

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Advancing Integration of its Three Dimensions through Regional Action



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Foreword

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have galvanized unprecedented national commitment and international support since their adoption in 2000, generating meaningful results in the lives of people around the world.

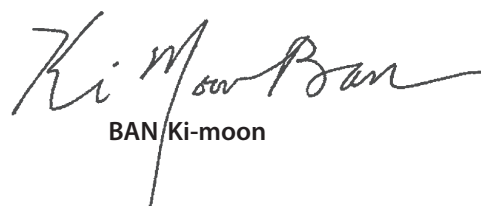
United Nations Regional Commissions have helped to drive this success by designing regional policy approaches, mobilizing political will and technical resources, monitoring progress, and adapting to emerging challenges. I applaud the vision and leadership of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions.

Now, as the international community engages in a final push to achieve the MDGs by the target date of 2015, we must intensify the focus on areas where more progress is needed.

At the same time, we must forge a vision for sustainable development in all of its economic, social and environmental dimensions to meet the demands of our changing world. New economic powers are rising while new technologies are reshaping our societies. Rapid urbanization and other demographic trends are heightening pressures on the planet. The impacts of climate change are growing. And inequalities are increasing in both rich and poor countries.

In my report on the post-2015 development agenda, *A Life of Dignity for All*, I stressed that in a world of great wealth and technological advances, no person should be left behind. This requires an approach that is bold in ambition yet simple in design. It must be universal in nature, yet responsive to individual countries. It needs to be rights-based, with particular emphasis on women, young people, and marginalized groups. And it must protect the resources of the planet, emphasize sustainable consumption and production, and support action to address climate change. We must ensure peace and governance as key outcomes and enablers of development. We must be open to new and innovative partnerships to mobilize the means of implementation.

This report contains thorough analysis of the regional challenges and opportunities of sustainable development. I commend it to all those interested in enhancing long-term well-being for all people and the planet.



BAN Ki-moon

Preface

Executive Secretaries of Regional Commissions

“The Future We Want”, the outcome document of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, reaffirmed the significance of regional frameworks that complement and facilitate effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action. It called on the Regional Commissions of the United Nations to promote a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental.

Such recognition was not new. “Agenda 21”, adopted by the original 1992 Rio Conference, highlighted the potential contributions of Regional Commissions to capacity-building, integration of environmental concerns into development policies, and cooperation regarding transboundary challenges related to sustainable development. The “Johannesburg Plan of Implementation” of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development also elaborated on specific roles and approaches for the Regional Commissions in promoting this integration.

The reaffirmation of this role at Rio+20 however, has significant implications for Regional Commissions in the course of developing and implementing the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Regional Commissions have held extensive consultations with governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, and parliamentarians. These consultations highlighted the need to finish the unfinished business: meeting the Millennium Development Goals, as well as to address new challenges and priorities, calling for a new development model to be based on structural changes for equality, inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainable development, as a more integrated whole.

The over-arching message which emerged from the consultations was that the next phase of development has to be based on a transformative agenda that is people-centred, cares for our planet, and which generates shared and sustained prosperity. This is the regional vision of the future we want.

The question, across all regions, is how best to get there. We need to take into account that not all countries and regions face identical challenges. Moreover, some countries are beset with conflicts, while others still suffer from decades-long devastating foreign occupations. Despite the importance of universal agreement on SDGs, there cannot be a homogenous approach to implementation. The framework to be developed must take sufficient account of different initial conditions and resource bases, and there must be enough flexibility to adapt this agenda to the local, national, and regional levels.

The Regional Commissions have key roles to play in addressing these challenges and supporting the work to advance sustainable development. Under the Rio+20 outcome, the Regional Commissions have a mandate to coordinate the collection and compilation of regional inputs to global processes on sustainable development, the formulation of SDGs, and the assessment of their implementation. In the context of the new high level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, Regional Commissions have also been invited to hold annual regional preparatory meetings prior to each meeting of the HLPF to include a regional dimension in its deliberations. This will ensure coherence from the local to the global level, leading to multi-stakeholder collaboration at both national and local levels, and assisting in implementation.

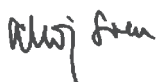
Preface

The role of Regional Commissions is not limited, however, to acting as a facilitator between global and national processes, but it also includes supporting the reshaping of regional actions in support of internationally agreed norms, policies and programmes.

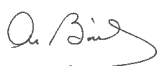
The Rio+20 outcome document envisions the prioritization of sustainable development by regional and subregional organizations, in particular to: 1) promote more efficient and effective capacity building; 2) develop and implement regional agreements and arrangements as appropriate; and 3) facilitate exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learned. Regional Commissions have made solid contributions to such needs at a regional level by hosting and operating various regional platforms for dialogue and cooperation, and by integrating critical elements in the three dimensions of sustainable development into our work.

In line with the commitments in the Rio+20 outcome document, the Regional Commissions have prioritized sustainable development to promote more efficient and effective capacity building, develop and implement regional agreements and arrangements, and facilitate the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned. The Regional Commissions have led regional consultations and offered platforms for dialogue and cooperation to support post-Rio+20 follow-up and to help shape the post-2015 agenda. In doing so, we are exploring new ways to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development into our work.

This report presents the major regional challenges to sustainable development and the work being done to address these challenges in an integrated way. The information and analysis presented in the report represents a small fraction of our work on sustainable development. However, we have no doubt that this report provides our partners with a better understanding of our efforts and important roles in advancing sustainable development.



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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
AMO	Atlantic Multi-decadal Oscillation
APTA	Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement
APTF	Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum
BGR	German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources
CAMRE	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment
CELADE	Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre
CORDEX	Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DPCCU	Development Policies and Cross-Sectoral Coordination Unit
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EDD	Environment and Development Division
EDPS	Environment and Development Policy Section
EECCA	Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
EPR	Environmental Performance Review
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FDI	foreign direct investment
FS&SDD	Food Security and Sustainable Development Division
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GGP	Generations and Gender Programme
GHG	greenhouse gas
GLADA	Global Assessment of Land Degradation and Improvement
HDI	Human Development Index
HISHub	Health Systems Information Knowledge Hub
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HLP	High Level Panel
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IDD	Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division
ILO	International Labour Organization
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
JCEDAR	Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region

Abbreviations

JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LDC	Least Developed Country
LLDC	Landlocked Developing Country
MCED	Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MINURVI	Minister and Highest Authorities for Housing and Urban
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
NCSD	National Councils for Sustainable Development
NRID	Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OWG	Open Working Group
RCM	Regional Consultation Meeting
RCREEE	Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
RESAP	Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific
RICCAR	Regional Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region
RIM	Regional Implementation Meeting
RIMES	Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System
RIOCC	Ibero-American Network of Climate Change Office
RIS	Regional Implementation Strategy
RPM	Regional Preparatory Meeting
SDD	Social Development Division
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDHSD	Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division
SDPD	Sustainable Development and Productivity Division
SMHI	Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solution Network
SEE	South-Eastern Europe
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLCP	Short-Lived Climate Pollutants
TFIG	Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide
TID	Trade and Investment Division
TST	Technical Support Team
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNNExT	United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific
UNTT	United Nations Task Team
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorology Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Executive Summary

The process of globalization has accelerated in recent decades, driven in part by increased connectivity through trade, finance, travel, migration, communication, innovation and technological change. While many countries have benefited from globalization through rapid economic growth, all countries have been affected by a host of adverse impacts, including those brought about by climate change, desertification, water stress, and ecosystems degradation, as well as rising inequality within and between countries, recurrent economic and financial crises, political instability, and threats of global epidemics.

Sustainable Development, which brings together the three dimensions – economic, social and environmental, is not only the most felicitous framework for understanding and responding to these trends, it is also the closest expression today of a global social consensus and common political will. Rio+20 was another key milestone in the expression of this political will in the journey towards a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future. Besides resolving to promote a balanced integration of the three dimensions of Sustainable Development, Rio+20 emphasized the important role of regional organizations in integrating three dimensions of sustainable development into national development policies, plans and programmes. This message was also reiterated by the 2013 Quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which asked the Regional Commissions to prioritize sustainable development inter alia by supporting the implementation of regional agreements and arrangements and the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned.

The focus of this report is the role of the Regional Commissions in enhancing inter-linkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development, building on past experience and identifying options and strategies for future action. The intention is to provide a better understanding both of how Regional Commissions could contribute to the global sustainable development agenda more effectively, and how this agenda could benefit from the Regional Commissions' experience and assets.

Context of the Report

The report begins by reviewing the history of relevant global conferences, with a particular focus on the evolution of the mandates, characteristics, and values of the UN Regional Commissions – namely, their significant roles in promoting a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and facilitating effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action as highlighted by the Future We Want, the outcome document of Rio+20. To present the global context that is shaping the new global agenda for sustainable development, in which the Regional Commissions act as a key point linking global processes with region-specific voices and actions, Chapter 1 reviews ongoing global processes in the follow-up to Rio+20 and in preparation for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The processes summarized in Chapter 1 includes the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP), the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (UNTT), Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), and the Report of the UN Secretary General "A life of dignity for all".

Chapter 1 also presents the outcomes of consultations at regional levels, which suggest that Regional Commissions could take the lead in ensuring coordination within the UN system at the regional level, communicating broad policy directions from Rio+20, working on nexus issues rather than specific sectors and establishing mechanisms for sharing information on best practices and lessons learned.

Inter-linkages among the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Chapter 2 surveys the main challenges commonly shared among all Regional Commissions, drawing from the individual commissions' accounts and reports. In section 1, inter-linkages between social and economic dimensions are explored through an examination of the losses that arise due to the current economic structure, especially the adverse impact of social inequality on competitiveness and economic activity, covering four key issues: (i) inequality and poverty, globalization and other factors, which have translated into various forms of discrimination of certain social groups in the ESCAP region and into structural heterogeneity and gaps in the ECLAC region; (ii) human capital and productive capacity, which have been limited by an unequal access to education and gaps between the rich and the poor such as those in the ECE and ECLAC regions; (iii) social wellbeing and economic weaknesses, including inadequate welfare policies and large working populations faced by the ECLAC and ESCAP regions and unemployment challenges in the ESCWA region that are aggravated by demographic trends and a lack of economic diversification, contributing to social unrest; and (iv) vulnerability and economic crises, which have different implications for each region such as unemployment in the ECE region, poverty, hunger and malnutrition in the ECLAC region, and the export-dependent economies in the ESCAP region.

In section 2, the report reviews economic and environmental trade-offs as well as synergies by assessing the regional situation of three major issues: (i) resources and exploitation, which show the significance of efficient management of resources in resources-importing as well as exporting countries by looking at the pattern of resource-intensive economic growth in ESCAP, the rebound effect of higher efficiency in the ECE region, the adverse impact of resource dependent economies on socio-economic development and deficits in ecological resources in the ESCWA region, and the economic benefit of biodiversity in the ECLAC region; (ii) economic activities and climate change, which presents economic activities as well as economic costs associated with climate change, and in particular increasing risk and vulnerability to climate change in ECLAC; and (iii) urbanization and environment, which reviews the overall trend of urbanization and its relations with energy use and environmental impact as well as its implication for jobs.

Section 3 analyses the environmental-social inter-linkage, taking into account the ways in which environmental problems exacerbate the challenge of meeting basic social services. In this regard, the section presents regional challenges related to (i) environmental services and accessibility with a focus on energy access and environmental health; (ii) vulnerable groups and environmental hazards associated with environmental factors (climate change, water and disasters) and socio-political factors (gender, exclusion and political participation); and (iii) institutional capacity dealing with civil participation.

This Chapter surveys the main challenges commonly shared among Regional Commissions, drawing from the individual commissions' accounts and reports. This chapter, therefore, serves as a building block for subsequent chapters to provide clear prescriptions for ways to meet these challenges in the context of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. Some conclusions that can be drawn are:

I. Connecting the social and economic dimensions

1. Today, in spite of economic growth, persisting inequalities fuel and aggravate widespread poverty, which erode social cohesion, subsequently increasing social tensions. Weakened social- and human-capital lead to a poor economic and investment environment for growth.
2. The so-called "Arab Spring" and political transitions in the region have been partly driven by the failure of developmental strategies. New development pathways that give greater prominence to the interdependent issues of economic and social inclusion are thus called for.
3. Efforts to make the development process more inclusive will be at the centre of attention in the years to come; although education, democratization processes and increased consciousness of gender equality values have modified some norms governing gender relations, data reveal greater disadvantages for women in terms of education, health and nutrition among some of the countries with the highest proportions of people living below the poverty line.

4. Various shortcomings of income indicators need to be evaluated and adjusted to reflect a range of challenges in terms of inequality and poverty, investment and saving, production and innovation, infrastructure, education, health, gender and the environment, among others.

II. Connecting the economic and environmental dimensions

5. Economic and environmental concerns have become increasingly intertwined with the advent of rapid industrialization and globalization; the adverse impacts of resource exploitation and mismanagement are being felt by the whole of the international community and particularly by its most vulnerable members.
6. There is a growing awareness that resource exploitation and mismanagement are linked to the unsustainable reliance on primary commodities and environmental degradation.
7. Economic growth patterns that do not internalize the environmental costs lead to increasing production costs in the long term, while economic practices that do not heed to ecological limits risk bankrupting the sources for economic vitality.

III. Connecting the environmental and social dimensions

8. From the very outset, the concept of sustainable development has incorporated the goal of equity; however, access to ecological services is distributed unequally, depriving certain social groups of their rights to common goods provided by nature.
9. While the amalgam of environmental pressures, need for economic vitality, the lack of adequate governance, and the precarious state of social wellbeing is felt more acutely in some parts of the world, it should be remembered that no region in the world is immune to these challenges.
10. Accessibility, affordability and inclusiveness to public services have an impact on health and the environment; poor access to clean energy sources can lead to an increased use of dirty sources that are detrimental to public health.
11. Social tensions can arise from shared resources. While the lack of accessibility is one issue, another is overconsumption due to behaviour and lifestyle choices that heavily rely on unsustainable energy sources and exploit natural resources without internalizing the environmental costs.

Regional Dimensions of Implementing Integrative Solutions

Chapter 3 builds on the analysis of the previous chapters, dwelling in particular on the strategies and approaches adopted by the Regional Commissions in their pursuit of sustainable development. To this end, the chapter offers a three-pronged approach, discussing the three different interlinkages introduced in Chapter 2 in light of the four elements of global policymaking and cooperation, namely, normative, technical, capacity building and assessment. This chapter highlights that all Regional Commissions have successfully devised various programmes targeting the interlinkages between different dimensions of sustainable development. Such programmes include gender and entrepreneurship, inclusivity and trade, green and paperless trade, economic benefits from environmental quality, poverty and socio-economic vulnerability, sustainable resource management in conflict-affected areas, ageing and development, green growth/green economy, disaster risk reduction and ICT, democracy and sustainable development, foreign direct investment and sustainable development, climate change and fiscal policy, and so on. While the focus of this chapter is to highlight programmes that have integrated two dimensions of sustainable development, it is acknowledged that some of these succeeded in integrating all three dimensions as is required for sustainable development. Key conclusions from this chapter include:

1. The analytical and technical demands have increased exponentially with the emergence of new normative concepts requiring deeper analyses of the technical foundations of these concepts. Regional analyses can help identify the potential winners, prepare the ground for a richer global analysis, and guide analytical efforts at national levels.

