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Trends and progress in the field of environment and development: Progress in implementing the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

Progress in implementing the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in Astana from 27 September to 2 October 2010, resulted in the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2010, the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and Pacific, 2011-2015 and the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative.

While the outcomes of the Conference underscored that their implementation relies primarily on strong political commitment as well as effective policy actions at the national level, the present document outlines the key actions that were taken by the secretariat immediately after the Conference, as well as relevant ongoing and planned actions, to support national-level implementation efforts.

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I. Introduction

1. The Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific was organized by ESCAP in cooperation with the Government of Kazakhstan and held in Astana from 27 September to 2 October 2010.

2. The Conference gathered together a total of over 800 participants and stakeholders, including ministers and heads of delegations from 46 States members of ESCAP. In addition to the intergovernmental meetings of senior officials and ministers held during the Conference, more than 32 side and parallel events were organized during the same period, which also provided a platform for wider consultation and debates that could contribute to nurturing a strong partnership towards environmentally sustainable economic growth in the Asian and Pacific region.

3. The outcome documents of the Conference were the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2010, the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and Pacific, 2011-2015 and the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative (see E/ESCAP/67/8, chap I). The significance of these outcome documents was affirmed by the Commission in its resolution 67/3.

4. The implementation of the Conference outcomes counts primarily on strong political commitment as well as effective policy actions at the national level, the progress of which needs to be reported on the basis of a comprehensive survey to be conducted in the mid-point stage and at the end of the five-year period leading up to the next Ministerial Conference, which is to be held in 2015.

5. The purpose of the present document is to outline the key actions that were taken by the secretariat immediately after the Conference, as well as relevant ongoing and planned actions, to support national-level efforts to implement the Conference outcomes.

II. The implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Implementation Plan

6. The Ministerial Declaration is a key forward-looking document which recognizes that “green growth, as appropriately adapted to country-specific circumstances and understood in the context of sustainable development” is “one of the approaches for supporting rapid economic growth, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and environmental sustainability”. Member States also agreed to work together on a range of sectoral and cross-sectoral issues in order to promote a sustainable development path in the region, following the overall principles contained in the Ministerial Declaration.

7. The Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2011-2015, was adopted to enable ESCAP and other organizations to assist member countries in taking appropriate action, by promoting regional, subregional and national capacities for achieving sustainable development. The Plan outlines the six areas of key interventions, including (a) harmonizing rapid economic growth, employment generation and environmental sustainability; (b) promoting sustainable urban development; (c) enhancing ecological carrying capacity;

(d) improving energy resource management for sustainable development; (e) improving water resource management for sustainable development; and (f) enhancing the resilience of socio-economic development to climate change. The ESCAP secretariat has been requested to assist member countries in implementing the above-mentioned activities, based on priorities identified by member countries, and to report on the progress. An overview of the ongoing and planned action by ESCAP appears below.

1. Programme areas

(a) Harmonizing rapid economic growth, employment generation and environmental sustainability

8. The latest issue of the ESCAP series on environmental sustainability in Asia and the Pacific is entitled *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience*, and presents a comprehensive analysis on the trends of resource use, material flow and efficiency, and provides knowledge support to aid in the strengthening of institutions and their policies in order to better facilitate and empower different stakeholder actions.¹ (Action areas A(a) and F(b)) It outlines changes in the socio-economic outlook that have taken place in the last five years, focusing on the increasingly evident resource constraints and implications of sustainable development and on steps needed for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It presents data, produced for it by the Commonwealth and Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), that will allow governments to identify trends in resource use. It also outlines a strategy for harmonizing economic growth objectives with environmental protection and for specifying priorities and enabling conditions that can be adapted to each government's situation. At the same time, it looks at the concept of resilience and identifies the practical impact of this concept on policy and management approaches, and highlights the changing challenges and requirements for governance in the context of sustainable development. Published in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNEP, it is the third in the ADB *Asian Environment Outlook* series and is complemented by the UNEP report *Resource Efficiency: Economics and Outlook for Asia and the Pacific*, which includes an extended analysis of the data presented in *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience*. At the time of preparation of the present report, the *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience* report was being finalized.

