



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
16 August 2019

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and
Financing for Development

Second session

Bangkok, 6–8 November 2019

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the second session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development (section I) and the annotations to the provisional agenda (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into economic policymaking.
3. Strengthening regional tax cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.
4. Enhancing regional cooperation to leverage financing for the countries with special needs.
5. Subprogramme on macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development:
 - (a) Activities carried out in 2018 and 2019 under the subprogramme in light of the recommendations of the first session of the Committee;
 - (b) Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.
6. Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.
7. Dates and venue of and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its second session.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening statements

A tentative programme for the opening of the session will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/committee-macroeconomic-poverty-financing-second-session.

(b) Election of officers

The list of participants will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/committee-macroeconomic-poverty-financing-second-session.

The Committee will elect a chair and two vice-chairs for the session.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CMPF/2019/L.1)

Annotation

The Committee will adopt the agenda, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

2. Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into economic policymaking

Documentation

Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into economic policymaking (ESCAP/CMPF/2019/1)

Annotation

Economic policies have typically been geared towards accelerating gross domestic product growth, but such a singular focus is no longer desirable in the face of inequality, environmental degradation and climate change, which affect all societies and the health of the planet. Indeed, proactively addressing these challenges is better for the economy. Through various channels, including national planning and budgetary processes as well as fiscal incentives for behavioural change and innovation, economic policymakers could step up their contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2019*, the importance of raising ambitions beyond economic growth was underscored, a framework to coherently pursue the Sustainable Development Goals in the region was provided and a reorientation of policy priorities for a greater focus on investments in people and the planet was called for.

Given the growing interest among countries in Asia and the Pacific in aligning economic policies with sustainable development priorities, there is room to strengthen policy research and facilitate peer learning on how economic policies, broadly defined as those under the purview of economic and finance ministries, could be deployed in a more effective, coordinated and

coherent manner in support of the 2030 Agenda. Document ESCAP/CMPF/2019/1 contains a discussion of holistic and integrated approaches that could help to translate ambitions into tangible outcomes and facilitate the mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals into economic policymaking.

The Committee is well positioned to deliberate and provide guidance on such matters, including policy research topics and capacity development areas that the secretariat should prioritize. The Committee may also wish to discuss how economic policies that support the Sustainable Development Goals could be mainstreamed into relevant regional and subregional forums and the work of respective national think tanks.

The Committee may also wish to encourage members to share their perspectives with regard to mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into economic policymaking. To that end, specific examples of policies being pursued would be most useful.

3. Strengthening regional tax cooperation in Asia and the Pacific

Documentation

Strengthening regional tax cooperation in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CMPF/2019/2)

Annotation

As global economic ties extend and cooperation deepens, taxation, predominantly a matter of domestic policy, is increasingly being recognized as a multilateral policy challenge. Widespread tax evasion by multinational corporations and wealthy individuals has extended beyond national borders to pose a common challenge to countries worldwide, while the emergence of the digital economy and new business models has raised new questions about the core principles of taxation. Shoring up pertinent policy measures against tax base erosion, in particular in developing countries, and ensuring a fair allocation of tax revenues would be vital for financing sustainable development and effectively pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, the Asia-Pacific countries are not yet fully prepared for broad-based regional tax cooperation. Document ESCAP/CMPF/2019/2 contains background information on pertinent issues and a discussion of the status of regional tax cooperation. The document serves to highlight that, unlike Latin America or Africa, the Asia-Pacific region remains the only major developing region that lacks a region-wide tax body for policy dialogue, consensus building and focused technical support. The existing subregional tax cooperation mechanisms, such as the Study Group on Asian Tax Administration and Research and the Pacific Islands Tax Administrators Association, have yet to develop institutions and capacities in that direction, and the cooperation between different subregions on tax matters has been minimal. In particular, the smaller and least developed countries of the region remain underrepresented and inadequately supported in various regional and global tax cooperation initiatives.

As the major international taxation reform initiatives push forward and extend their coverage to an increasing number of the region's countries that are not members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or the Group of 20, there is a greater need than ever for a region-wide entry

point for effective outreach to the Asia-Pacific countries, broad-based policy dialogue on tax matters, coordination and consensus building, and increased synergy in the support provided by different stakeholders in the region.

The Committee, as the only inclusive region-wide intergovernmental platform for discussing issues related to financing for development, may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on those issues so that it can continue to support regional dialogue and cooperation on tax matters. That guidance will also facilitate the secretariat's efforts to strengthen regional participation in and contribution to international tax cooperation through the United Nations system. To that end, the Committee may wish to consider forming a working group, which would report to it, to explore actionable opportunities for strengthening tax cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, in close consultation with existing subregional tax cooperation mechanisms, pertinent United Nations bodies, specialized organizations and other stakeholders.