2. The regional dimension is relevant on substantive as well as procedural grounds, making Regional Commissions act as the key facilitator of norm-setting and intergovernmental negotiation on norms. On the one hand, there is now a large potential and demand for the development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements; and on the other hand, there is a greater need for regional processes to feed into the difficult global negotiations that lie ahead.
3. Capacity building needs in developing countries have become ever more complex, and there is a call for more efficient and effective approaches. The landscape of capacity building is highly diverse, including those carried out by bilateral aid programs, UN Agencies, global and regional Multilateral Development Banks, international NGOs, funds, treaty secretariats, specialized agencies and Regional Commissions.
4. The regional contribution has always been seen as a complement to these institutions, focusing on addressing unique goals (e.g., for regional integration), unique challenges and unique priorities (e.g., ICTs) within a topic (e.g., on energy and water).
5. Regional forums and ministerial conferences effectively provide an opportunity for new norm setting to address region-specific challenges (e.g., green growth approach of ESCAP) and thorough and large-scale policy relevant assessments. Some regional bodies have begun to experiment with innovative mechanisms such as peer review, regional reports (e.g., on human development), and others.

Regional Commissions for Sustainable Development: The Way Forward

Chapter 4 builds upon the previous three chapters to clarify options for action, including the identification of concrete strategies for Regional Commissions to fashion an integrated approach connecting their own work with the interlinkages set forth by the three dimensions. The chapter uses a composite framework of the learning alliance to bring together the idea of a learning organization to interpret the past actions of the commissions and potential areas of change.

The two sections of this chapter each offer opportunities to improve internalization and implementation of the model for sustainable development into the work programmes and organizational structures of the commissions. Such a strategy would build on the progress that has been made already in this regard and on their advantages.

In this regard Section 1 presents the following;

1. The potential of Regional Commissions to promote sustainable development highlights the unique attributes of Regional Commissions within the UN system giving a voice to regional perspectives and concerns, providing a deeper understanding of regional socio-economic problems and their historical contexts.
2. The need to forge partnerships and create mechanisms for cooperation. In this regard, the Regional Commissions already work to bridge the gaps between national interests and global action in order to formulate new norms, common goals and priorities in their respective regions, and provide various regional platforms for intergovernmental or multistakeholder dialogue and cooperation.
3. The Regional Commissions have already worked towards establishing regional platforms in a number of ways, namely by means of comprehensive membership, supporting regional intergovernmental processes and by encouraging member states to initiate regional cooperation and collective action.
4. Drawing on operational mechanisms and a wealth of knowledge. The multisectoral constituency of the Regional Commissions allows for inclusivity, with each regional commission housing a diverse array of substantive divisions; the organizational structure of regional commission is expansive yet detailed, and tailored to each region's particular needs.

The objective and purpose of Section 2 is to build upon the analysis presented in Chapters 1 to 3, thus identifying the options available to the Regional Commissions to move forward and advance sustainable development in their respective regions.

1. Regional Commissions as the Learning Commission: Regional Commissions have sought to introduce structural changes in their work programmes and operational arrangements, including inter-commission cooperative arrangements. In addition, they have also experimented with a number of innovative practices and ideas in each of the four areas of UN system contribution – normative, operational, technical, and assessment.
2. Individual commitment to learning and incorporating sustainable development: All commissions have taken great pains to incorporate sustainable development goals and perspectives into their work programmes and operations. The commissions have tried to institute a commitment to learning among its team members and component programmes. This commitment to learning is visible in the incorporation of new elements into the work of traditional Divisions and programmes. However, strengthening Regional Commissions' responses to new calls made in the course of the Rio+20 and Post-2015 requires a more formally structured mechanism to facilitate a broader dissemination of such learning.
3. Operationalization of the idea of sustainable development: Regional Commissions have created cross-sectoral or inter-divisional mechanisms for coordinating programmes across the three dimensions of sustainable development and promoting more integrative approaches to simultaneously address two or three dimensions. However, there is a great need for continuing review of the work programme and organizational structure of the Regional Commissions in the context of global processes with regard to post-Rio+20 and development agenda beyond 2015. Responding to the new development agenda and the expected roles, Regional Commissions may require secretarial unit dedicated to mainstreaming, inter-departmental coordination, and monitoring of progress.
4. The Learning Alliance: The various work programmes are evidence of the highly innovative and forward-looking nature of the Regional Commissions while it is also the case that more could be done to ensure that each of these successes gets disseminated more widely.

The Chapter concludes that Regional Commissions have already worked towards establishing regional platforms in a number of ways, namely by means of comprehensive membership, supporting regional intergovernmental processes and by encouraging member states to initiate regional cooperation and collective action; drawing on operational mechanisms and a wealth of knowledge, the multi-sectoral approach. However, more work will be needed to ensure the integration and convergence of key elements in all three dimensions of sustainable development in the regions. Moreover, greater attention should be directed towards successful cases so as to disseminate them across all Commissions and to consider accompanying practices.

"The Future We Want", the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference identified the Regional Commissions, among other regional institutions, as having a significant role in promoting a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and reiterated their mandate to "support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development". It went on to call for the further extension of the much-acknowledged regional actions promoting sustainable development. In this regard, this Report presents examples of Regional Commissions' roles in giving a voice to those concerned with regional perspectives, providing a deeper understanding of regional socio-economic contexts, and promoting sustainable development.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Regional Commissions in Global Policy for Sustainable Development

The evolution of global policy on sustainable development has, from the very outset, recognized the importance of the Regional Commissions. This contribution was set out explicitly in the Brundtland Commission Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, WCED), and has been reiterated in every agreement and decision on sustainable development since then, including Rio+20.

1.1.1 From WCED to Johannesburg

The WCED acknowledged that there was a significant institutional gap hindering the pursuit of an interdependent and integrated agenda. The gap was characterized in such terms as independence (of complementary institutions), fragmentation, and narrowness of mandates (WCED 1987, para 31), as insufficient to tackle the challenges that are “both interdependent and integrated”. As part of its recommendations on this point, the Commission urged regional and subregional organizations to do more to integrate environmental concerns fully in their goals and activities. In this regard, it drew attention to the appropriateness of regional arrangements, particularly for transboundary environmental resource issues (WCED 1987, Chapter 12 para 29).

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), referred to the role of the Regional Commissions in Chapter 38 Section IV (Means of Implementation) of Agenda 21 (International Institutional Arrangements) in particular paragraphs 29 to 35. These paragraphs are entitled “Regional and subregional cooperation and implementation”, and they highlight cooperation of Regional Commissions as an important tool for implementing the outcome of the Conference. The three notable contributions expected from the Regional Commissions were: 1) capacity-building; 2) integration of environmental

concerns into development policies; and 3) cooperation regarding transboundary issues related to sustainable development (UNCED 1992b para 38.29).

Similarly, the Rio+5 resolution (1997) also included Regional Commissions under its chapter on Means of Implementation (UNGA 1997, para 93) for facilitating transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and again under International Institutional Arrangements for promoting coherence in intergovernmental organizations and processes as well as to provide appropriate support to regional meetings of experts related to the implementation of Agenda 21 (UNGA 1997, para 121).

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) recognized and encouraged a number of regional initiatives (WSSD 2002, para 72), and further elaborated on the optimal role of the Regional Commissions:

- (a) Promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into their work in a balanced way, including through implementation of Agenda 21. To this end, the Regional Commissions should enhance their capacity through internal action and be provided, as appropriate, with external support;
- (b) Facilitate and promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development into the work of regional, subregional and other bodies, for example by facilitating and strengthening the exchange of experiences, including national experience, best practices, case studies and partnership experience related to the implementation of Agenda 21;

- (c) Assist in the mobilization of technical and financial assistance, and facilitate the provision of adequate financing for the implementation of regionally and subregionally agreed sustainable development programmes and projects, including addressing the objective of poverty eradication;
- (d) Continue to promote multi-stakeholder participation and encourage partnerships to support the implementation of Agenda 21 at the regional and subregional levels.

1.1.2 Rio+20: Regional Commissions to Support Implementation of Concrete Action and Integration

The Future We Want, the outcome document of the Conference, identified the Regional Commissions, among other regional institutions, as having a significant role in promoting a balanced integration of

the three dimensions of sustainable development, and reiterated their mandate to “support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development” (UNCED 2012, para 68). It went on to call for further extension of the much-acknowledged regional actions promoting sustainable development (UNCED 2012, para 185). The document recognizes that “regional frameworks can complement and facilitate effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action” (UNCED 2012, para 97), and that regional and sub-regional organizations could contribute to the operationalization and harmonization of policies, plans, and programmes. It envisions the prioritization of sustainable development by regional and subregional organizations, in particular to 1) promote more efficient and effective capacity building; 2) develop and implement regional agreements and arrangements as appropriate; and 3) facilitate exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learnt (UNCED 2012, para 100).

1.2 Post-Rio+20 Global Processes

Following the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012, a number of processes have been launched with a view to formulate the future development agenda; these include the High Level Panel (HLP) on the post-2015 Agenda, High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). All these processes recognize the priority of increased integration among the three dimensions. The HLP organized global consultations to develop a broader vision of inclusive development; the OWG has sought to refine the granularity in the concepts and metrics for sustainable development, while the SDSN seeks to promote supportive voluntary activities by tapping into a broad range of knowledge and tools. The challenge for these and others remains the same, namely how to effectively promote integrated goals.

The number of current global processes reflects a growing recognition of the importance to facilitate an integrated approach towards sustainable development, especially with regard to implementation; such an integrated approach must draw on the interlinkages among the issues at stake, which will require a range of diverse stakeholders and experts to come together. In this respect, the Regional Commissions are at a considerable advantage, being

well-versed in the area of regional cooperation for sustainable development by providing regional platforms for dialogue and cooperation, and building regional views and voices.

1.2.1 High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP)

The HLP, chaired by three sitting heads of state and government (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia, and David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and comprised of 27 members including leaders from civil society, private sector and government, was mandated to: 1) devise and recommend a vision to shape the Post-2015 development agenda; 2) recommend key principles for global partnership and accountability methods; and 3) recommend key strategies for building and sustaining broad political consensus. The HLP solicited and received inputs from global consultations organized by the UN Development Group (UNDG) in collaboration with Regional Commissions and other organizations. Engaging stakeholders in a series of discussions and producing a series of papers on the various topics, views were gathered through both online and offline global conversations over a set of 11 thematic topics. Country

consultations in more than 60 developing and developed countries took their own forms and shape, gathering knowledge about national development priorities, circumstances, and needs.

The HLP recognized that MDGs most seriously fell short by not integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, thus forcing people to work separately on inherently interlinked problems (UN 2013, executive summary).

Given the broad scope of the post-2015 agenda that “blends social progress, equitable growth, and environmental management”, the Panel advised that there must be clear priorities and shared global metrics as well as national targets (UN 2013, 13). A key issue identified by the HLP is the balance among any proposed goals, and the connections between them (UN 2013, 16), asserting that a true transformation to sustainable development will only happen when countries move forward on several fronts at the same time.

Building on this overarching vision, the HLP has proposed an ambitious agenda comprised of five overall objectives and 12 development goals. The five objectives are to (a) eradicate (rather than reduce, or halve) poverty by 2030; (b) place sustainable development at the centre; (c) promote inclusive growth; (d) build peace and accountable governance; and (e) forge a new global partnership. Of the 12 proposed goals, exactly eight are adapted (with some adjustment) from the previous MDGs (i.e., poverty, gender empowerment, education, health, food security, water and sanitation, natural resources, and a global partnership) and four new goals are added – sustainable energy, inclusive growth, good governance, and peace.

1.2.2 High Level Political Forum (HLPF)

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) builds on and replaces the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to provide political leadership for sustainable development starting at the sixty-eighth session of UN General Assembly (UNGA). The General Assembly has adopted a resolution, based on the work of an international negotiation process, to define the format and organizational aspects of the Forum. These include provisions for annual meetings, a quadrennial summit meeting, and a mandate to review the implementation of past commitments. In this process, Regional Commissions are expected to provide inputs into regional dimensions of sustainable development

through annual regional meetings, with the involvement of other relevant regional entities, major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Other ongoing processes that aim for completion by the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly include the intergovernmental Expert Committee on a Sustainable Development Financing Strategy, and the UN Global Compact process that provides the views and knowledge from businesses and the private sector. These processes are expected to improve the current understanding of the mechanisms contributing to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

1.2.3 UN Task Team (UNTT) on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda

The UNTT brings together over 40 UN entities and agencies, and international organizations to support the multi-stakeholder consultations being led by member States on a post-2015 global development agenda. The Team provides analytical inputs, expertise and outreach through consultations with member States, civil society, academia, and the private sector. The Team’s inputs have addressed fundamental questions about the post-2015 development agenda, such as lessons from the MDG agenda, the most pressing challenges, the post-2015 framework’s relationship with other processes and initiatives, and the organization of a global partnership for development.

The Task Team, and more concretely UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), inferred from the national reports for Rio+20 (DESA and UNDP 2012) that most countries experienced difficulties improving sustainable development, particularly in integrating the three dimensions. While many national planning institutions endorsed the message of integrating economic, environmental, and social pillars at least in their stated plans, the main focus remained on economic growth and poverty reduction. Furthermore, political will and good governance were identified as the missing ingredients for enhancing integration among what are currently fragmented approaches and agencies at the national levels. Social issues, largely due to the international commitments made to the MDGs, were found to be relatively more mainstreamed into development practices than environmental issues; hence the adoption of clear and time-bound targets and agreed indicators are expected to raise the level of integration.

Box 1.1 Developing goals and targets for integration

The inter-agency technical support team (TST) under the umbrella of the UN System Task Team is a collective team of roughly 40 UN entities that deliberate on conceptual issues as well as technical issues related to the SDGs. TST has considered how to balance and integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development (TST Issue Brief: Conceptual Issues 2013, 6), and in particular how to integrate the three pillars in the formulation of the SDGs.

The options considered include integrating the three dimensions within each SDG or compiling a cluster of SDGs that addresses different dimensions. Views are mixed, leading to the possibility of having a combination of the two – some goals being three-dimensional while others focus more on a particular dimension.

1.2.4 Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The OWG, comprised of 30 representatives nominated by UN member States, was created following a decision at Rio+20 to flesh out a proposal for the adoption of SDGs by the GA (Para 248 of the General Assembly resolution 66/288). While the Rio+20 outcome document did not elaborate specific goals, it stated that the SDGs should be limited in number, be aspirational and easy to communicate. The goals should also address in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and be coherent with, and integrated into, the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

Following the January 2013 UNGA decision on the membership of the OWG on SDGs (67/555), the OWG has initiated sessions starting with the conceptualization of the SDGs, to ensure the goals are action oriented, concise, and universally applicable yet able to reflect different national circumstances. The OWG stresses the recognition of inter-linkages as a key feature of sustainable development, and yet also realizes the difficulty of retaining simplicity in goals and targets when trying to design them around inter-linkages (second session summary, 6). Furthermore, the OWG is tasked with coordinating the integration, as ultimately the indicators need to be able to reflect inter-linkages and integration. In this regard, the OWG benefits from the work of UN Technical Support Team as an official input.

1.2.5 The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

The SDSN is a network of experts from academia, civil society, and the private sector in support of sustainable-development problem solving at local, national, and global scales. The network was set up by the Secretary-General in August 2012 with the aim of encouraging the analysis of unresolved, and often

controversial, sustainable development problems, and enabling the design of effective, practical, and consensus solutions. In order to facilitate informed decision-making, SDSN addresses issues that often involve difficult trade-offs. The SDSN is organized into thematic groups and produces solutions-oriented, rather than research-oriented outcomes to map pathways to sustainability.