9. With financial assistance from the Republic of Korea, ESCAP is developing a low-carbon green growth road map which will provide a list of concrete policy options and strategies from which countries may choose should they wish to pursue a low-carbon green growth development path. In particular, the road map will focus on: (a) practical approaches for mainstreaming relevant environmental and socio-economic actions into national development plans; (b) incorporating environmental costs into market prices; (c) using economic and market-based instruments that are supportive of sustainable development and green growth; (d) promoting eco-efficient innovation through public and private investment in the application of environmentally sound technologies and infrastructure; (e) developing a circular economy stimulated by government-initiated

¹ A preview of the publication was published ahead of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (see ST/ESCAP/2582).

investments and procurement, eco-industrial parks and sustainable waste management: waste-for-wealth and waste-as-resource-for-products; and (f) promoting corporate social responsibility and green jobs. (Action areas A (b), (d), (e), (h) and (i))

10. Also with financial assistance from the Republic of Korea, ESCAP is in the planning phase of a project that will facilitate further development and application of eco-efficiency indicators and their use in economic modelling. The objective is to better support the formulation of economic policy and decision-making in order to stimulate eco-efficient and resource-efficient productivity. The project will also work towards building the capacity of government research institutions and policy analysis units in pilot countries. It is planned to start in early 2012. (Action area A (f))

(b) Promoting sustainable urban development

11. ESCAP is implementing diverse projects on strengthening capacity and institutional building for sustainable urban planning and design, including the promotion of eco-efficient infrastructure (Action area B (a)):

(a) With funding from the Development Account, ESCAP has developed guidelines for the development of eco-efficient and socially inclusive infrastructure. Prepared jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Urban Design Lab of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, the guidelines provide practical tools for city planners and decision makers to reform urban planning and infrastructure design according to the principles of eco-efficiency and social inclusiveness;

(b) ESCAP is conducting research on greening building codes in selected countries of Asia and the Pacific in partnership with the Asian Institute of Technology. The objective is to undertake a review of the source codes from which other building codes in Asia-Pacific countries are derived, as well as other advanced codes, to identify “green elements.” Strategies will then be proposed for incorporating those green elements into the codes of developing countries in a manner that will not increase the various costs of constructing buildings. In this context, innovative practices will also be documented;

(c) ESCAP is undertaking a project funded by the Russian Federation that focuses on strengthening sustainable urban infrastructure development and management in Central Asia. The first phase of the project focused on Uzbekistan. A country-level study was undertaken that identified challenges and opportunities in strengthening municipal governance. The study was extensively discussed in a national seminar which was also attended by experts and organizations from other countries in the subregion. The second phase covers other Central Asian republics;

(d) The project on eco-efficient water infrastructure was implemented from 2008 to August 2011. It was funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency of the Republic of Korea. The project was implemented in partnership with UN-Habitat, the Korea Institute of Construction Technology, the Korea Water Forum, the International Water Management Institute, the University of Technology, Sydney, and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea. A total of eight country capacity-building projects, in Bhutan, China, Indonesia Malaysia,

Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines and Viet Nam, and four pilot demonstration projects were implemented to develop policy options and strategic action plans on eco-efficient water infrastructure. In an effort to further promote regional voices and cooperation, ESCAP also organized three regional workshops on eco-efficient water infrastructure. Key research papers of the project were developed to assist the policymakers of member States in promoting sustainable water infrastructure as follows: (i) “How can we develop eco-efficient infrastructure”; (ii) “Guidelines for the establishment of national strategies for eco-efficient water infrastructure development” based on regional practices; (iii) “Generic guidelines for an eco-efficient approach to the development of water infrastructure based on Australian experiences”; (iv) “Guidelines on sustainable rehabilitation of small urban water bodies”; (v) “Status and challenges in water infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific”; and (vi) “Good practices for eco-efficient approaches to water resources planning and management”. These papers were circulated in the regional workshops and international conferences to share regional knowledge and practices.