4. Enhancing regional cooperation to leverage financing for the countries with special needs

Documentation

Enhancing regional cooperation to leverage financing for the countries with special needs (ESCAP/CMPF/2019/3)

Annotation

Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, collectively referred to as countries with special needs, face various structural impediments, such as small market size, remote access to large markets, and limited production and export capacity. The impediments limit not only the availability of financing within the countries with special needs but also their access to external financing. According to recent estimates by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the additional annual financial investments that are needed to attain the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific countries with special needs are much greater than in other developing countries in the region. One of the investment areas that requires sizeable additional investments is infrastructure development.

To develop infrastructure that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, the Asia-Pacific countries with special needs will need to work together with regional peers and development partners to mobilize the needed financing. Document ESCAP/CMPF/2019/3 contains an overview of the relevant issues and serves to highlight the challenges faced by countries with special needs in that regard. Some policy options discussed in the document include reallocating public resources, leveraging domestic and international private finance, exploring innovative financing instruments and strengthening regional cooperation initiatives. The document also serves to underscore the conviction that prudent planning, selection and implementation of infrastructure projects are critical to the achievement of infrastructure development that provides value for money and supports the 2030 Agenda. This is possible through the development of national infrastructure financing strategies that are underpinned by robust governance mechanisms.

The Committee may wish to request the secretariat to strengthen the ESCAP-coordinated Infrastructure Financing and Public-Private Partnership Network of Asia and the Pacific. The Network is a good example of the kind of regional cooperation that the secretariat is already facilitating. The Network

facilitates the exchange of knowledge and skills among countries with special needs and enhances peer learning with regard to various financing modalities. The Committee may also wish to provide guidance on other issues related to financing for development, including the policy research topics and capacity development areas that the secretariat should prioritize.

The Committee may wish to encourage members to share their views on the issues raised in the document and provide examples of financing strategies that they are pursuing to support the 2030 Agenda. That discussion could be of great value to countries with special needs.

5. Subprogramme on macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development

(a) Activities carried out in 2018 and 2019 under the subprogramme in light of the recommendations of the first session of the Committee

Documentation

Report on the activities carried out in 2018 and 2019 under the subprogramme on macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development in light of the recommendations of the first session of the Committee (ESCAP/CMPF/2019/4)

Annotation

Document ESCAP/CMPF/2019/4 contains an overview of the steps taken by the secretariat in response to the requests and recommendations of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development at its first session, held in December 2017. At that time, the Committee recommended and requested the secretariat to act on nine points in the following broad areas: (1) strengthening of analytical work on macroeconomic assessment, policies to reduce poverty and strategies to finance sustainable development; (2) supporting countries with special needs, including through capacity development, and synergizing the review of the implementation of global programmes of action for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States at the regional level with the 2030 Agenda; and (3) prioritizing and mainstreaming financing for development issues into the secretariat's work, such as domestic resource mobilization, infrastructure financing through public-private partnerships and capital market development, and financing of small and medium-sized enterprises, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

The Committee may wish to provide feedback to the secretariat with regard to the steps taken by the secretariat in response to the Committee's requests and recommendations. The Committee may also wish to provide guidance to the secretariat on further support for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in their efforts to reduce poverty and implement the 2030 Agenda. Areas that the Committee may wish to consider in that regard include the following: (1) strengthening financial inclusion and financing for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in countries with special needs, in particular least developed countries; (2) developing domestic capital markets by providing focused support to countries with special needs, in particular landlocked developing countries; and (3) and strengthening the capacities of countries with special needs, in particular small island developing States, to access and

leverage international financial resources through such means as climate finance, blended finance and the issuance of green bonds.

The Committee may also wish to provide guidance to the secretariat on the analytical work, research and capacity-building activities that members consider most useful for their specific circumstances, with the ultimate purpose of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

(b) Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme

Documentation

Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme (ESCAP/CMPF/2019/5)

Annotation

At its first session, in addition to the nine requests and recommendations on substantive issues addressed in document ESCAP/CMPF/2019/4, the Committee also recommended that further discussion be held to review its terms of reference to better align them with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. To that end, document ESCAP/CMPF/2019/5 contains a brief discussion on the proposed updates to the Committee's terms of reference. The Committee may wish to review the proposed changes and provide guidance to the secretariat.

Document ESCAP/CMPF/2019/5 also serves to highlight the intended future focus of the work of the secretariat in the area of macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development, taking into account the programme direction and priorities outlined in the programme plan for 2020. The Committee may wish to provide guidance on this matter so that the outcome of its deliberations can be integrated into the programme plan and priorities for 2021.

6. Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session

Member States may wish to circulate, in advance, proposals and/or texts of draft resolutions on priority issues relating to macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development for consideration by the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.

7. Dates and venue of and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee

The Committee may wish to deliberate on the tentative dates and venue of and provisional agenda for its third session, to be held in 2021.

8. Other matters

The Committee may wish to consider other matters not covered under the items mentioned above.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its second session

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/CMPF/2019/L.2)

Annotation

The Committee will consider and adopt the report on its second session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.