1.2.6 Report of the Secretary General “A Life of Dignity for All”

With inputs from High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Global Compact Office, the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, the Regional Commissions and our partners in civil society and academia, the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, in July 2013 released his report “A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015”. The report identifies policies and programmes that have driven success in the achievement of the Goals and can contribute to accelerating it. These include emphasizing inclusive growth, decent employment and social protection; allocating more resources for essential services and ensuring access for all; strengthening political will and improving the international policy environment; and harnessing the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Based on lessons learnt from implementing MDGs, the report proposes key elements for the development agenda beyond 2015, which include: (a) universality, to mobilize all developed and developing countries and leave no one behind; (b) sustainable development, to tackle the interlinked challenges facing the world, including a clear focus on ending extreme poverty in all its forms; (c) inclusive economic transformations

Box 1.2 Open Working Group

The work of the OWG is as follows:

First Session 14-15 March, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • election of officers • adoption of agenda and general discussion
Second Session 17-19 April, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conceptualizing the SDGs and Poverty Eradication
Third Session 22-24 May, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food security and nutrition • sustainable agriculture • desertification • land degradation and drought • water and sanitation
Fourth Session 17-19 June, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment and decent work for all • social protection • youth • education and culture • health • population dynamics
Fifth Session 25-27 November, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustained and inclusive economic growth • macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial systems and external debt sustainability) • infrastructure development • industrialization and energy
Sixth Session 9-13 December, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • means of implementation (science and technology, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building) • global partnership for achieving sustainable development • needs of African countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS as well as specific challenges facing middle-income countries • human rights • the right to development • global governance
Seventh Session 6-10 January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable cities and human settlements • sustainable transport • sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste) • climate change • disaster risk reduction
Eight Session 3-7 February, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oceans and seas • forests • biodiversity • promoting equality (including social equality, gender equality and women's empowerment) • conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building

Box 1.3 Sustainable development goals and targets

Both the High Level Panel and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network have proposed a set of Goals and Targets.

High Level Panel	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
Goal 1: End Poverty	Goal 1: End Extreme Poverty including Hunger
Goal 2: Empower Girls and Women and Achieve Gender Equality	Goal 2: Achieve Development within Planetary Boundaries
Goal 3: Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning	Goal 3: Ensure Effective Learning for All Children and Youth for Life and Livelihood
Goal 4: Ensure Healthy Lives	Goal 4: Achieve Gender Equality, Social Inclusion , and Human Rights for All
Goal 5: Ensure Food Security and Good Nutrition	Goal 5: Achieve Health and Wellbeing at All Ages
Goal 6: Achieve Universal Access to Water and Sanitation	Goal 6: Improve Agriculture Systems and Raise Rural Prosperity
Goal 7: Secure Sustainable Energy	Goal 7: Empower Inclusive, Productive, and Resilient Cities
Goal 8: Create Jobs, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Equitable Growth	Goal 8: Curb Human-Induced Climate Change and Ensure Sustainable Energy
Goal 9: Manage Natural Resource Assets Sustainably	Goal 9: Secure Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity, and Ensure Good Management of Water and Other Natural Resources
Goal 10: Ensure Good Governance and Effective Institutions	Goal 10: Transform Governance for Sustainable Development
Goal 11: Ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies	
Goal 12: Create a Global Enabling Environment and Catalyze Long-Term Finance	

ensuring decent jobs, backed by sustainable technologies, to shift to sustainable patterns of consumption and production; (d) peace and governance, as key outcomes and enablers of development; (e) a new global partnership, to recognize shared interests, different needs and mutual responsibilities, and to ensure commitment to, and means of implementing, the new vision; and (f) being “fit for purpose”, to ensure that the international community is equipped with the right institutions and tools for addressing the challenges of implementing the sustainable development agenda at the national level.

In this regard, the report also presents 15 transformative and mutually reinforcing actions including: eradicate poverty in all its forms; tackle exclusion and inequality; empower women and girls; provide quality education and lifelong learning; improve health; address climate change; address environmental challenges; promote inclusive and sustainable growth and decent employment; and prevent hunger and malnutrition; address demographic challenges; enhance the positive contribution of migrants; meet the challenges of urbanization; build peace and effective governance based on the rule of law and sound institutions; foster

a renewed global partnership; and strengthen the international development cooperation framework.

As recommended, the Secretary-General calls upon member States to adopt a universal post-2015 development agenda, with sustainable development at its core, and the international system, including the United Nations, to embrace a more coherent and effective response to support this agenda. Thus, he reaffirms that the United Nations system will continue to reform and make itself “fit for purpose” so as to respond to the challenges of this new path to sustainable development.

The number of the current global processes reflects a growing recognition of the importance to facilitate an integrated approach towards sustainable development, especially with regard to implementation; such an integrated approach must draw on the interlinkages among the issues at stake, which will require a range of diverse stakeholders, and experts to come together. In this respect, the Regional Commissions are at a considerable advantage, being well-versed in the area of cooperation and thus able to subsume differing national interests under one umbrella and to speak with one voice.

1.3 Regional Views on the Future Development Agenda

As mentioned, the role of Regional Commissions has been highlighted in the preparation and follow-up to global conferences since the 1990s.¹ More recently, coordination of regional level efforts has been carried out via Regional Consultation Meetings (RCM), Regional Preparatory Meetings (RPMs) for Rio+20, and Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs) on Rio+20 outcomes and the development agenda. The Rio+20 outcomes mandated the Regional Commissions to coordinate the collection and compilation of regional inputs to global processes on sustainable development, including the development of SDGs and assessment of countries' implementation. In this regard, RIMs or the equivalent have been held to provide an opportunity to address Rio+20 follow-up issues related to institutional arrangement and other matters as regional input to the global processes; these follow-up issues reveal that the different circumstances at regional and national levels influence various policy stances across the region. This section briefly reviews the opinions expressed in the latest RIMs on the follow-up to Rio+20 that were held across the five Regional Commissions.

1.3.1 The Relationship between MDGs and SDGs

Member States across all Regional Commissions were vocal in calling for the completion of the MDGs. The participants in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) RIMs argued that the new set of goals should complement rather than substitute the MDGs. Similarly, the meeting convened by the

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) heard that SDGs should build on MDGs. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) meeting stressed that the SDGs should focus on completing the implementation of the MDGs. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) meeting agreed on the importance of crafting a first structure for a transformative agenda and acknowledged the importance of the MDGs as a principal point of departure and as building blocks for future work to be built. However, it was also admitted that a mere focus on the MDGs will not suffice; any unfinished business under the MDGs should be completed while a new goal geared towards the complete eradication of poverty within a clear time-frame must be formulated.

Furthermore, discussions at the ESCAP RIM stressed that the SDGs should speak not only to developing countries but to developed countries alike, and not solely in terms of conventional development cooperation. The discussions also focused on the relationship between global goals and national action, while respecting countries' different priorities. At the same time, it was noted that a degree of flexibility must be granted to countries in order to adapt to global targets, especially to those related to their individual needs. An option for doing so that garnered considerable interest was the creation of a global dashboard of targets and indicators under each goal from which countries could select those most appropriate and relevant; the common understanding being that targets on the global dashboard be there to assist the implementation of global goals, both of them should be relying on a coherent institutional

¹ Berthelot, op.cit., pp 41.

framework. As a result, flexibility would be guaranteed for countries to take on more targets over time, should they progress faster and better than expected.

1.3.2 Institutional Matters and the Value of Regional Commissions

Member States across the regions generally expressed a favourable view regarding the HLPF as an effective and inclusive decision-making forum for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. The ESCWA RIM noted that the CSD had been predominantly composed of ministers of environment, which limited the representative balance among the three pillars within the CSD.

Countries participating in the regional meetings encouraged further enhancement of regional integration, active engagement with global activities, and enabling more inclusive platforms for multi-stakeholders in order to facilitate effective implementation. The ECE RIM recognized regional and sub-regional level efforts as having the highest efficacy

in translating desired goals into implementation. The RIMs in ECA and ESCWA emphasized the high value of regional meetings such as the RIM, where regional voices could be collected to create a clear position for the region as well as share best practices among neighbouring countries, and recommended ways to strengthen or elevate them. The ECLAC RIM requested that ECLAC be the linchpin of future meetings in the region and that they be held annually, in order to streamline and accelerate the definition of development objectives before and after 2015.

In particular, the ESCAP RIM identified Regional Commissions as the appropriate platforms for regional efforts pertaining to sustainable development. In this regard, regional commission could take the lead in ensuring coordination within the UN system at the regional level, communicating broad policy directions from Rio+20, working on nexus issues rather than specific sectors and establishing mechanisms for sharing information on best practices and lessons learned.

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CHAPTER 2

Inter-linkages among the Different Dimensions of Sustainable Development

2.1 Towards Reframing Socio-Economic Inter-linkages

Today, in spite of accelerated growth in developing economies, the persistence and even deepening of inequality allows poverty to persist, eroding social cohesion and subsequently increasing social tension and the potential for civic unrest. Against this backdrop, the first section of this Chapter explores the multi-faceted aspects, which arise when connecting the economic and social dimensions. It does so by drawing on the experience of the Regional Commissions through the lenses of Inequality and Poverty, Human Capital and Productive Capacity, Social Wellbeing and Economic Weakness, and Vulnerability and Economic Crisis.

2.1.1 Inequality and Poverty

Unemployment, poverty and inequality are not newly emerging problems, but they have become more serious in recent years due to pressures from globalization and technological change, coupled with weak domestic social and economic policies (ESCWA 2012a). Social and economic exclusion leave certain social groups – the poor, women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, etc. – in perpetual cycles of financial and material poverty. This form of inequality not only manifests itself in the form of income poverty but also of unequal access to information and services, greater vulnerability to natural shocks or abuse of power, and lack of opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. All of the above-mentioned concerns are widely shared across the regions and further elaborated below.

ECE: Growing Inequalities across the Region

In much of the ECE region, thanks to generally high per-capita income levels, extreme poverty has largely been eradicated (with the exception of some areas within the low- and lower- middle-income countries in the eastern part of the region). However, inequalities in income and wealth are on the rise across the region – in high-, middle- and low-income countries. Growing inequalities result in part from such longer-term exogenous factors such as globalization and technological change. However, they are also a consequence of deliberate policy choices. In a number of countries in the western part of the region, economic and social disparities were already widening back in the 1980s, reflecting the combined impact of institutional shifts, tax policies and liberalization of financial markets. Moreover, post-2008 reductions in sovereign creditworthiness (or fears thereof) have made fiscal consolidation the order of the day for much of the region, with attendant cuts in public investment, public wage bills and spending on health care, employment promotion and social protection. The vicious circle of weak economies, perpetual fiscal austerity, growing poverty and inequalities, and underfunded social protection systems is now haunting much of the region. Inequality increased significantly in the 1990s in the former transition economies in South-East Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia with the breakup of central planning. Over the last two decades these economies have been re-establishing their social protection programmes and redesigning their tax systems but inequality remains higher in these regions than in most of Western Europe.

ESCAP: Discrimination, Inequality, and Social Cohesion

Notwithstanding impressive overall economic progress in some Asia-Pacific countries in recent years, the socio-economic gap between different income groups has increased; for Asia and the Pacific, key challenges to inclusion include shortcomings in promoting, protecting and fulfilling agreed commitments regarding human rights, including eliminating discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, as well as in relation to access to basic services, including access to energy, water and sanitation, health care, education and social protection. Empowerment and enforcement of the rights of those marginalized by societal, structural and institutionalized discrimination, including women and girls who also face high levels of violence, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, sexual, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants, those living with HIV and indigenous people should be a key goal for sustainable development strategies.

Thus, discrimination against social groups still persists widely, including – but not limited to – women, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons living with certain diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and leprosy, sexual, ethnic, and religious minorities, and migrants. Social and economic exclusion leaves these social groups in perpetual cycles of financial and material poverty.

For example, the social gap in the form of gender inequality is of great importance in addressing root causes of poverty and social cohesion. In 2007, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that 85.1 per cent of economically active women in South Asia were in precarious employment as compared to 74.3 per cent of men (ESCAP 2010a). Although education, democratization processes and increased consciousness of gender equality values have modified some norms governing gender relations, data reveal greater disadvantages for women in terms of education, health and nutrition (ESCAP 2010a) among some of the countries with the highest proportions of people living below the poverty line.

ESCAP: Climate Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Unemployment

Asia and the Pacific is home to some of the world's largest refugee populations, with very few countries in the region having acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention, while the numbers of environmental and climate “refugees” are growing, displaced either internally, or across borders by environmental changes and severe climate-related extreme weather events and other types of natural disasters that have impacted livelihoods, diminished access to resources, and destroyed communities. Rapid urbanization brings with it an expanding number of slum dwellers, while persistent informality, the financial crisis and declining wages as a per cent of income has increased the numbers in vulnerable employment. The ILO estimates that more than 1 billion workers in Asia and the Pacific were in vulnerable employment in 2011, comprising more than 65 per cent of the global vulnerable employment and almost half of the region's workforce in the region. Those affected are disproportionately women and youth, and increasingly, migrants. Small farmers form a particular group of vulnerable persons. These groups of people face tremendous economic insecurity, including related to rising and volatile food and energy prices.

ECLAC: Structural Heterogeneity and Gaps, Inequality and a Global Partnership

Structural heterogeneity and gaps, which are a hallmark of Latin American countries, impede the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development should underpin all policies (industrial, macroeconomic, social, labour and environmental) in order to advance towards virtuous structural change that combine a shift in the production matrix towards sectors that are more productive and environmentally friendly by incorporating technological progress and narrowing gaps between sectors; productive macroeconomic policy to encourage productivity and investment; social and labour policies that team structural change with redistributive impacts, improvement in the working world and fairer distribution of productivity gains among factor and productive sectors. A global partnership for development should be deepened and implemented in an effective manner to address the ill causes of global inequality. Official Development Assistance (ODA) will continue to be a significant source of development financing for the poorest countries. Nevertheless, to make national development models sustainable, an enabling global context is required.

Fortify essential global public goods such as fair trade, a stable international financial system and the accessibility of technologies that are critical for health and environmental sustainability demand global covenants. The need to strengthen regional public goods must not be overlooked either. Integration schemes for energy and infrastructure, macroeconomic coordination including fiscal reforms, agreements on transboundary pollution, among others, offer comparative advantages at the regional level.

ESCWA: Income versus Development

Despite remarkable achievements in terms of the MDGs, national Human Development Index (HDI) scores are lower than would be expected given the region's high levels of income. Similarly, while the Human Poverty Index has declined since the 1990s, particularly in the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, it is still higher than expected compared with other developing regions with similar levels of income per capita (UNDP 2011). Poverty eradication remains a priority for the region as a significant proportion of the population remains highly vulnerable to shocks to income or expenditure.

The prevailing form of the Arab social contract has been essentially one where the population exchanged political freedom in return for the provision of certain services, such as state employment, access to public healthcare and education and exemption from, or low, taxation (UNDP 2011). The widespread political and social unrest in the region known as the 'Arab Spring' resulted from decades of accumulated social problems and political exclusion that led people to the streets to protest (ESCWA, 2012a). Underlying causes related to unemployment, poverty and inequality have been highlighted in most countries. After decades of stagnation, Arab citizens called for dignity, freedom and social equity (ESCWA, 2012b). Thus, one of the key regional priorities identified in the joint Regional Commissions report on the post-2015 development agenda focuses on the incorporation of democratic governance dimensions in a future global development framework.² This will include the formulation of alternative options for member states, ranging from a set of non-binding governance principles to the formulation of a practical governance goal.

