to one or more dimensions of sustainable development, policy options and implications and/or policy experiences that may be of benefit to the region. Editorial policy is to maintain a sound balance between theoretical and empirical studies, and to highlight policy relevance.

APSDJ particularly welcomes papers that deal with sustainable development issues using a multidisciplinary approach. Submissions may range from overviews spanning the region or parts of it, to papers with a detailed focus on issues facing individual countries.

APSDJ encourages submissions from researchers residing in countries in special situations, such as small island developing States (SIDS), least developed countries (LDCs) and economies in transition, as well as submissions that deal with challenges of such economies.

APSDJ provides a platform for policymakers to share their experiences. It also offers opportunities to academics and researchers in their early careers to develop their capacity for policy-oriented and applied research.

APSDJ publishes short notes, reflecting experiences in policy and practices, comments, and book reviews – not exceeding 3,000 words – in addition to full length research articles. From time to time, it also publishes special issues on matters of importance to economies in the Asia-Pacific region.

All manuscripts will undergo a rigorous double-blind peer-review process.

Manuscripts should be sent by e-mail to the Managing Editor of the Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Journal: [escap-apsdj@un.org](mailto:escap-apsdj@un.org)

For more details, please visit [www.unescap.org/publication-series/APSDJ](http://www.unescap.org/publication-series/APSDJ).

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

References to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

References to “tons” are to metric tons, unless otherwise specified.

A solidus (/) between dates (e.g. 1980/81) indicates a financial year, a crop year or an academic year.

Use of a hyphen between dates (e.g. 1980-1985) indicates the full period involved, including the beginning and end years.

The following symbols have been used in the tables throughout the journal:

Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.

An em-dash (—) indicates that the amount is nil or negligible.

A hyphen (-) indicates that the item is not applicable.

A point (.) is used to indicate decimals.

A space is used to distinguish thousands and millions.

Totals may not add precisely because of rounding.

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## EDITORIAL

I am pleased to introduce this year's second issue of the *Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Journal* (APSDJ, Vol. 29, No. 2, November 2022). Keeping with the *Journal's* policy, this issue contains an overview of the social outlook of the region, with a focus on overcoming the challenges in building a healthy, protected and productive workforce for achieving inclusive and sustainable development in the face of global megatrends, such as climate change, digitalization and rapid ageing. It suggests policies to improve access to decent work and extend universal social protection and universal health coverage.

“From lab to jab” is the special theme of this issue. Five original research papers include discussions on various aspects for ensuring affordable access to and equity in administering COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

Focusing on the attempt by developing countries to obtain temporary waivers of key obligations under the WTO Trade Related Intellectual Rights (TRIPS), Antony Taubman discusses the critical role of international solidarity. He suggests practical steps needed by national governments for producing and distributing COVID-19 vaccines and treatments without the consent of the holders of intellectual property rights.

Padmashree Sampath assesses welfare effects of the rise in trade measures on pharmaceutical products stemming from the COVID-19 crisis. She classifies the plethora of trade measures and advances ways in which such trade measures can be used in the interest of local production and public health.

Pralok Gupta and Ayona Bhattacharjee analyse trade and trade barriers related to vaccines and vaccine inputs. They recommend diversifying import sources of vaccines and vaccine inputs, lowering tariffs, reducing export restrictions and using trade agreements to ease trade restrictions.

Despite tight global supply, Valerie Ulep and Beverly Lorraine Ho argue that health system challenges, particularly in terms of financing, service delivery, human resources, regulatory and governance are important drivers in ensuring equity in vaccine administration and treatments. They discuss measures needed to strengthen the health system to ensure equitable administration of COVID-19 vaccines.

Gavin Yamey, Kaci Kennedy McDade, Wenhui Mao and Ekene Osakwe estimate that in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific, the annual financing gap for vaccine research and development (R&D) for neglected diseases is approximately \$2 billion, and the annual gap for vaccine R&D for emerging infectious diseases is

between \$50 million and \$170 million. They propose a variety of mechanisms to mobilize financing for vaccine R&D.

The issue also includes contributions from policymakers on the theme of affordable and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. Mariângela Simão, Allison Colbert, Christophe Rerat and Deirdre Dimancesco highlight the importance of cooperation at the global and regional levels, especially in the areas of regulation, to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of health products, and pricing policies and procurement strategies to align with the goals of equitable access and affordability. Satvinder Singh discusses practical steps taken by the ASEAN countries and the Association's secretariat to ensure supply chain connectivity and resiliency in the post-pandemic recovery in South-East Asia.

The invited paper of Santosh Mehrotra provides an analysis of social security systems data from seven Asian countries. It is a matter of concern that despite high levels of per capita income and rapid growth in a majority of Asian economies, there is a lack of social insurance, indicating large-scale informality in the workforce. The paper includes a discussion of the barriers to social insurance schemes for informal workers and suggestions for the way forward.

The issue also includes two book reviews: *The World Trade Organization Needs to Prepare Better for Future Pandemics* by Xiankun Lu, and *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Central Asia* (Rico Isaacs and Erica Marat, eds.) by Zulfan Tadjoeddin

I sincerely hope policymakers, academics, researchers and development practitioners will find this issue of the *Journal* extremely useful and interesting.

Finally, I regret to inform you that Professor Clem Tisdell, one of our Advisory Board members, passed away on 14 July 2022 at the age of 82. The world has lost a pioneer in theoretical and applied environmental economics, and a passionate advocate of sustainable development. I am pleased that we have been able to include a tribute to Prof. Tisdell by Mohammad Alauddin, one of his former Ph. D. students and long-time research associates.

*Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana*

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and  
Executive Secretary of ESCAP