12. In order to promote integrated resource recovery as an economically viable approach to solid waste, ESCAP is implementing the project entitled “Pro-poor sustainable solid waste management” which focuses on the establishment of integrated resource recovery centres in developing countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. Increased economic growth and prosperity in the region is coupled with increasing generation of solid waste. Governments face increasing costs for collection and disposal in small towns and secondary cities — while public health and the environment suffer from the damaging effects of untreated solid waste. Most countries in the region agree that solid waste is a problem to be addressed and most policies focus on collecting and disposing wastes. This project is aimed at promoting an attitudinal change that treats both inorganic and organic waste as a resource from which governments can earn revenue and create employment, while at the same time protecting the environment. It also links solid waste management with carbon financing to increase the profitability of the integrated resource recovery centres. The project focuses on secondary cities and small towns, and is now starting to explore waste-to-energy approaches as well as linking wastewater treatment to solid waste management. (Action area B (b))

13. ESCAP is undertaking active research on pro-poor eco-settlements. The objective of said research is to develop mechanisms and approaches that look at urban poor settlements holistically and identify approaches that would improve the living environment, livelihood and resilience of the poor while promoting environmental protection. The project is being implemented in the Philippines in partnership with civil society organizations, community-based organizations and various government agencies. (Action area B (d))

14. With focus on the role of local government in achieving sustainable urban development, ESCAP has promoted the sharing of knowledge, good practices and experiences in the region (Action area B (e)):

(a) ESCAP took the lead in organizing the Fifth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in partnership with over 30 organizations within and outside the United Nations system (see E/ESCAP/CED(2)/2). Over 900 national and local government officials, academics, members of civil society and the

private sector, grass-roots leaders and United Nations representatives from 45 countries participated in the Forum, which was held in Bangkok from 20 to 25 June 2011, and discussed how best to strengthen cooperation in moving Asia and the Pacific towards a more inclusive and sustainable urban future. Furthermore, ESCAP is strengthening the exchange of knowledge and expertise with United Nations agencies in other regions and UN-Habitat to enhance the application of innovative approaches in urban water, urban energy and solid waste management for sustainable urban development. A key associated event of the Forum was the Ministerial Dialogue on Citywide Slum Upgrading. A number of ministers and deputy ministers participated in both the Dialogue and the Forum;

(b) ESCAP launched its flagship publication in the urban sector, *The State of Asian Cities 2010/2011*. The report was prepared jointly with UN-Habitat and in partnership with UNEP and the Asia-Pacific Section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG-ASPAC). The report presents an overview of the demographic transition from rural to urban areas; the urban economy; urban poverty and equity; urban environment; and urban governance and finance. ESCAP is now in the process of preparing the second *State of Asian Cities* report. In addition to the generic chapters on urban demography, urban economy, urban society and culture, urban environment and urban governance, the second report will also contain thought pieces on a selection of emerging urban issues in Asia and the Pacific;

(c) Bearing in mind that, increasingly, cities in Asia and the Pacific are facing the impact of climate change, ESCAP, together with UN-Habitat, is undertaking a project aimed at preparing a “quick guide” for policymakers regarding cities and climate change and at documenting innovative practices on climate change adaptation. Under the project, there will be pilot projects in selected countries to demonstrate how adaptation can be mainstreamed in the areas of urban planning and management.

(c) Enhancing ecological carrying capacity

15. Sustainable management of natural resources is critical to maintaining and enhancing ecological carrying capacity. In an effort to help develop enabling policy conditions aimed at maximizing such functions and to facilitate the investments necessary to support the related actions, ESCAP implemented a regional project on payment for ecosystem services. The project established two pilot arrangements in Aceh Province, Indonesia, in which a water utility and a liquefied natural gas company, both of which rely on a good supply of water, have made investments to help secure sustainably managed and protected watersheds.

16. The project also resulted in payment for ecosystem services being recognized as a policy tool in three provincial *qanuns* or laws: one already passed in Parliament, one under consideration and one in the pipeline. A project impact assessment identifies the following outcomes: new institutions for joint management of watersheds and for managing arrangements regarding payment for ecosystem services (watershed forums); increased income for villagers; and provisions in draft policy to support replication. Other project impacts are increased awareness and capacity via documents produced by the project.