2.1.2 Education

Education, widely perceived as a human right, "is the heart of sustainable development of any country"³ and as such its quality and universal accessibility must be continuously evaluated and ensured. Against this backdrop, the following subsection follows more closely the individual efforts of the Regional Commissions to tackle the challenges associated with guaranteeing universal access to education.

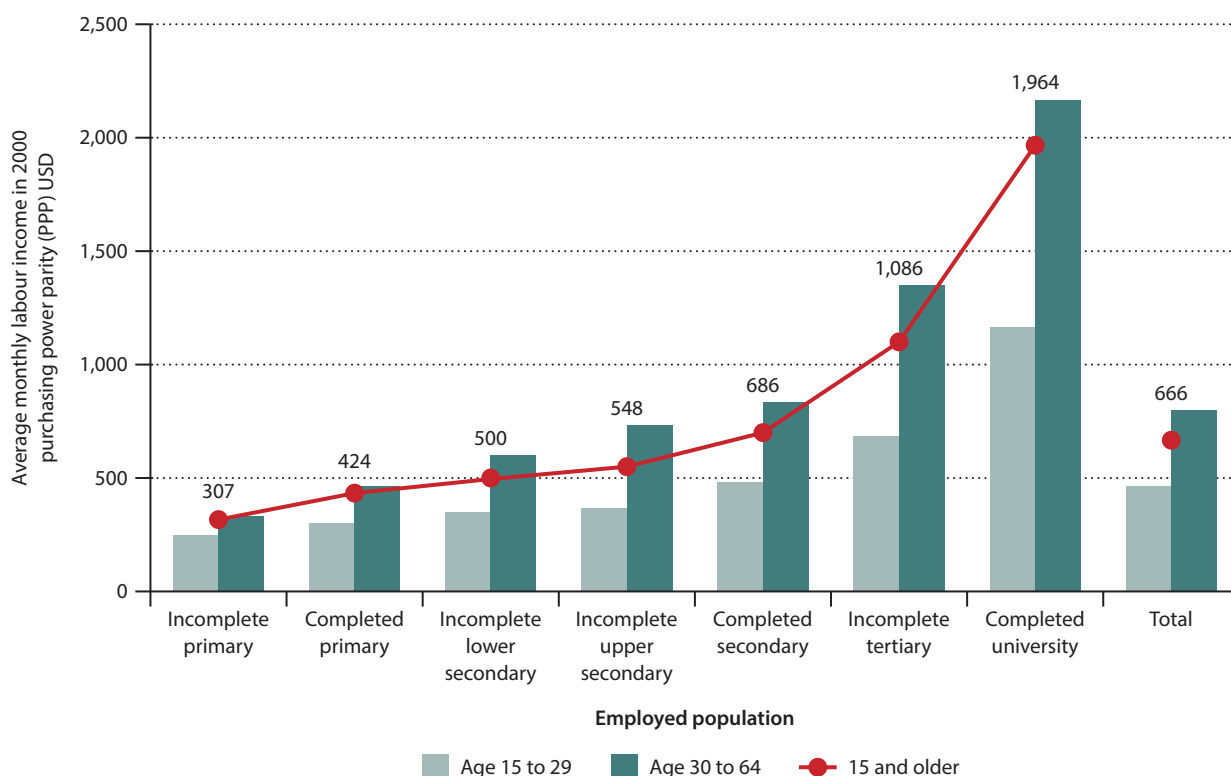
ECE: Education Inequality in the Knowledge Economy

Limited access to education represents a challenge to social inclusion, economic development and social cohesion in a number of emerging countries in Europe and Central Asia. Many children of Roma background are particularly affected accounting for only 20-25 per cent in secondary schools, with the vast majority shifting to vocational education. While Eastern Europe and Central Asia show net enrolment rates higher than 90 per cent, about 1.5 million children of primary school age remained out of school in 2008 (UNESCO, 2011). This figure does not include out-of-school adolescents of lower and upper secondary education, which is estimated at about 12 million, and 1.1 million children with disabilities who remain unaccounted for and are likely to be out of school. In many countries, shortages of trained teachers pose a major barrier, at all education levels, to achieving education goals. An estimated additional 1.6 million teachers are needed to achieve only universal primary education in the region by 2015.

In the advanced economies of Europe and North America most children complete compulsory primary education and a high percentage complete secondary school. Nevertheless, there is an increasing gap in the academic achievement between children from rich and poor families and the access to higher education is highly dependent on the income level of one's parents. For example, in the United States 82 per cent of children from the richest quarter of households obtain a college degree while only 8 per cent of those from the lowest quarter do so (UN, 2012). The increasing gap in education has been an important factor in reducing the intergenerational mobility within these societies. Throughout the region girls are often channelled into traditional occupational career paths

² ECE, ESCAP, ECLAC, ECA and ESCWA (2013), op. cit.

³ Statement made by the First Vice-President of ECOSOC, Mr. Milos Koterec At the opening of the 13th session of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) on 21 March 2011 (http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/ecosoc/linking_education.html).

Figure 2.1: Average monthly labour income of employed population by level of education, Latin America, 2008

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social panorama of Latin America, 2010 (LC/G.2481-P), Santiago, Chile, 2010.

Notes: This figure includes results of household surveys from 18 countries in Latin America, conducted around 2008. The length of education cycles was defined in accordance with the 1997 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

which ultimately limit their ability to obtain good high-paying jobs.

ECLAC: Education and Opportunity

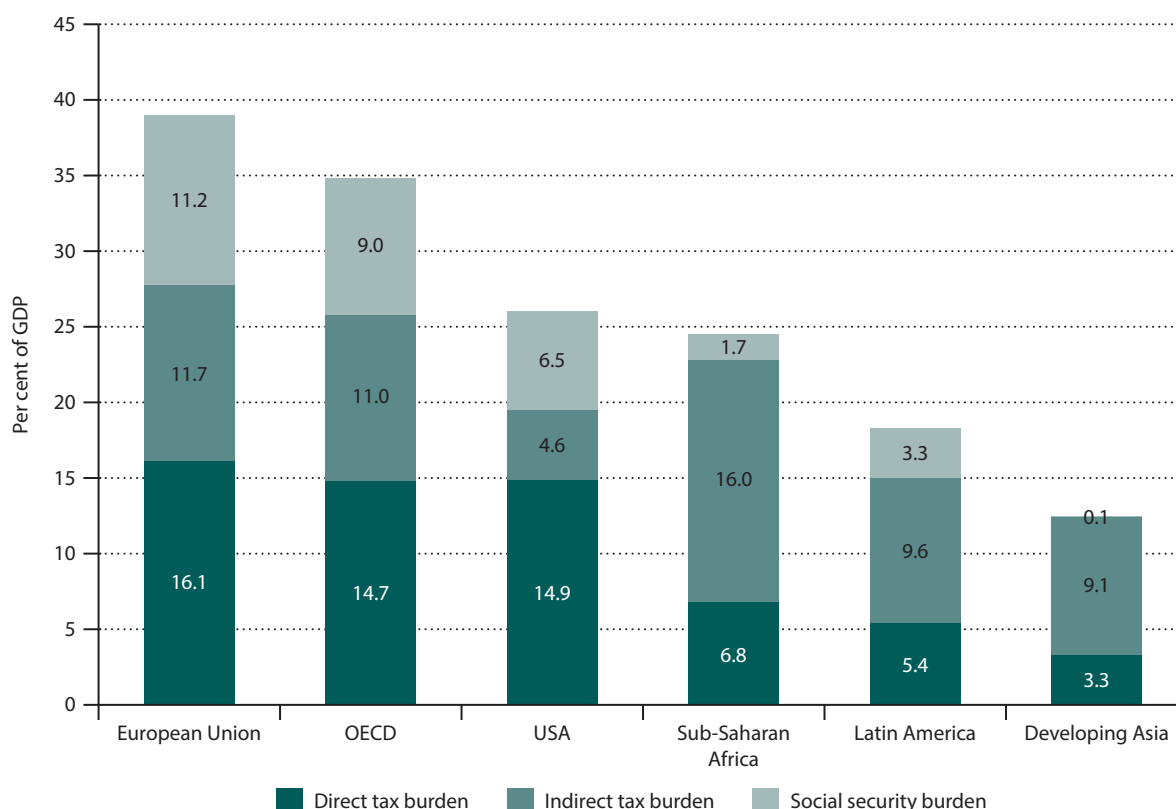
The educational gap in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region is very prominent: while four out of five young people between the age of 20 and 24, from the richest quintile households have completed their secondary education, only one out of five from the lowest quintile households have done so (UNESCO, 2011). As much as 30 per cent of school-age children are unable to acquire secondary education, and half of the 20-24 year age cohort, do not complete secondary schooling. Access and quality failings in education constrain access to higher income segments of the labour market (see Figure 2.1). Therefore, the sustainability perspective must unavoidably consider the intergenerational transmission of inequality.⁴

ESCAP: Countries with Special Needs

The issue of suppressed productive capacities is more pronounced among countries with special needs, which face several obstacles in enhancing productive capacities, namely their small market size, landlocked or “sea-locked” (i.e., small islands) status, inadequate domestic savings, entrepreneurship, skills, technological capability, and infrastructure, and a lack of well-developed capital markets and financial institutions. These factors altogether place these countries at a significant disadvantage in today’s global economy.

Looking at the indicators that are typically associated with productive capacity for Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries (LDCs), their share in total global GDP is less than one tenth of their share in the global population. Furthermore, for the past 30 years, it has been lower than it was 40 years ago. Similarly, their share of global manufacturing value added is also much lower than their population share, as is their

⁴ ECLAC (2010), Time for equality: closing gaps, opening trails (LC/G.2432(SES.33/3)), Santiago, Chile.

Figure 2.2: International comparison of level and structure of tax burden, various years between 2002 and 2010

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), as compiled in ECLAC, *Structural Change for Equality: An Integrated Approach to Development* (LC/G.2524 (SES.34/3)), Santiago, Chile. (p. 157).

Note: The coverage for calculating the Latin American average refers to central government except in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where it refers to general government.

share in merchandise exports. The share in exports has been less than 0.25 per cent throughout a period when total world merchandise exports in current terms increased 42-fold.

2.1.3 Social Wellbeing and Economic Weaknesses

Social unrest is exacerbated by sluggish economic growth and recovery, diminishing overall confidence while deterring investment and trade. Consequently, the ability of States to provide services and households to access the basic needs is severely hampered.

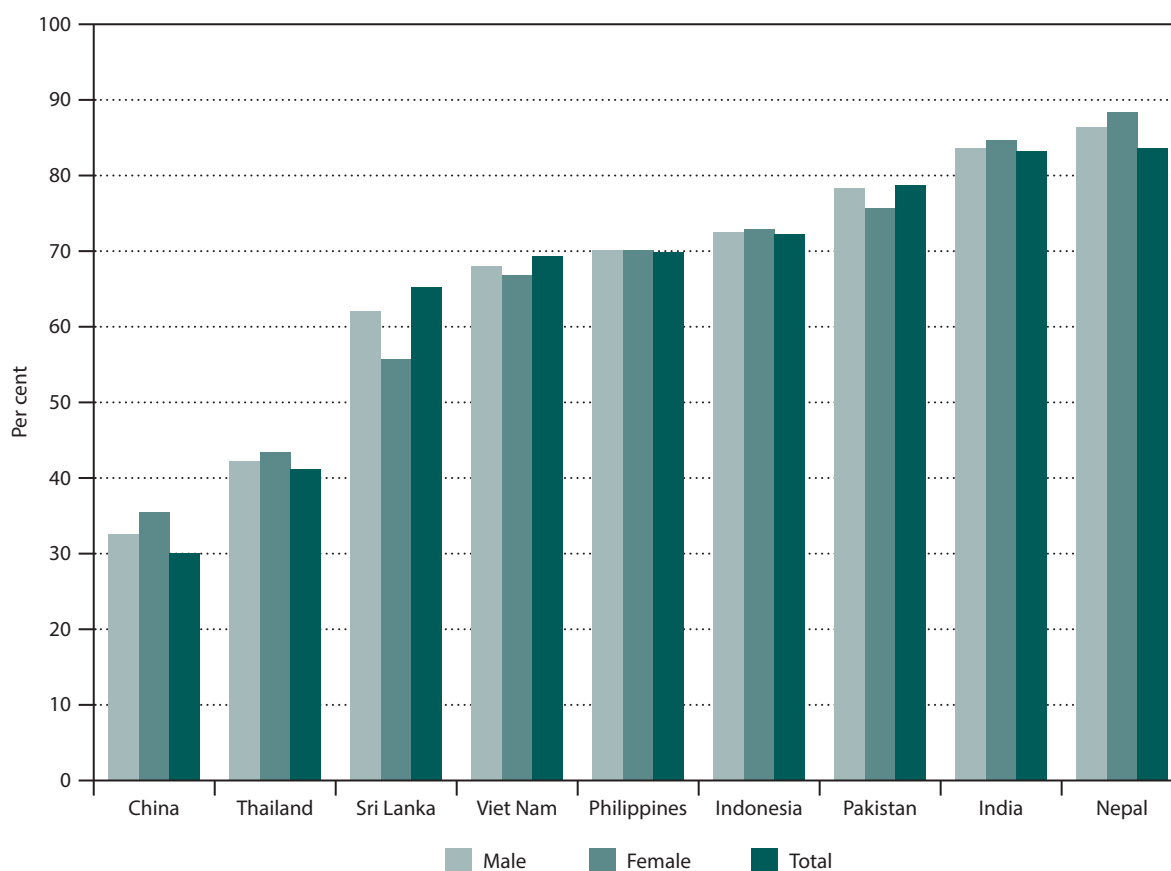
ECE: Access to Public Goods and Economic Strife

Despite the progress made in the ECE region, a great number of people still live in poverty without access to the means to make use of their economic potential. Household energy insecurity still exists in the pan-European region, with some households unable to afford sufficient amounts of energy, energy-efficient

housing or heating equipment. In Western Europe, water quality has improved over the past 20 years, due to better regulations and enforcement, and increased investment in wastewater treatment plants. Nevertheless, in the pan-European region 4 million people in urban areas and 14.8 million in rural areas still use unimproved water sources, and 34.6 million have unimproved sanitation – making them vulnerable to water-related diseases. Although infant mortality and morbidity from water-related diseases have declined, significant subregional inequalities remain. Approximately 13,000 deaths occur in the region each year due to diarrhoeal disease from unsafe drinking water, mainly in Central Asia (WHO/EURO 2011b).

ECLAC & ESCAP: Inadequate Welfare Policies

Tax pressure in the ECLAC region is still far below that in developed countries, which are very dependent on indirect taxation, along with opportunities to apply environmentally friendly reforms (Figure 2.2). Some 80 per cent of household income comes from the

Figure 2.3: Informal employment as a share of non-agricultural employment, selected Asia-Pacific economies, most recent year

Source: ILO: Statistical update on employment in the informal economy (Geneva, June 2012); National statistical offices. (ESCAP 2013 ESSurvey 2013).

