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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Committee on Environment and Development

### Seventh session

Bangkok and online, 29 November–1 December 2022

Agenda item 3

### Protecting our planet through regional cooperation and solidarity in Asia and the Pacific

## Terms of reference of the Technical Expert Group on Environment and Development

### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

The present document was prepared pursuant to the decision taken by the Committee on Environment and Development at its sixth session, in December 2020, to establish, within existing resources, the Technical Expert Group on Environment and Development to enhance regional exchange and to mobilize technical expertise in support of the efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to accelerate environmental and sustainable development action. In that same decision, the Committee requested the secretariat to organize the preparation, as appropriate, of the terms of reference of the Technical Expert Group and to submit them to member States for their consideration.

On 29 November 2022, during its seventh session, the Committee considered the terms of reference annexed to ESCAP/CED/2022/3 and amended them in plenary. The Committee may wish to consider adopting the terms of reference annexed to the present document, which reflect the amendments made in plenary, and provide further guidance to the secretariat on the holding of Technical Expert Group meetings.

## I. Background

1. At its sixth session, held on 9 and 10 December 2020, the Committee on Environment and Development decided to establish, within existing resources, the Technical Expert Group on Environment and Development to enhance regional exchange and to mobilize technical expertise in support of the efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to accelerate environmental and sustainable development action.

2. In that same decision, the Committee requested the secretariat:

(a) To organize the preparation, as appropriate, of the terms of reference of the Technical Expert Group and to submit them to member States for their consideration;

(b) To seek nominations of experts from member States three weeks prior to the first meeting of the Technical Expert Group.

3. It is expected that the Technical Expert Group will support the implementation of relevant ESCAP resolutions and the ministerial declarations on environment and development. The decision taken by the Committee at its sixth session to establish the Technical Expert Group is consistent with the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific, 2017, including in respect of support to be provided to ESCAP members and associate members by promoting the review of progress at the regional level on the areas identified in the Ministerial Declaration through the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

4. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has illustrated the need to incorporate environmental action to protect human and planetary health.

5. The Technical Expert Group should encourage the adoption of policies and mobilize technical expertise in support of efforts by ESCAP to accelerate environmental and sustainable development action. Furthermore, the Technical Expert Group should strengthen efforts to implement relevant ESCAP resolutions on the environment and development through enhanced regional cooperation, including the sharing of best practices.

6. In this context, the Technical Expert Group should focus periodically on specific environmental issues identified in the ministerial declarations on environment and development for Asia and the Pacific, and the thematic areas discussed during the sessions of the Committee.

## **II. Issues for consideration by the Committee**

7. The Committee may wish to consider:

(a) Adopting the terms of reference annexed to the present document;

(b) Requesting the secretariat to organize a call for nominations from members and associate members, in accordance with the Committee's decision, and to hold the first meeting of the Technical Expert Group as soon as practicable.

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<sup>1</sup> ESCAP/74/10/Add.1, para. 21.

## Annex

### Terms of reference of the Technical Expert Group on Environment and Development

#### I. Overall functions

1. The Technical Expert Group on Environment and Development was established as a subsidiary body of the Committee on Environment and Development, which is the main body of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for promoting environmental policies and strategies, including the sustainable management and development of the environment and natural resources. The Technical Expert Group will support the achievement of the objective set out in the subprogramme on environment and development of the ESCAP programme of work<sup>1</sup> by:

(a) Facilitating the timely exchange of information and technical discussions among experts from ministries or other public institutions, other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, and ESCAP on environment and development matters;

(b) Providing technical feedback and advice, as appropriate, to the Environment and Development Division on opportunities to accelerate action across the Asia-Pacific region in environment and sustainable development areas;

(c) Providing technical feedback and advice to the Environment and Development Division on effective ways and modalities to advance actions in the areas of environment and sustainable development through intergovernmental processes, with the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

2. The Technical Expert Group will define its priority outputs and activities among the thematic areas with clear outcomes and specific timelines and may establish a workplan.

#### II. Composition

3. The Technical Expert Group will comprise technical experts nominated by ESCAP members and associate members who have recognized competence in matters related to the environment and sustainable development. It may be open to the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders, as appropriate. Each member and associate member may nominate a maximum of two experts.

4. On a case-by-case basis, members and associate members may delegate representation to appropriate national experts to ensure specific thematic expertise on the specific issue to be considered by the Technical Expert Group.

5. Experts are nominated for three-year terms. The term of an expert may be extended by a decision of the nominating member or associate member. Experts may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

6. Experts are not remunerated for their service. In line with applicable rules and regulations of the United Nations, relevant expenses may be supported by the secretariat for participation in meetings. Nevertheless,

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<sup>1</sup> A/77/6 (Sect. 19), paras. 19.70–19.85.

members and associate members are generally expected to support the participation of their representatives.

7. At its first meeting, the Technical Expert Group shall elect, from among its members and for terms of three years, a Chair and a Vice-Chair to assist with the holding and conduct of its meetings. The Chair and the Vice-Chair shall constitute the bureau of the Technical Expert Group.

### **III. Conduct**

8. The Environment and Development Division of ESCAP shall serve as the secretariat of the Technical Expert Group. In that capacity, it shall, inter alia: disseminate documents in accessible formats; support the drafting of provisional agendas for the meetings, as appropriate, the holding of meetings and the issuance of meeting notices; and facilitate reporting to ESCAP bodies.

9. The Technical Expert Group and the ESCAP secretariat will coordinate the organization of meetings on a quarterly basis, or as needed, to enable the Technical Expert Group to carry out its functions.

10. Documents and materials produced by or for the Technical Expert Group will be shared with representatives of all members and associate members, regardless of their participation in the Technical Expert Group.

11. The Technical Expert Group shall report regularly to the Committee on all aspects of its work.

12. The present terms of reference may be amended as necessary. Any proposed amendment to the terms of reference shall be brought to the attention of members and associate members for their consideration and approval, as appropriate.

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