17. The information and experiences were shared among regional countries via a series of three workshops that were co-organized with the ADB Environment Operations Centre and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Centre for Biodiversity, and the now-closed Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Programme. A concluding workshop held in Banda Aceh in June was attended by more than 70 participants from Indonesia and 10 other countries in the region. Participants noted government officials had acquired, over time, an increased understanding of and the development of the concept as a tool that can be adapted to each country's situation. They also called for more capacity-building activity. Following the project, there has been evidence of project impacts further afield, and the continuing need for support and technical cooperation. (Action area C (a))

(d) Improving energy resource management for sustainable development

18. In order to promote a better understanding of the co-benefit approach to enhancing energy security and achieve sustainable development, ESCAP published the study *Towards a Low Carbon Development Path for Asia and the Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities to the Energy Sector (ST/ESCAP/2589)*, providing policymakers and other stakeholders with different options on energy security and describing the steps towards a low carbon development path. The publication provides a clear analysis of co-benefits by identifying the developmental and environmental benefits of the low carbon development path mainly through improving energy efficiency and increasing use of renewable energy. (Action areas D (a) and (h))

19. The co-benefit approach was also applied in a project on strengthening institutional capacity in promoting energy efficiency. The project placed emphasis on identifying and quantifying both the developmental and the environmental benefits of energy efficiency, with a view to obtaining stronger political commitment from all stakeholders. The need to establish an energy efficiency baseline that also contributes towards development was recognized particularly by Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. The project was funded by the Republic of Korea and implemented in partnership with subregional organizations, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Energy Centre, the ASEAN Centre for Energy and the Eurasian Economic Community. After targeted country and subregional studies, an expert meeting in April 2011 reviewed the major gaps in implementing energy efficiency policies. ESCAP is currently producing guidelines for strengthening energy efficiency planning and management in Asia and the Pacific, and a Web-based learning tool presenting good practices for policymakers across the region. (Action area D (e))

20. ESCAP continues to promote energy security through regional and subregional energy cooperation, in particular, in the areas of sustainable usage of energy resources, enhancing energy efficiency and energy conservation, clean energy technologies and the development of alternative energy (Action area D (b)):

(a) To promote energy security through subregional and regional cooperation, the secretariat continues to facilitate the implementation of the Intergovernmental Collaborative Mechanism on Energy Cooperation in

North-East Asia. Currently, two working groups have been established: (a) Working Group on Energy Planning and Policy, and (b) Working Group on Coal. Both are implementing joint studies, aimed at developing concrete development projects that could enhance energy security in the North-East Asian subregion;

(b) In its resolution 67/2 on promoting regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy in Asia and the Pacific, the Commission renewed and strengthened the mandate to expand and deepen the dialogue between countries and regional and subregional organizations in promoting energy security in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, it requested the Executive Secretary to convene, in 2013, the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum at the ministerial level. As a direct follow-up to the resolution, the secretariat launched an e-Forum on Asia-Pacific Energy Security Cooperation. The first session of the e-Forum covered three themes: (i) coping with energy price shocks; (ii) increasing the affordability of renewable energy and energy efficiency options; and (iii) regional and subregional energy connectivity. The e-Forum has proved to be a powerful tool that enables simultaneous discussion on a number of issues relevant to energy security over an extended period;

(c) In following up to these activities, the secretariat will also organize an expert group meeting on sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific, the objective of which will be to review critical issues that could be presented at the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum and to develop a road map towards the organization of the Forum. The meeting will be held in September 2011, in close consultation with other United Nations entities and agencies, including UNEP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), together with ADB.

21. Access to energy services is a prerequisite for development. The development of public-private renewable energy partnerships is an innovative financing modality for providing such services. In this connection, the secretariat has successfully mobilized financial resources through the Development Account and from the International Fund for Agricultural Development to address innovative financing and appropriate technologies for rural energy development. ESCAP is exchanging knowledge and expertise with regional commissions in Africa (ECA) and Latin America (ECLAC) on engaging such public-private partnerships to enhance the application of renewable energy. As an example, a pro-poor green business model has been identified for the provision of renewable energy in poor rural communities in Samoa, through the use of biogas technology. (Action areas D (d) and (g))

22. Addressing the energy needs of least developed countries is at the core of the ESCAP technical cooperation plan. In 2010, ESCAP trained government officials from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the use of biogas in rural households. In 2011, the design to demonstrate biogas production for use in livestock farms was completed, and related equipment was installed. The demonstration project will utilize animal waste from a pig farm and will generate heat to keep the livestock warm during the severe winter months in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The result is energy conservation and financial savings gained as opposed to providing the same heat by burning fossil fuel. ESCAP also worked on efficiency improvement and pollution control in a thermal power

plant and a high voltage electricity transmission in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. (Action areas D (d) and (g))