Notes: China covers six urban areas. Sri Lanka excludes the Northern Province. Indonesia includes only Banten and Yogyakarta.

labour market, so progress in reducing poverty and inequality depends critically on the set of economic and social policies aimed at creating decent jobs for all, including women and young people. Despite advances, more than 40 per cent of the employed population in the region is in the informal sector, with low productivity and income and no social protection coverage.⁵ The high rate of informal employment in the region calls for social protection to be decoupled from the labour market in order to ensure more inclusive social security systems.⁶

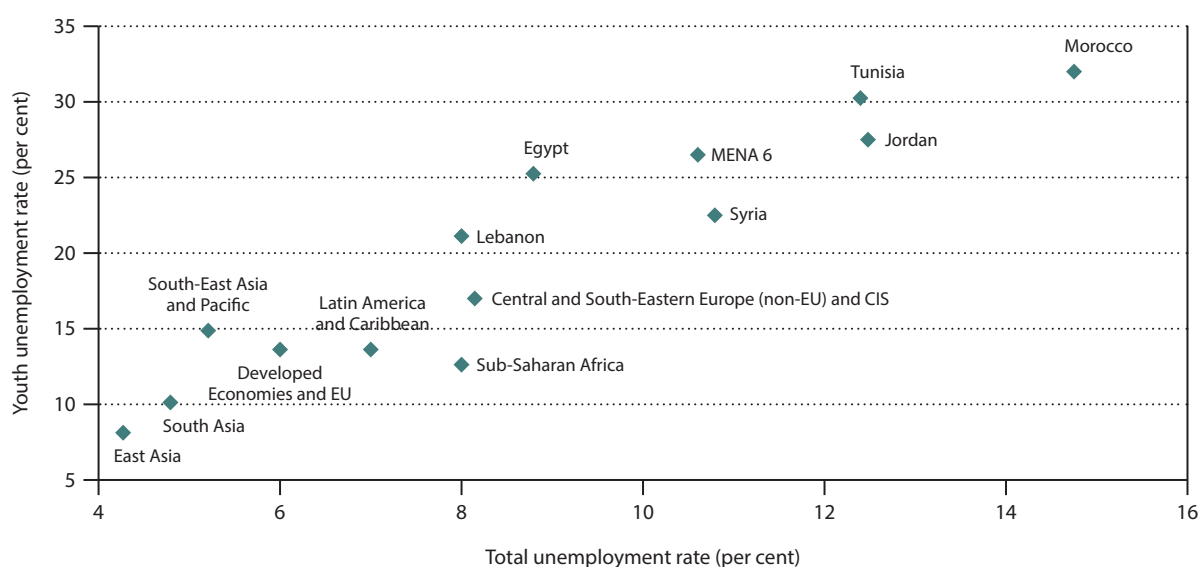
Similarly for the ESCAP region, Asia-Pacific economies have the lowest tax burden of any developing region in the world. However, many economies in the region have not raised sufficient tax revenue despite rapid growth in the past three decades. Countries need

to address inequalities by means of adequate fiscal policies through reforming the tax structure to increase public expenditure.

In the ESCAP region, the issue of informal employment is also of great importance. While overall unemployment remains typically low in most Asia-Pacific countries (often below 5 per cent), many people are engaged in low-paying informal sectors or self-employment (Figure 2.3). For example, outside the agricultural sector in Nepal, India and Pakistan, around 80 per cent of all workers are engaged in informal employment; in Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam, the comparable shares are approximately 70 per cent. Widespread informality and poor job quality pose significant concerns for policy-makers seeking to reverse recent regional trends in high and

⁵ ECLAC (2013), Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean Follow-up to the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and to Rio+20 (LC/L.3590), United Nations, Santiago, Chile.

⁶ ECLAC (2010) Achieving the Millennium Development Goals with Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean: Progress and Challenges (LC/G.2460), United Nations, Santiago, Chile.

Figure 2.4: Unemployment rates, selected regions and Middle East and North Africa six countries, 2008

Sources: IMF (2011) World Economic Outlook, IMF, Washington, USA; International Labour Organization; national authorities; and IMF staff estimates.

Notes: Data from 2008 or most recent earlier year available. MENA 6 countries are Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. Total and youth unemployment rates for Morocco reflect data from Urban Labor Force Survey.

rising inequality and rebalance their economies towards stronger domestic markets (ESCAP 2013).

ESCWA: Lack of Economic Diversification

Notwithstanding a common language and shared culture and history, tremendous economic, demographic and social diversity exists across the Arab region.⁷ However, the countries also face many common challenges, including expanding populations, a growing youth bulge and high youth unemployment, rapid urbanization and crowding in cities, large flows of immigrants, and shortages of arable land, food and water.

The total population of the Arab region has nearly tripled since 1970, from 128 million to 359 million in 2010, and it is expected to reach 461 million by 2025 and 598 million by 2050 (ESCWA 2009; UNDP 2010). In addition, one out of every five persons in the Arab Region is between 15 and 24 years of age, while more than half of the population is below the age of 25.⁸

Such population trends place a major stress on governments to provide basic services such as energy, water and sanitation, as well as decent work.

Several economic deficiencies aggravate these demographic trends and create challenges for employment generation and growth. First, the Arab world has struggled to develop a strong private sector that is connected with global markets, can survive without state support and generates productive employment for its youth (World Bank 2012).⁹ Increasingly constrained public expenditure and a bloated civil service cannot continue to compensate for the failure of economic policies in the region to create economic opportunities and jobs. It is now widely recognized that sustainable economic growth and job creation can only be achieved by fully unlocking private initiatives, innovation, and investments, both domestic and foreign, maximizing the benefits of an increasingly integrated world (World Bank 2012).¹⁰

⁷ UNDP (2010) *Population Levels, Trends and Policies in the Arab region: Challenges and Opportunities*, Research Paper by Barry Mirkin for Arab Human Development Report, UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdrps/paper01-en.pdf>

⁸ ESCWA & UNPY (2010) "Regional Overview: Youth in the Arab Region", United Nations, Beirut.

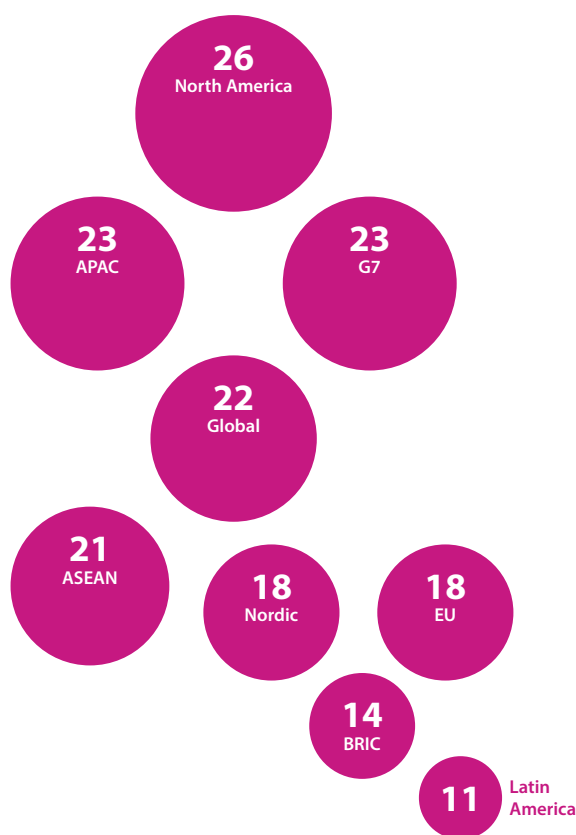
⁹ World Bank (2012) *From Political to Economic Awakening in the Arab World: The Path of Economic Integration*, The World Bank, available at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/05/25/000333038_20120525021154/Rendered/PDF/688320vol020ES05023020120Box369244B.pdf

¹⁰ World Bank (2012) *From Political to Economic Awakening in the Arab World: The Path of Economic Integration*, The World Bank, available at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/05/25/000333038_20120525021154/Rendered/PDF/688320vol020ES05023020120Box369244B.pdf

Figure 2.5: Impact of Arab Spring on businesses, 2011

(Average per cent of businesses based on interviews, conducted in May 2011, with 2,700 CEOs and other senior executives)

Negatively affected by unrest



Less likely to do businesses in region



Source: Grant Thornton (2011) *International Business Review: The global economy in 2012: a rocky road to recovery*, available at: <http://www.internationalbusinessreport.com/files/ibr2011%20-%20global%20overview%20final.pdf>

Note: Circles represent the percentage of businesses.

Secondly, the economy has been unable to absorb the growing youth bulge. The youth population – increasingly more educated and mobile with access to widespread adoption of new information technology tools (ESCWA 2011a) – is entering a labour market already suffering from persistently high unemployment. As a result, Arab countries have the highest regional youth unemployment rate in the world, particularly affecting young Arab women (ESCWA 2011a).

Third, the Arab regional economic context has been shaped by the shift to “free” markets after decades of centrally managed economies, a corresponding social contract characterized by weak political participation, and by ill-fated national development projects (UNDP 2011). The lack of domestic reforms to promote

competition and transparency, together with persisting corruption, political interference, and rent-seeking behaviour of political and economic elites, have meant that growth dividends and benefits have been captured by a well-connected few to the detriment of the wider population (World Bank 2012; UNDP 2011).¹¹

The widespread political and social unrest in the region known as the Arab Spring resulted from decades of accumulated social problems and political exclusion that led people to the streets to protest.¹² Underlying causes related to unemployment, poverty and inequality have been highlighted in most countries. Ongoing political transitions and conflict in some countries continue to weigh on growth throughout

¹¹ World Bank (2012) *From Political to Economic Awakening in the Arab World: The Path of Economic Integration*, The World Bank, available at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/05/25/000333038_20120525021154/Rendered/PDF/688320vol020ES05023020120Box369244B.pdf

¹² ESCWA (2012).

the region. In response to social demands and rising food and fuel prices, governments have significantly expanded spending on subsidies creating fiscal vulnerabilities. Stronger growth is urgently needed to spur job creation and provide the population with tangible benefits. To do so, governments urgently need to restore macroeconomic stability and growth-oriented structural reforms aimed at improving competitiveness and laying the foundations for a more inclusive economic model.¹³

2.1.4 Vulnerability and Economic Crises

The gap between rich and poor has continued to widen globally and within regions, with the recent global financial crisis resulting in the emergence of the so-called “new poor”. The global financial crisis has also revealed the downside risks of heavy reliance on net exports; declining import demand from developed economies, because of curbs on debt-fuelled consumption (ESCAP 2012, 5), have impacted the countries whose economies depend disproportionately on export demand. Moreover, countries with exports concentrated in a limited number of primary commodities are exposed to even higher risks.

In order to mitigate the negative multiplier effect, social protection provided by the government is an important buffer; a universal and comprehensive social protection scheme guarantees all citizens a minimum level of security, releasing the vulnerable social groups from structural traps that lock them into inequality. A robust system of social protection not only fulfills people’s basic rights, but also establishes a firm platform for social and economic development and provides a stabilizer for vulnerable groups affected by crisis.

ECE: Global Crises and Unemployment

Creating employment is a key challenge for all of the countries in the ECE. In the advanced economies unemployment has been quite high for the last five years and by some measures has reached levels not experienced since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Associated with the high levels of unemployment are a historically high percentage of those that have been unemployed for over 6 months and especially high

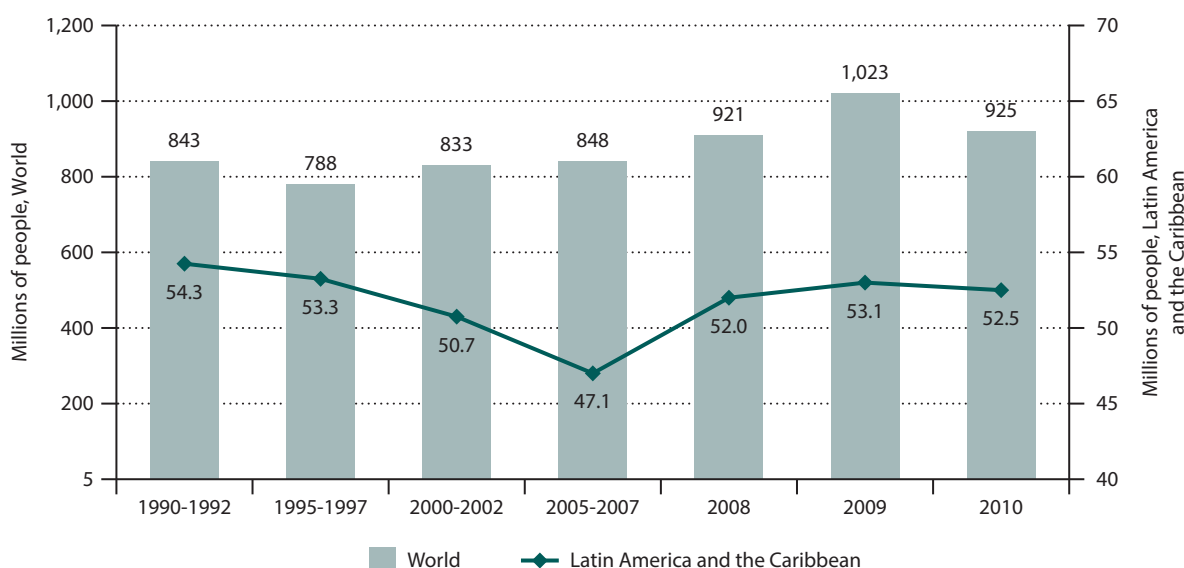
levels of unemployment for youth. Unemployment in the advanced economies of North America and Western Europe has been the result of a lack of aggregate demand due to the collapse in private sector spending as a result of the financial crisis of 2008-2009. The economic weakness in the Eurozone has been compounded by defects in the institutional design of the Eurozone (such as creating a central bank without a lender of last resort) which placed political and legal constraints on implementing a proper set of corrective policies. Creating decent jobs has also been a major challenge in Eastern and South-eastern Europe (SEE) and the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). Unemployment varies considerably in these economies and is especially high in the Western Balkans, Armenia and Georgia where it is in double digits. In Armenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia it exceeds 30 per cent and is close to this level in Bosnia and Herzegovina. High unemployment in SEE precedes the financial crisis and is due more to structural than macroeconomic causes; many of the structural issues are the result of the destruction which accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. In the EECCA the level of unemployment is lower, generally below 10 per cent, but these countries are experiencing considerable underemployment, in particular in the rural sector. Throughout the SEE and EECCA there is widespread informal employment, low employment security, low wages, insufficient social security coverage and high poverty. The economies of the region conceal vast structural imbalances and institutional weaknesses. Many of the EECCA are highly dependent on several commodities (e.g., hydrocarbons, minerals and steel production) as the principal drivers of growth; diversification of their production structures towards manufacturing will be essential for creating full and decent employment. Several other economies are highly remittance-dependent as a large portion of their labour force has left the country due to the lack of jobs at home.

ECLAC: Impact of Global Crises on Hunger and Malnutrition.

Hunger and malnutrition are the most dramatic expressions of poverty. The number of people suffering from hunger decreased between 1990 and 2006, but this progress was halted by the food crisis of 2007-2008

¹³ IMF (2012) *Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia*, IMF, Washington, USA, available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2012/mcd/eng/pdf/mreo1112.pdf>

¹⁴ Data obtained from <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/wfs-home/foodpricesindex/en/> (date of reference: December 2011).