23. In an effort to strengthen policies for financing energy efficiency, ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) organized the Second International Energy Efficiency Forum, which was in Dushanbe from 12 to 14 September 2011 and provided an opportunity for member States to share their strategies and schemes on innovative financing. During the Forum, ESCAP organized a workshop to seek guidance from the participating member countries in North and Central Asia regarding the development of a policy database on energy efficiency to serve as a tool for policymakers. The database will enable the comparison of energy-efficiency policies, legislation and agents needed to form the market to promote energy efficiency. (Action areas D (e) and (g))

(e) Improving water resource management for sustainable development

24. ESCAP promotes integrated water resources management (IWRM) and integrated river basin management (IRBM) as fundamental strategies for effective and sustainable water resource management. Regional cooperation is at the core of the ESCAP strategy for ensuring the implementation of both IWRM and IRBM. (Action areas E (a) (a), (a) (d), (a) (e) and (b) (c))

(a) ESCAP remains supportive of the Mekong River Commission (MRC);

(b) To support an effective mechanism for collaboration on water resource management among decision makers, ESCAP has been working with the secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum and the Department of Water Resources of the Government of Thailand to prepare for the Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit, which will be held in Bangkok on 5 and 6 February 2012, and for the Sixth World Water Forum. ESCAP is taking the lead on the two sub-themes of "household water security" and "economic aspects of water management";

(c) In conjunction with the Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit, ESCAP will organize two workshops, one on capacity-building needs assessments and one on monitoring investments and results in the water sector, to be held on 3 February 2012.

25. To better focus and prioritize regional action, ESCAP identified "hot spots" of multiple challenges (see E/ESCAP/CED(2)/5). Hot spots were defined as countries, areas, or ecosystems with overlapping challenges of; poor access to water and sanitation, deteriorating water quality, limited water availability and increased exposure to climate change and water-related disasters. The regional hot spot analysis revealed that South-East Asian countries are particularly vulnerable, as development priorities ignore the risks from disaster, climate change and poor household water and sanitation access; it also revealed that some Central Asian and South and South-West Asian countries were facing exceptional circumstances because of inadequate preparedness for climate change and poor sanitation respectively. (Action areas E (a) (a), (a) (c) and (a) (d))

26. As part of its regional capacity-building plans, in IWRM, training of trainers was organized in both Myanmar and Thailand to promote river

basin organization management with local host agencies; AguaJaring, CapNET-United Nations Development Programme and DHI. This was followed by a training of trainers on conflict resolution and negotiations on water-related issues in Viet Nam. ESCAP is currently organizing the training of trainers on Lake Management in Inle, back to back with capacity-building needs assessment workshops in Yangon. The participants for all the training of trainers programmes are invited from across the region. (Action areas E (a) (b) and (a) (e))

27. Focusing its capacity-building activities on countries with special needs, ESCAP supported a training programme on integrated watershed management and reforestation for officials from the Ministry of Land and Environment Protection and the State Academy of Sciences of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The highly specialized four-week training course combined lectures, discussions, exercises, case studies, demonstrations, workshops and field visits. The course participants gained knowledge and information related to watershed management, project appraisal as well as project development for sustainable and holistic development. (Action areas E (a) (b) and (a) (d))

28. ESCAP continued to promote the application of eco-efficient approaches for water infrastructure development across the region (Action areas E (a) (b), (b) (b) and (b) (c)):

(a) ESCAP has compiled and disseminated a list of good practices, with a particular focus on eco-efficient urban infrastructure;

(b) Through studies and workshops, ESCAP has been advocating appropriate decentralized and sustainable solutions, such as rainwater harvesting, wastewater treatment, the provision of urban water services for multiple uses and better household water adequacy;

(c) Outreach activities were conducted at the High-level International Conference on the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for life" 2005-2015, held in Dushanbe from 8 to 10 June 2010.

29. With the support of KOICA, ESCAP has initiated a regional dialogue on wastewater management in Asia and the Pacific. The first regional meeting on this topic was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2010 and discussed the latest developments regarding wastewater technologies and led to a framework for synergy among existing programmes and initiatives on wastewater management, also known as the "Kuala Lumpur Initiative". The framework provided opportunities for initiating a "Wastewater Revolution in Asia", following the leadership of the Hashimoto Action Plan II and the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. (Action areas E (a) (a) and (b) (c))

30. ESCAP has also been promoting the modernization of irrigation systems, linking up with regional efforts made by FAO. In the upcoming Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit, ESCAP will work with FAO and other partners to explore the economic dimensions of water and food security, especially as regards the linkage to green growth. (Action area (b) (a))

31. In order to assess the sustainability of water and sanitation systems, including poverty and gender access to water and sanitation, ESCAP undertook field surveys, in five selected countries (Bangladesh, India,

Nepal, the Philippines and Viet Nam). Using a participatory assessment methodology, researchers visited selected rural and urban communities and sought information on the demand responsiveness of systems, their reliability and functionality, their financing mechanisms, and other management conditions. The results of the on-site field assessments were mixed. In general, privately owned systems were found to be more sustainable than community-owned systems, which, in turn, were found to be more sustainable than some publicly provided services. (Action area (b) (c))

32. Among future priorities is building a network of partners to share and develop information on extreme water-related events and climate change projections, on a scale that provides more detail than those that are currently available in developing countries in order to identify vulnerable areas within the region with better accuracy. ESCAP will also continue exploring the economic aspects of water resources management, including financing for eco-efficient water infrastructure, particularly wastewater and sanitation. (Action areas E (c) (a) and (c) (b))

(f) Enhancing the resilience of socio-economic development to climate change

33. A number of activities mentioned above contribute to the necessary interventions in this category.

34. The ESCAP report *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience* provides an analytical base to promote the region's socio-economic resilience to, among other things, climate change. The report stresses adaptive and inclusive governance approaches as a way to increase socio-economic resilience. The project on payment for ecosystem services also addresses socio-economic measures to enhance resilience at the local level. (Action area F (a))

35. In the area of urban vulnerability, the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum provided an opportunity to forge a common understanding of the role of local authorities and other stakeholders, as well as required actions for enhancing the resilience of socio-economic development to climate change in an urban context. (Action area F (b))

36. To build capacity on adapting to climate change, ESCAP is currently drafting a guideline on green growth and climate change the purpose of which is to address the impact of climate change on water-related issues in the region, the challenges faced in managing this impact and the green growth opportunities associated with these challenges. Targeting mid- and high-level officials, the guideline will draw on current events and existing regional experiences. (Action areas F (e))

2. Implementation strategy

37. While national-level implementation of the actions in the above-mentioned programme areas is the responsibility of respective Governments, there are supportive actions that ESCAP can undertake in conformity with the overall strategy of the Regional Implementation Plan, as well as the specific guidance provided in section E below.

(a) Resource mobilization and partnership building

38. ESCAP continues its attempt to maximize the support of country donors, other United Nations entities and other international organizations as well as financial institutions in connection with the above-mentioned activities.

39. At the same time, a number of ESCAP activities support national efforts to achieve environmentally sustainable economic growth aimed at protecting future prospects for economic growth, reducing economic loss and produce net economic benefits, thus narrowing the financial gap.

(b) Capacity-building

40. In collaboration with the Governments of several member States, including the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and with other United Nations entities and international organizations, such as the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNEP, the United Nations Project Office on Governance, the country offices of the United Nations Development Programme in the region, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GTZ), the SWITCH-Asia Network Facility and the Regional Helpdesk on Sustainable Consumption and Production, ESCAP has developed and operated the Green Growth Capacity Development Programme,² which supports policymaking for the development and implementation of national strategies and actions through, among other things, the application of green growth policy tools. Through green growth training-of-trainers seminars, including five conducted at the regional and subregional levels and many others conducted at the national level upon request, more than 200 policymakers have been trained since 2009, when the Programme was launched. The Programme also developed e-learning tools for online and desktop self-learning training with the objective of reaching out to a broader range of policymakers in the region in the most cost-effective manner. An online e-learning facility was developed in partnership with the Asian Institute of Technology, and trainings are being held since the last quarter of 2011.

(c) Access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies

41. The project on eco-efficient water infrastructure has promoted eco-efficiency dimensions in the development planning process by integrating innovative technologies and devices including green-filter and micro-filter membrane system for rainwater/stormwater treatment; and micro-bio reactor (MBR) systems for wastewater treatment; as well as IT-based remote monitoring and controlling systems for decentralized management.