Figure 2.6: Number of undernourished people in the World and in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990-1992 to 2010

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Panorama of Food and Nutrition Security in Latin America, 2010*, Santiago, Chile, 2010

and the economic crisis of 2008-2009. In 2010, there were still over 52 million undernourished people in the region and the outlook is not encouraging in view of food price developments – between 1992 and 2011, the FAO food price index doubled.¹⁴

Undernutrition results in estimated losses of USD6.659 billion in the Dominican Republic and Central America and USD4.311 billion in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru. These are equivalent to 6.4 per cent and 3.3 per cent of GDP, respectively. More than 90 per cent of these costs reflect productivity losses caused by lower education levels and a higher mortality rate among the undernourished (ECLAC 2010).

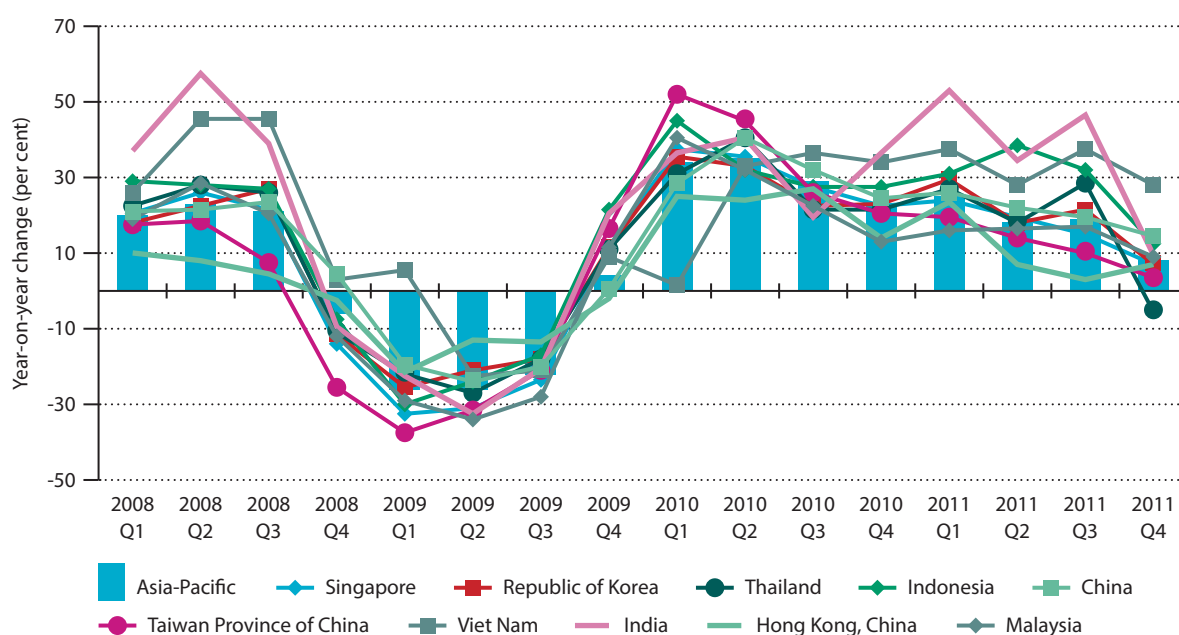
ESCAP: Global Crises and Export-Dependence

Prior to the economic crisis, the Asia-Pacific region experienced rapid economic growth and made remarkable progress towards reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs, with the share of the region's population living in extreme poverty (less than USD 1.25 per day) falling from 48.8 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent in 2009. However, the multiple crises that hit the region, including the food and fuel crises of 2007-2008 and financial crisis in 2009, have severely impacted the region's growth and disproportionately affected the poor and vulnerable. As a result of sharp increases in food and fuel in 2007 and 2008, an additional 112 million in Asia remained in poverty (ADB, ESCAP, UNDP, 2013), and an additional 17 million

people were trapped in extreme poverty in 2009 (ESCAP 2010b). In 2010, the global economy again experienced rapid increases in food and fuel prices with food prices rising between 10 and 35 per cent in various countries and oil prices by 45 per cent.

The series of global crises have revealed that a number of countries in the ESCAP region are vulnerable to external shocks because of their high export-dependency. Prior to the global financial crisis, the world economy was characterized by record large trade and current account imbalances between major trading partners, which saw the AP region in a favourable position, especially East and South-East Asia. As measured by the ratio of merchandise exports to GDP, the regional dependence on trade increased from 11 per cent in 1990 to 31 per cent in 2011 (ESCAP 2012a). Due to heavy reliance on export without strong domestic markets, the deepening debt crisis in Europe increased volatility in financial and commodity markets globally. As a result, the economic outlook weakened for export-oriented economies (ESCAP 2012, 58) increasing uncertainties, which not only produced economic hardships but also grave social consequences.

Many economies in the region have suffered the consequences of their high export-dependence and pressure flowing from the developed world's economic slowdown. These countries – notably China, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea,

Figure 2.7: Export growth, selected Asia-Pacific economies, 2008-2011

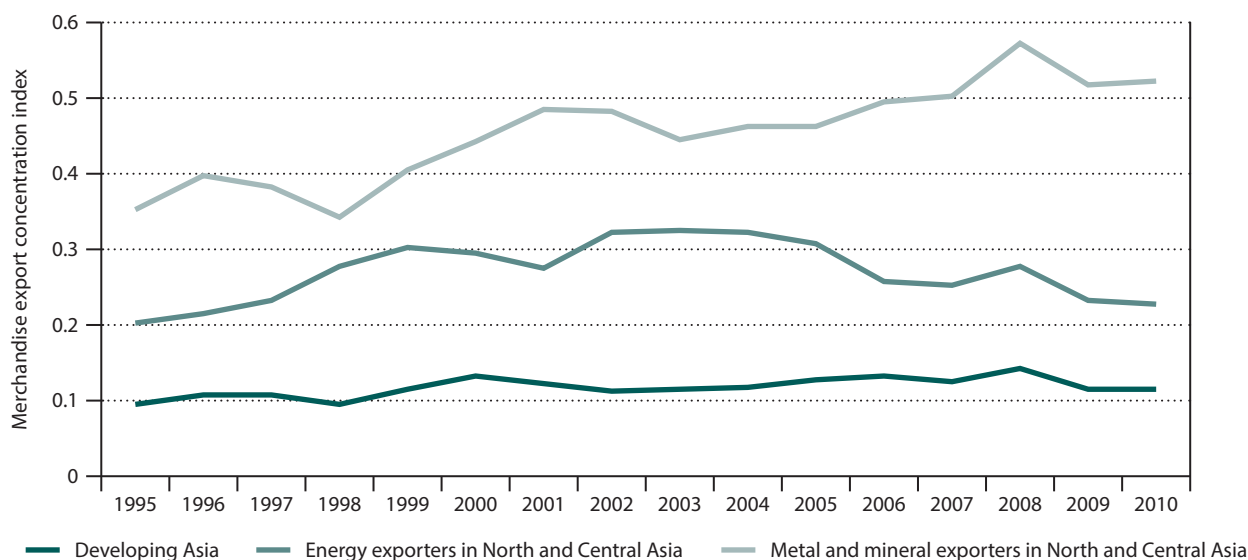
Source: ESCAP calculations based on World Trade Organization online Short-term Statistics. (ES Survey 2012 pp.9).

Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong, China as well as LDCs and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) of the region – have relatively high exposure due to a comparatively large share of GDP coming from exports. Signs of weakening export growth performance for 2008-2011 are shown in Figure 2.7. In contrast, the economies least affected by the slowdown in developed economies are characteristically those with large and robust domestic markets and limited reliance on exports as a driver of growth – India and Indonesia are the most prominent examples in the region. Strong domestic demand in India and Indonesia is related to a high proportion of consumption in GDP (ESCAP 2012, 8-9).

This suggests that export-dependent Asia-Pacific countries may need to gradually rebalance their economies in favour of domestic consumption and investment, and greater regional economic integration. To this end, in addition to appropriate investment measures to stimulate aggregate demand (e.g., investment in physical infrastructure), countries could also consider stimulating private consumption by social investments and welfare spending. These could lessen the need for precautionary savings by governments by providing greater security through stronger systems of social protection.

On the other hand, countries specialized in exports of only a limited range of commodities are exposed to higher vulnerability to shocks following a sharp decline in commodity prices. Countries of North and Central Asia are examples of those aiming to diversify their economies away from growing dependence on commodity exports. Their high dependence on the export of undiversified commodities, namely energy and minerals, makes these economies extremely vulnerable to price swings (ESCAP 2012, 81). Such dependence is also evidenced by the Merchandise Export Concentration Index, which measures the sectoral concentration of merchandise exports. From 1995 to 2010 the indices for energy exporters and metal and mineral exporters in North and Central Asia have indicated that the subregion has a highly concentrated export structure compared to other Asian economies.

In another example, Mongolia has also seen remarkable economic growth in recent years – 17.3 per cent and 12.3 per cent in 2011 and 2012 respectively – from a single sector: mining for coal and minerals. In addition to the serious environmental implications due to the lack of diversification in export commodities, the mining boom has conceived serious social consequences with high inflation reaching 10 per cent during the highest growth in 2011

Figure 2.8: Merchandise export concentration index in Developing Asia, and North and Central Asia, 1995-2010

Sources: ESCAP calculations based on data from United Nations, International Merchandise Trade Statistics <http://comtrade.un.org/>; International Trade Centre <http://www.intracen.org/>; and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *UNCTADstat* <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/>. (ES Survey 2012, pp. 79).

resulting mainly from rising food prices, subsequently affecting the lower-income households to the greatest extent.¹⁵

The Asia-Pacific region also includes countries that are dependent on fuel and food imports and are

vulnerable to global supply and price instability. In the Pacific Islands dependence on oil imports is high enough to cause national crises in times of rising fuel prices. This offers a strong incentive to transition to renewable energy with many of the countries committing to ambitious renewable energy targets.¹⁶

2.2 Economic-Environmental Inter-linkages

The WCED Report articulated the intertwined nature of environmental stress and economic development: “economy is not just about the production of wealth, and ecology is not just about the protection of nature; they are both equally relevant for improving the lot of humankind” (WCED 1987, Chapter 1 para 42). As such, economic and environmental issues have merged into an increasingly intricate relationship with the progress of industrialization and globalization. This section will thus examine the environment-economy nexus and the interlinked challenges that arise with regard to the individual Regional Commissions.

2.2.1 Resources and Exploitation

The adverse impacts of resource exploitation and mismanagement are becoming clearer, as well as those arising from the unsustainable reliance on primary

commodities and nearly irrevocable environmental degradation. Economic growth patterns that do not internalize the environmental costs lead to increasing production cost in the long term, while economic practices that do not heed to the ecological limits bankrupt the ecological assets and ultimately bankrupt the source for economic vitality.

ECLAC: Static Comparative Advantage and Energy Intensity

The Latin America and the Caribbean region is characterized by a wealth of natural resources, ecological diversity and rich biodiversity. The abundant natural resource assets of the region include: a third of global water reserves; 15 per cent cultivable land in the region; a third of world production of ethanol, around 25 per cent of the production of biofuels and

¹⁵ <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65057>

¹⁶ www.unescap.org/EPOC/pdf/Pacific-Perspectives-2012.pdf

Figure 2.9: Proportion of terrestrial protected areas, World and Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990, 2000 and 2010

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Database on Protected Areas (online) www.wdpa.org/Default.aspx (date of reference: December 2011).

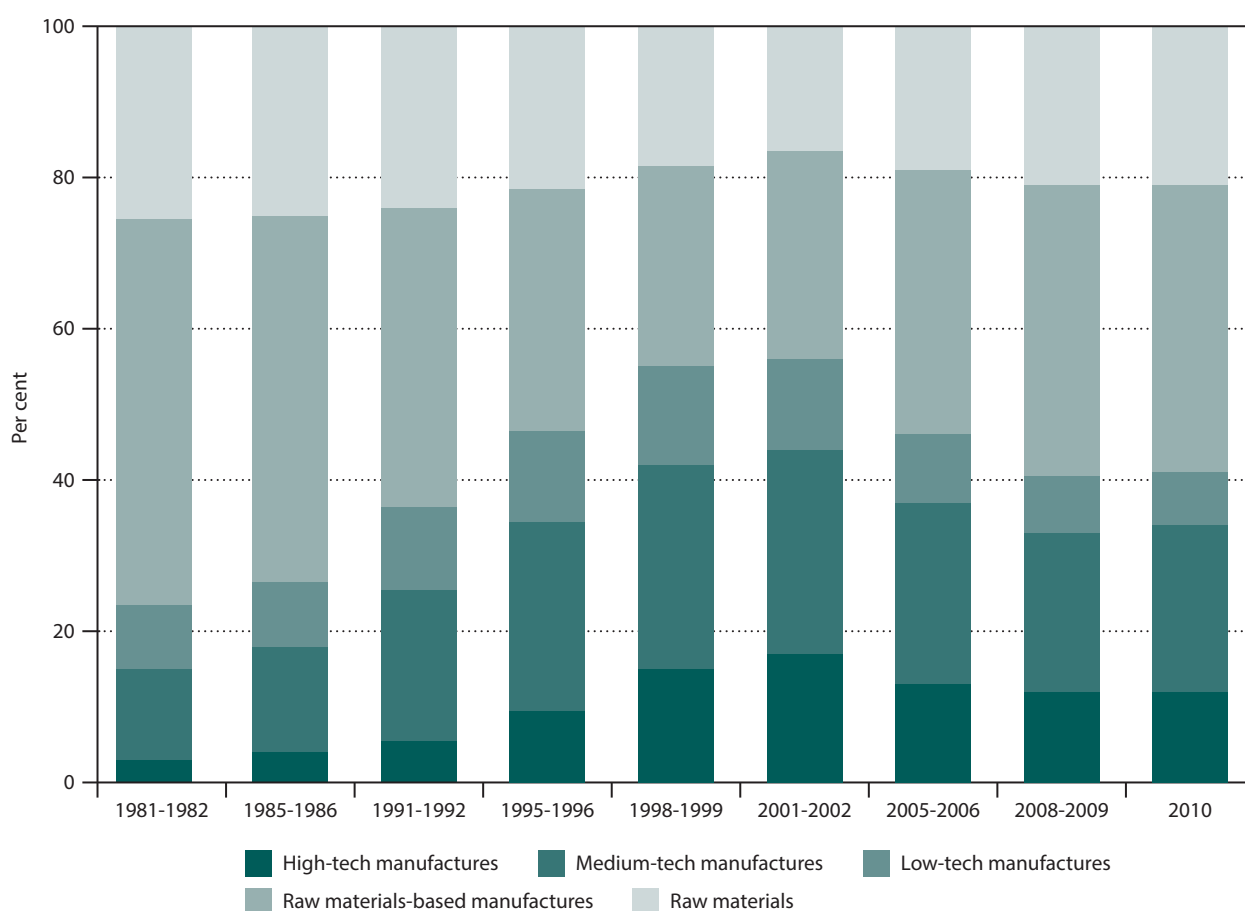
13 per cent of the world's oil production; reserves of: 65 per cent of lithium, 49 per cent of silver, 44 per cent of copper, 33 per cent of tin, 32 per cent of molybdenum, 26 per cent of bauxite, 23 per cent of nickel, 22 per cent of iron and 22 per cent of zinc; around 50 per cent of the world soybean's production and so forth. The region is endowed with abundant water resources but faces significant risks associated with the quality of water and its uneven availability.

In conjunction with natural resources, the region's biodiversity and biodiversity-related economic opportunities are also of great importance. Latin America and the Caribbean is the most ecologically diverse area on the planet with 21 per cent of the global area of natural forest and rich biodiversity, holding 6 of the world's 17 mega-diverse countries (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru), and the Amazon (most mega-diverse area on the planet). The region is home to between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of the world's species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, as well as a large proportion of its plant and insect species. The region has a high level of endemism: 50 per cent of the plant life found in the Caribbean sub-region exists nowhere else in the world. The Mesoamerican Reef is the largest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere. Although Central America accounts for only 0.5 per cent of the world's land mass, it contains 10 per cent of its biological diversity. Biodiversity is crucially important to the survival of communities and, in a number of sectors, production relies on a variety of ecosystem services. For example,

biodiversity-related tourism and wood and non-wood forest products are important sources of income in many areas.

Ecosystem regulating services are also vital, especially in view of the increased frequency of climate change-related extreme weather events. They protect lives and assets from weather-related natural hazards by acting as protective barriers and buffers. In the Caribbean alone, healthy coral reefs are estimated to provide between USD0.7 billion and USD2.2 billion worth of coastal protection from erosion and the effects of extreme weather events. Furthermore, the region's immense endowment of natural resources makes for a unique laboratory for products and processes that could foster medical, agricultural and other solutions for present and future generations. The region also offers considerable potential for bio-prospecting, which should be properly promoted and regulated. Over the past decade, there has been a sustained expansion of the total surface of protected areas. Since 1990 the proportion of officially protected areas in Latin America and the Caribbean has doubled (Figure 2.9).

However, deforestation linked to large-scale economic activities, the introduction of exogenous species and climate changes have caused significant habitat loss. Marine and coastal resources are also under tremendous pressure. Warming of sea temperatures and acidifying oceans will result in more frequent bleaching and possible collapse of the vulnerable Caribbean coral reefs, which are nurseries for an

Figure 2.10: Export structure by technology intensity, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1981-2010

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Structural Change for Equality: An Integrated Approach to Development* (LC/G.2524 (SES.34/3)), Santiago, Chile.

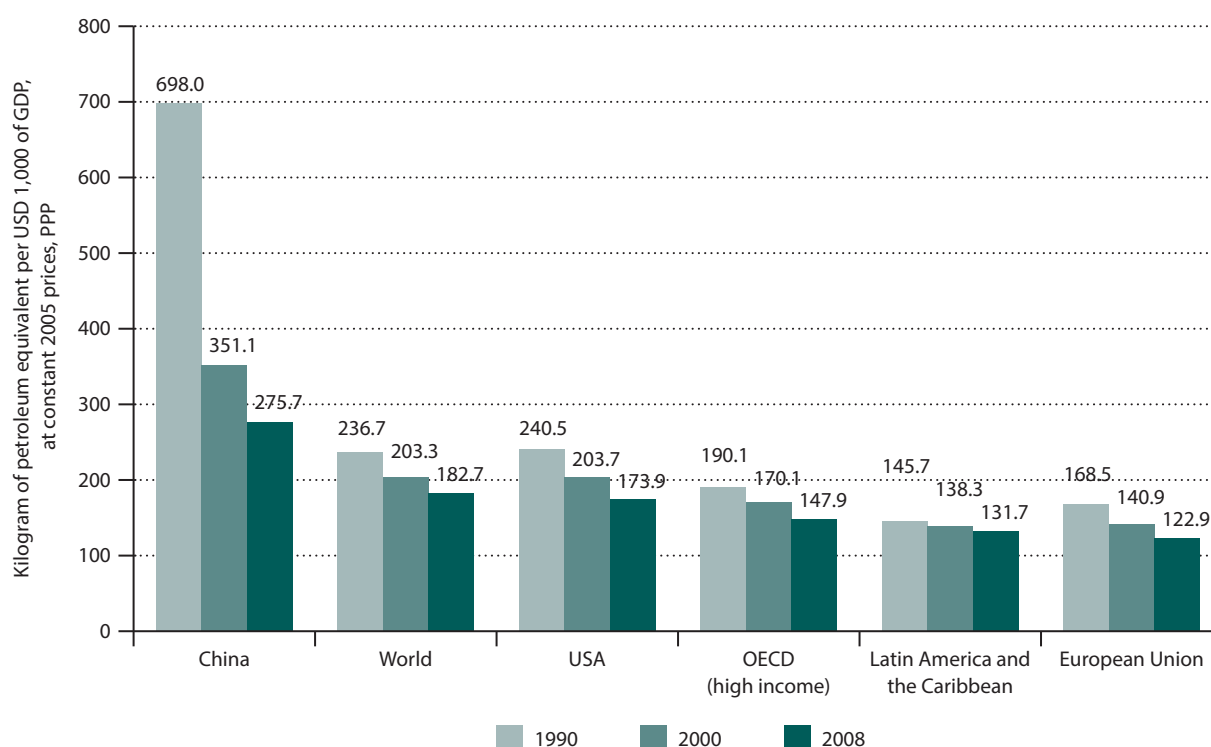
Notes: Data for Antigua and Barbuda refer only to 2007, and data for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela only to 2008; data for Honduras do not include 2008; data for Belize, Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Grenada (exports only) do not include 2009.

estimated 65 per cent of all fish species in the basin. As the region is dedicating almost half of its natural ecosystems to agriculture and cattle, about 5.4 million km² of the territory of the region is degraded (ECLAC 2012, 94) according to estimates issued by the Global Assessment of Land Degradation and Improvement (GLADA).

With regards to resources, while the region is a successful exporter of raw materials (Figure 2.10), there is still much to be done in ensuring sustainable exploitation and the contribution of these activities to more equitable and sustainable development. In general, the current development model is significantly dependent on the use of energy and natural resources and is environmentally degrading. A major factor underlying the trend of pollution, degradation, deforestation and the threat to biodiversity in the region is that investment decisions are also based on traditional economic criteria that do not take into

account the costs and standards required to protect biodiversity and ecosystems. The negative (and positive) externalities therefore conceal the true cost of the economic activity and divert investments towards unsustainable activities.

The region's productivity gap with the developed countries has widened. Its production structure continues to be based to a great extent on resource-intensive sectors; moreover, economies have once more become heavily dependent on the primary sector ("reprimarized"). The boom of export commodities prices and the inflow of international capital confront many countries with the risk of reprimarization. Reprimarization, increasing dependence on extractive capital, has deep implications in environmental aspects: communities in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia have documented illnesses from oil spills, contaminated aquifers, rivers and adjoining farmland and among residents while

Figure 2.11: Energy intensity of the economy by selected regions and countries, 1990, 2000 and 2008

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Bank, World Development Indicators (online) <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators> (date of reference: December 2011).

poisonous chemicals undermine the health of local producers. Furthermore, rerouting of water towards mines and plantations deprives irrigation water, sapping the livelihood of local farmers. This situation generates considerable pressure on soils, water resources and the atmosphere.

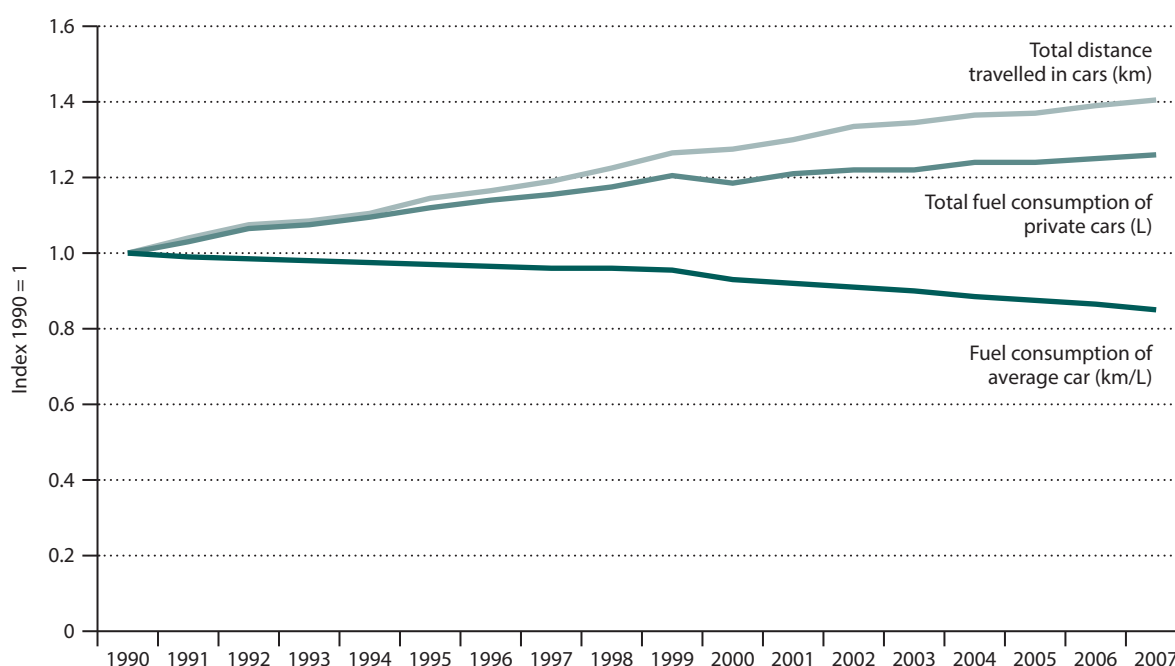
Furthermore, sustainable development needs a different type of industrial structure than what is currently in place in most countries. The current structure depends on static comparative advantages consisting in exploiting abundant natural resources. There are wide differences in levels of productivity between and within the various branches of economic activity: compared to the success of raw material competitiveness, the manufacturing sectors continue to operate with little value added. Such structure further reinforces reliance on primary resources and hinders economic diversification. This channels investment, innovation and technological development in that direction and encourages energy intensity (especially the use of fossil fuels). This bias towards the dominant pattern, together with a failure to account for and internalize the costs of deteriorating natural resources and ecosystems, has held back structural change towards more efficient and knowledge-intensive activities with a smaller environmental and health impact.

Attributable to the region's production patterns, energy intensity for the region has been declining much more slowly in Latin America and the Caribbean than in other regions (Figure 2.11). The fact that environmental and health costs are not factored into economic decisions, the use of hydrocarbon consumption and production subsidies, and the low priority that policymakers have assigned to energy efficiency are underlying causes to such trend.

ECE: The Rebound Effect of Higher Efficiency

The pan-European region has historically been a large emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that contribute to global warming – it currently accounts for around half of global GHG emissions. In reflection of this historic responsibility, most of the economies in the region have adopted policies that are achieving sizeable reductions in energy intensity and GHG emissions per dollar of GDP. The energy intensity of GDP in Western Europe is approximately a third lower than in North America.

There is considerable potential for reducing emissions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia by increasing their efficiency to the levels of Western Europe. For this region, the challenge is to deliver the mix of appropriate policy instruments, technological

Figure 2.12: Fuel efficiency of cars, European Union, 1990-2007

Source: EEA (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/growth-in-private-car-travel>).

Note: Includes 27 EU countries.

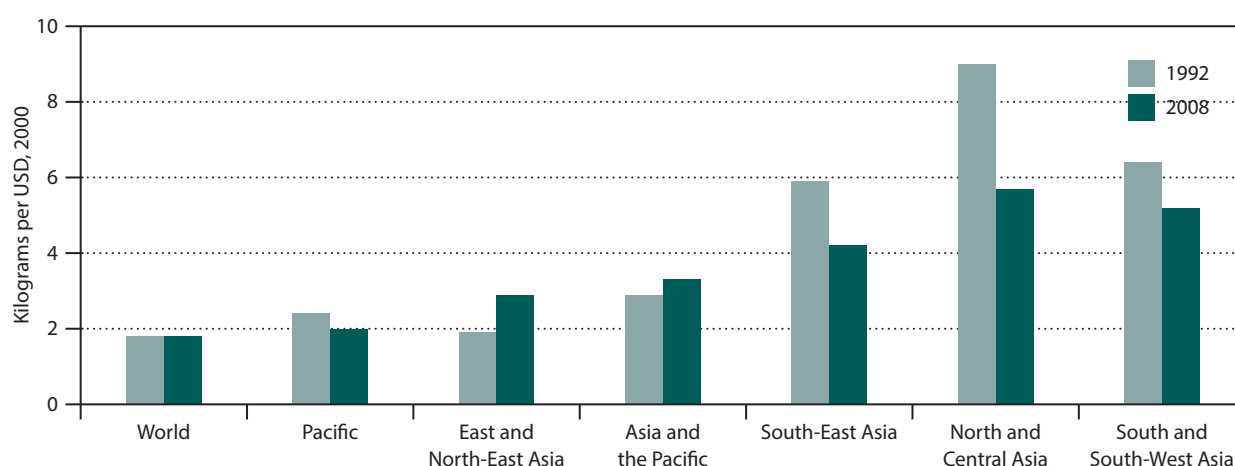
innovation and financing which can lead to such significant energy efficiency gains. A number of countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia remain among the least energy efficient and most carbon-intensive economies in the world.

Triggered by industrial restructuring, significant energy-efficiency improvements have taken hold in the formerly centrally planned (and often resource-intensive) economies of the Soviet Union. Energy intensity of production declined on average by 40 per cent between 1990 and 2007 in the transition economies and by more than 60 per cent in the NMS. Since the early 2000s, energy use has grown at a slower pace than production, but this energy-saving tendency has been overwhelmed by robust output growth.

For all parts of the ECE region, transport is an increasingly important source of GHG emissions that has also been experiencing gains in efficiencies. Technological progress has strongly reduced the energy and carbon intensity of transport over the past two decades. For instance, car fuel efficiency was increased by 15 per cent in 1990-2006 in the EU-27

countries (Figure 2.12).¹⁷ However, rapid expansion of transport activity has overwhelmed the improvements in energy efficiency of all transport modes. Notwithstanding the comparatively strong growth of civil aviation and navigation subsectors, road transport continues to produce more environmental pressures than any other mode, accounting for about three quarters of CO₂ emissions from transport. Furthermore, road transport has not become more sustainable as technological advance has been overwhelmed by other trends: on average, vehicles have increased in size, weight and power, but, even more important, they have increased in quantity as have the distances driven. Car ownership in EU-15 countries and the number of kilometres travelled have increased at the same rate as GDP growth since 1990, and in many countries consumers have shown a strong preference for larger and less fuel-efficient cars despite unfavourable differential road taxes (EEA, 2007). The social and environmental cost of traffic congestion is another aspect: pollution and accidents in the EU well exceeds EUR500 billion per year, and overall costs due to road traffic deaths and disability make up to 3 per cent of Europe's GDP (UNEP, 2011).

¹⁷ The European Union now has 28 members with the accession of Croatia in 2013 but this figure is based upon the 27 members.

Figure 2.13: Domestic material consumption intensity, Asia and the Pacific, 1992 and 2008

Sources: Based on data from the Commonwealth, Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation of Australasia and UNEP Asia-Pacific Material Flows Database: www.csiro.au/AsiaPacificMaterialFlows

Notes: Covering biomass, fossil fuels, metal ores, industrial minerals and construction minerals

ESCAP: Impact of Resource-Intensive Growth Pattern

Despite growing efforts greening economy as a tool towards sustainable development, a resource-driven growth path poses ominous threats to environmental as well as economic sustainability. In the Asia-Pacific region, the extraction and consumption of non-renewable and renewable resources, such as biomass, minerals and metals, have increased rapidly. Between 1970 and 2005, domestic material consumption¹⁸ more than tripled – compared with an approximately 50 per cent increase in the rest of the world. Between 1992 and 2008, while the resource intensity of almost every other global region used almost twice as much resources as the global economy to create one unit of GDP, and almost five times that of the North American Economy.