42. ESCAP has established the Regional Training Centre on Pro-poor and Sustainable Solid Waste Management. The first of its kind, it is located in Dhaka and has already provided hands-on training in water treatment, reduction, reuse and recycling (3Rs) and other profit-making approaches as well as relevant technologies, in solid waste management to over 100 national and local government officials.

² See www.greengrowth.org/capacity_building/capacity.asp.

43. Within the framework of its green growth capacity programme, ESCAP supported the successful development and transfer of low-cost and pro-poor technology for the provision of energy, water and sanitation services to poor rural communities through the establishment of local community businesses for maintenance and services. Solar-powered recharging stations and rechargeable lanterns were made available to the villagers of Kampong Prohot and Anlong Ta Ur, in Battambang Province, Cambodia, by the Sunlabob Renewable Energy Company from the Lao People's Democratic Republic via a low-fee rental scheme paid to the village community cooperative. Demand for similar services for neighbouring villages has increased recently. Similar pro-poor business models for the provision of renewable energy (biogas) services, integrating the provision of water and sanitation, was successfully piloted at the campus of Youth With A Mission in the Falelauniu community of the Faleata district, Samoa, and have been successfully replicated in Fiji and Vanuatu. The original technologies for building, operating and maintaining the facility are from Thailand and Viet Nam, while the community cooperative established by the pilot is providing private companies in Samoa with fee-based technical advice.

(d) Stakeholder involvement

44. With a view to strengthening partnerships with the private sector as part of its effort to promote sustainable development, the secretariat has undertaken different activities to share the views and demonstrate different modalities to actively work with the private sector.

45. Within the framework of energy cooperation in North-East Asia, the fourth Government Business Dialogue was held in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea, in November 2011. The theme of the Dialogue was "energy efficiency for ensuring sustainable development in North-East Asia". The Korea Energy Economics Institute supported the organization of this event with a view to (a) sharing knowledge on measures, projects and policies; (b) promoting a dialogue between government business stakeholders aimed at achieving sustainable patterns of growth; and (c) identify potential areas for regional cooperation in North-East Asia.

46. A parallel session, on sustainable business practices for a green economy and energy security, was an integral part of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2011 (see E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/INF/4). The Forum is an annual event led by the Trade and Investment Division in collaboration with other substantive divisions of the secretariat, including the Environment and Development Division. The parallel session recognized, inter-alia (a) the need for stronger public policies for the private sector to actively participate in promoting energy efficiency; (b) the significant achievement of the Government of Thailand in establishing the Energy Conservation Fund and the potential for replication in the region; and (c) the need for the private sector to develop optimized solutions that integrate resources, financing and technologies that are adopted to a specific local context. Such conclusions and recommendations contribute further to the ongoing work of the secretariat in enhancing energy security for sustainable development.

47. The Fifth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum was also successful in putting together over 900 national and local government officials, academics, civil society, the private sector, grass-roots leaders and United Nations officials from 45 countries in Asia and the Pacific and discussing how to strengthen

cooperation in order to move Asia and the Pacific towards a more inclusive and sustainable urban future (see also para. 14(a)).

48. In the field of pro-poor public-private partnership (5P), the secretariat has identified pilot projects on a 5P approach to enhancing access to energy services, highlighting innovative financing and various forms of private sector involvement through a participatory approach. These pilot projects are to be implemented with financial support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

49. Pilot projects are also developed to demonstrate the application of pro-poor green business models within the framework of the Green Growth Capacity Development Programme. The pilot projects, developed in response to requests from member States, cover the provision of renewable energy (biogas), clean water and sanitation facilities, and are implemented with the participation of the private sector and community-based organizations.

50. In an example of private sector participation in regional cooperation under the auspices of ESCAP, a private research institution seconded a staff expert to ESCAP to take part in the development of a regional low carbon/green growth road map. The secretariat will continue its efforts to expand such collaboration with a broader range of institutions in the region.

(e) Initiatives

51. The Ministerial Declaration acknowledges that regional initiatives, such as the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment³ and the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth),⁴ as well as initiatives undertaken by SAARC⁵ and other regional and national initiatives of ESCAP member States provide excellent examples of promoting new approaches to economic growth and have created the necessary impetus to strengthen region-wide cooperation. On this basis, the Regional Implementation Plan presented an indicative list of such initiatives that are to be implemented during the period from 2011 to 2015.

(i) The Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative

52. The Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative,⁶ championed by the Government of Kazakhstan, outlines the blueprint for the first interregional partnership between Europe and Asia and the Pacific, a partnership that is expected to stimulate further cooperation for eco-efficient use of natural resources, investment in ecosystem services, low-carbon development and

³ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific 2000, Kitakyushu, Japan, 31 August-5 September 2000: Ministerial Declaration, Regional Action Programme (2001-2005) and Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment (ST/ESCAP/2096)* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.II.F.12), Part Three.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005 (ST/ESCAP/2379)* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.F.31), Annex III.

⁵ Thimphu statement on climate change. Sixteenth SAARC Summit, Thimphu, 28-29 April 2010 (SAARC/SUMMIT.16/15).

⁶ E/ESCAP/67/8, chap I. Sect. C.

adaptation to climate change, sustainable urban development and the promotion of green business and green technology, as well as sustainable lifestyles and improvement of quality of life.

53. The Government of Kazakhstan established the Green Bridge Office in January 2011 and underlined further its commitment to the Astana Green Bridge Initiative by sponsoring a draft resolution at the sixty-seventh session of the Commission, which was held in May 2011. The Government of Kazakhstan has developed, with expert assistance provided by the secretariat, a Europe–Asia-Pacific partnership programme and an operational mechanism, which was discussed at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, 21-23 September 2011),⁷ which welcomed and supported it.⁸ Such political commitment from the European region will ensure the validity of trans-regional partnerships. Two consultation meetings with partners were held by the Government of Kazakhstan in Astana: the first one was held back-to-back with the Fourth Astana Economic Forum (4-5 May 2011), and the second was held on 17 August 2011.

54. Guided by Commission resolution 67/3, the secretariat will support, as appropriate, the implementation of the Astana Green Bridge Initiative and its proposed programme for partnership between Europe and Asia and the Pacific, through various activities, including participation in meetings and conferences organized by the Government of Kazakhstan and ECE. In support of the above process, the secretariat has conducted various consultations with the Government of Kazakhstan for the purpose of developing a workplan and a partnership programme to implement the Astana Green Bridge Initiative.

(ii) The Seoul Initiative on Green Growth

55. Based on a favourable assessment of the activities undertaken from 2005 to 2010 (E/ESCAP/MCED(6)/3), the Seoul Initiative on Green Growth has been extended for an additional five-year period, through 2015, with the commitment of financial assistance by the Republic of Korea. The new implementation plan, which was discussed at 4th Network Meeting (Busan, Republic of Korea, 5 July 2011), is aimed at further promoting the green growth approach and policy options in the Asia-Pacific region for the next five years. The Meeting decided that the Initiative would continue to operate the key activities, following, in principle, the programme format established in the previous period, namely the annual Policy Consultation Forum, annual Leadership Programme, grant for pilot projects, and technical advisory services upon request. The Sixth Leadership Programme was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 20 to 30 September 2011.

III. A way forward

56. The secretariat of ESCAP is committed to continuing to play its pivotal role of promoting regional, subregional, national and local action to implement the Ministerial Declaration, the Regional Implementation Plan and the associated initiatives. In order to maximize the support from the United Nations and other international organizations, development banks

⁷ See ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/6.

⁸ See ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/2/Add.1, para. 17.

and donor institutions, the secretariat will keep those partner agencies informed of, and, where appropriate, invite them to, relevant events and activities that will be conducted for the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and Regional Implementation Plan. In so doing, the secretariat will make maximum use of existing avenues of inter-agency coordination, such as the Regional Coordination Mechanism and the Thematic Working Group on Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction.

57. A comprehensive review must be submitted to the Committee at its next session, in 2013, and then to the Commission for the mid-term review in 2014. The final review report will be submitted to the seventh Ministerial Conference, in 2015. As such reports should be based primarily on information regarding national-level actions reported by member States, the secretariat will soon begin consultations with member States with a view to establishing an appropriate reporting/compiling mechanism.

IV. Issues for consideration

58. Member States may wish to exchange views, plans and reports on national-level actions to implement the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Implementation Plan.

59. The Committee may wish to advise the secretariat on the elements of an effective regional and subregional programme for supporting the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Implementation Plan.

60. The Committee may wish to advise the secretariat on the elements of an effective reporting/compiling mechanism.