The stocks of processed and manufactured metals are now getting larger than the stock yet to be mined. Underground reserves such as iron, cobalt, platinum and palladium are projected to be close to exhaustion by 2050.¹⁹ The depletion of resources conceives severe consequences: the environmental impacts include extensive ecological damage caused by extracting these minerals, pollution in the form of growing CO₂ emissions associated with mining and extraction. Furthermore, as the resources are depleted, mining and exploiting increases in more fragile locations such

as the seafloor and in lower quality deposits. Such activities in turn lead to processing a larger quantity of material, resulting in greater leftover spoils to pollute air, water, and soil as well as a higher cost.²⁰

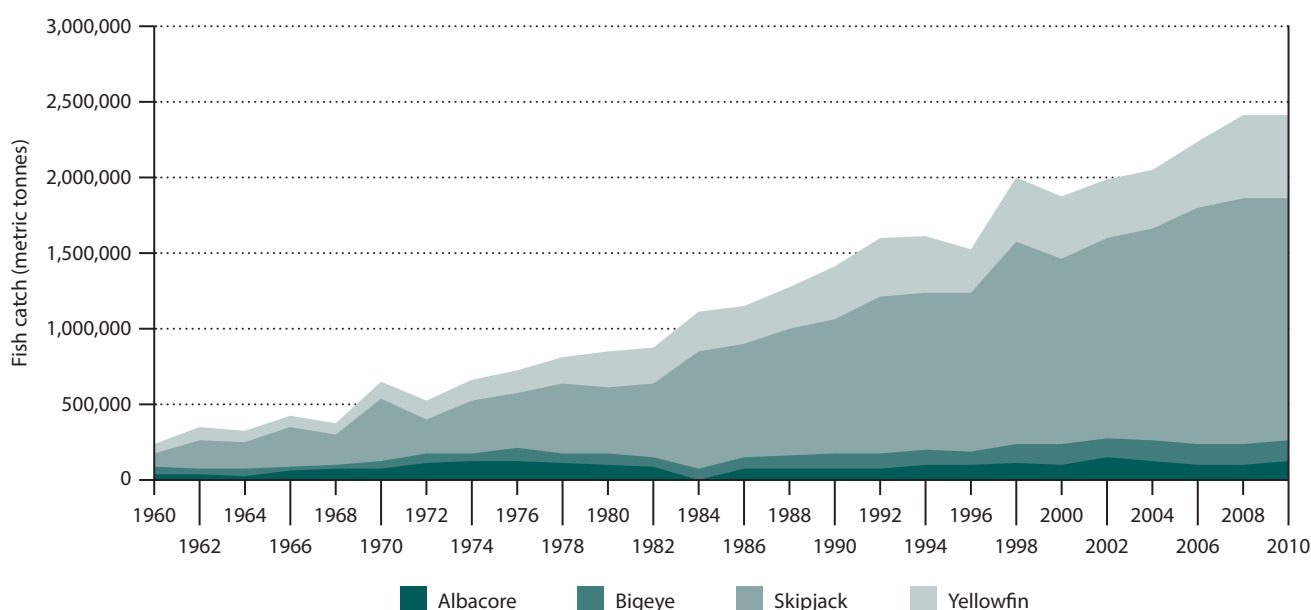
Besides the increase in difficulty and economic cost of extraction and mining, extensive exploitation of resources have other economic consequences. In particular, there are implications for low-carbon technologies and their markets. For example, supplies of rare earth metals such as lithium used in low-carbon technologies – such as wind turbines, hybrid vehicles and many information and communication technologies (ICTs) – are constrained. This resource limitation dampens the optimistic outlook for low-carbon technology industries as well as for the role of technology in achieving low-carbon growth.

Resource curse is yet another relevant problem for a number of countries in the region. The smaller resource-rich countries such as Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, and even Mongolia are vulnerable to the typical problems of a high degree of dependence on natural resources. Especially with global economic powerhouses in the region, the demand for natural resources in these countries is expected to rise significantly. Mineral-dependent transition economies, those endowed with oil and gas

¹⁸ Covering biomass, fossil fuels, metal ores and industrial minerals and construction minerals. Source: based on data from the Commonwealth, Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation of Australasia and UNEP Asia-Pacific Material Flows Database: www.csiro.au/AsiaPacificMaterialFlows

¹⁹ K. Halada, M. Shimada and K. Iijima, "Forecasting of the consumption of metals up to 2050", *Materials Transactions* (2009), vol. 50, pp. 453–460.

²⁰ <http://monthlyreview.org/2013/01/01/global-resource-depletion>

Figure 2.14: Tuna catch in the Western and Central Pacific region, 1960-2010

Source: ESCAP (2012) *Green Economy in a Blue World: Pacific Perspectives*, Suva, Fiji. pp24.

resources, and others with abundant timber or precious minerals are led to negative impacts including proliferation of toxic waste, water, soil and air pollution, land disturbance, deforestation, and inter-sectoral competition for critical natural resources (UNDP Cambodia 2006). A heavy reliance on natural resources as a source of revenue also tends to reduce incentives for taxation.

But resources do not have to be a “curse”. Rather, they are endowments that should be safeguarded and utilized responsibly, in a manner that accounts for the expected consequences of extraction and usage. Examples such as Norway’s “Government Pension Fund Global” demonstrates a way to benefit all citizens by collecting the net cash flow from the resource extraction as well as the return on its investment to finance the government’s fiscal deficit. The task lies in ensuring sustainable management of resources and their use so that society as a whole can benefit from the common good while also protecting the natural resource values.

ESCAP: Health of Marine Life

The Pacific Ocean being the biggest in the world makes a significant contribution sustaining life on earth. At least 90 per cent of the volume of global trade is seaborne.²¹ As a valuable source of nutrition, globally fish provides 4.3 billion people with about 15 per cent of their intake of animal protein.²² Approximately half of all international tourists travel to coastal areas, and some countries notably Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are highly dependent on tourism.

Asia-Pacific also experiences a set of challenges in managing marine resources. The problems include marine pollution, loss of habitat, and overfishing; these pose a particularly unique challenge for the region because oceans and seas serve as a vital connector among Asia Pacific countries,²³ a regulator of climate and an important sink for GHGs. The ocean captures and stores 30 per cent of the carbon dioxide produced by humans;²⁴ it absorbs a majority of the sun’s radiation and redistributes the heat around the world enabling humans to live on this planet;²⁵ its phytoplankton produces 50 per cent of the Earth’s oxygen; and

²¹ IMO (2012): *International Shipping Facts and Figures: Information Resources on Trade, Safety, Security, Environment*.

²² FAO (2012): *The States of World Fisheries and Aquaculture*.

²³ At least 90 percent of global trade is seaborne according to IMO (2012): *International Shipping Facts and Figures: Information Resources on Trade, Safety, Security, Environment*.

²⁴ UNEP (2009): *The Natural Fix? The Role of Ecosystems in Climate Mitigation*.

²⁵ IOC/UNESCO, IMO, FAO, UNDP (2011): *A Blueprint for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability*.

Box 2.1 The Coral Triangle – The Amazon of the Seas

The Coral Triangle – referred to as the Amazon of the Seas – covers 5.7 million square kilometers of ocean waters in Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. The area is considered as the global center of tropical marine diversity, supporting the highest number of species of coral reef fish, and turtles. The mangrove forests, coral reefs, and coastal and offshore waters are the most species-rich in the tropics. It is a good example of a major resource at immediate risk from a range of factors, including the impacts of climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, unsustainable fishing methods, and land-based sources of pollution.

majority of rain that falls on land originates from it.²⁶ Consumption of fish and other marine resources of the Asian countries place great demand on Pacific countries, thus creating a high interdependency between economic activity and livelihood in the region.

With the world's largest stock, the AP region relies on tuna fishing as a key source of employment, income and food; however, stocks are in danger of over-exploitation. While the annual tuna catch in the Pacific Ocean has more than doubled over the last three decades (Figure 2.14), a significant part of the demand comes from Asian countries – especially with Japan alone consuming more than 25 per cent of the world's catch of all species of tuna. Today, 30 per cent of the world's fish stocks are over exploited, while more than half are fully exploited.²⁷ The main concerns include overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices as well as the usage of harmful subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing and overcapacity. The Pacific Island States are also concerned at the low (approximately 5 per cent of total catch value of around USD4 billion) returns accruing to themselves.

Aside from fisheries, the natural marine environment is also at peril: over 60 per cent of Asia's mangroves have been converted to aquaculture farms, large areas of the coral reefs in Pacific Island countries are degraded, and sediment load is high in the coastal zones of South Asia due to the poor land-use practices and construction activities. Such marine environment disturbances have implications for climate change: not only do mangrove forests protect landward coastal areas from extreme storms and hurricanes, but degradation of mangroves release significant amounts of both nitrogen dioxide and methane.

Climate change – in addition to its impact on fragile ecosystems and other aspects of human welfare – has significant economic implications. Productive sectors including agriculture and infrastructure are at grave risk and growth potential is diminished. Climate sensitive production is upset, affecting employment and worsening social struggles. While the primary sector, namely agricultural activities, are severely and most directly affected, also subject to influence is trade and investment.

ESCWA: Natural Resource Abundance and Deficits

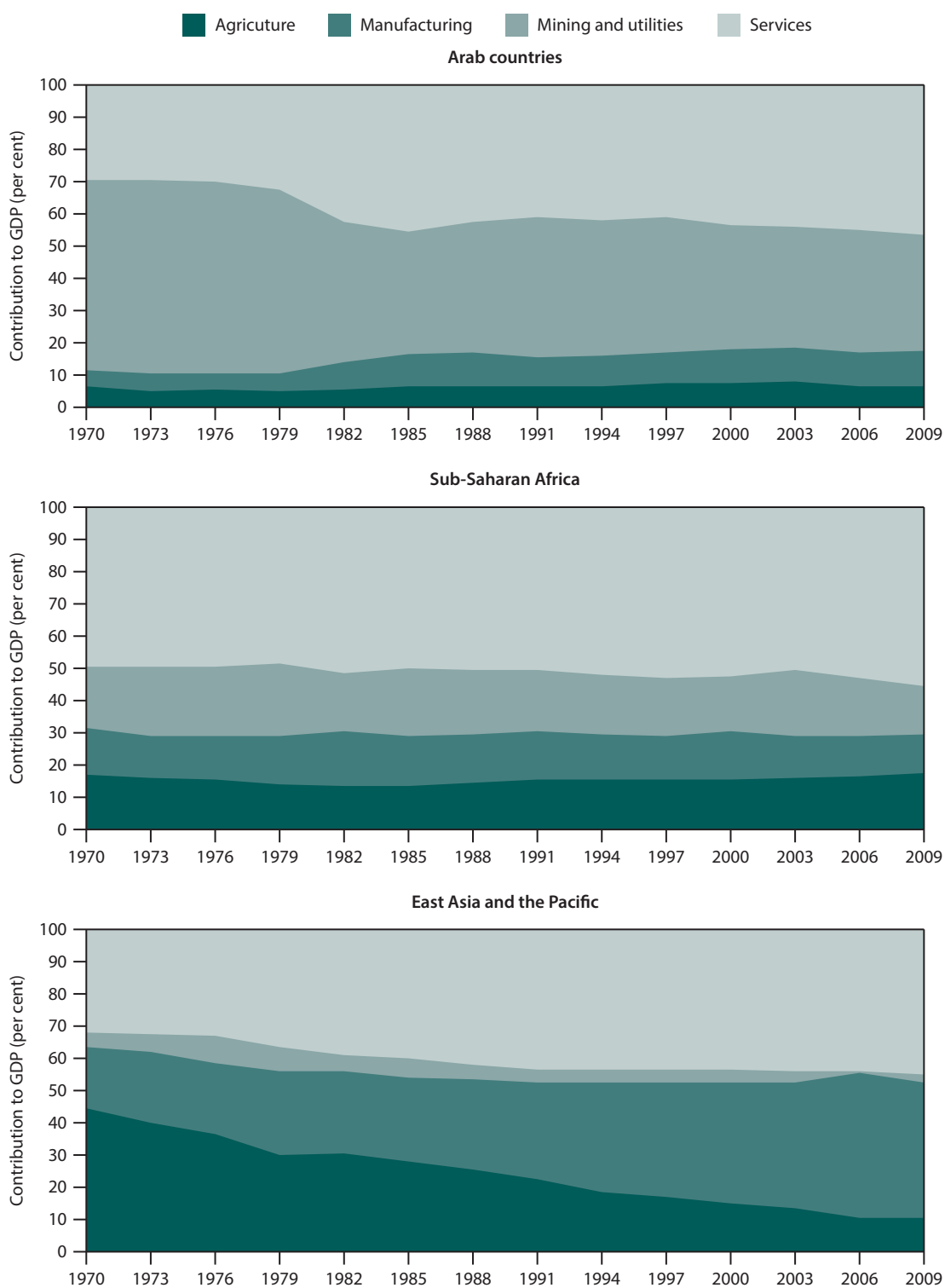
ESCWA member countries contributed 26.3 per cent and 11.1 per cent of the total global oil and gas production respectively in 2009 (ESCWA 2011b). While rapid urbanization, population growth, lifestyle changes and industrialization is increasing the energy demand, the region lacks long-term national strategies for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Hence Arab investments in renewable power sources make up less than 2 per cent of global investments (ESCWA 2011b).

But not only does oil and gas production preclude exploration of alternative energy sources, it has contributed to limiting the ability of economies of some countries in the region to diversify and invest in innovative industrial sectors. Predominantly, oil has become embedded as the prime commodity forming the backbone of the region's trade and production with its revenues financing luxury goods and services in oil-rich economies (UNDP 2011). Oil-led growth has led to a premature de-industrialisation, unbalanced growth among Arab countries, increased divide between urban and rural populations and the accumulation of rent-based activities such as tourism, speculative real estate or high-end retail. This has

²⁶ UNEP (2009): *The Natural Fix? The Role of Ecosystems in Climate Mitigation*.

²⁷ FAO (2012): *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture*.

Figure 2.15: Economic transformation by sectors in terms of contribution to GDP in Arab countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific, 1970-2009



Sources: UNDP (2011); based on national datasets from Statistical Offices and UNSD datasets.

Note: Arab countries included are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.

accentuated the region's reliance on imports for most of its basic necessities, making it vulnerable to external price shocks particularly for food commodities. Most prominently, the rise in international domestic food prices since 2007 has also placed a burden on the well-being of millions of the poor in rural and peri-urban areas (UNDP 2011).

Notwithstanding economic reforms over the last three decades, real GDP growth in the region has been constantly lower than that in emerging and developing economies. Most analysts agree that to increase employment growth in the region, exports need to be diversified away from raw materials toward high value-added and labour-intensive products (UNDP 2011; World Bank 2012;²⁸ IMF 2012;²⁹ ESCWA 2012a). However, the Arab region's share in non-oil exports has remained relatively flat compared to that of emerging and developing economies (such as Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia), which have more than doubled their export shares. Arab exports have also remained relatively concentrated in low value added sectors. Growth has disproportionally focused on non-tradable service sectors at the expense of manufacturing. As a result, the Arab Region remains the least industrialized middle-income region in the world.

While GDP per capita in Arab countries has quadrupled over the last 50 years, it has not always translated into a better quality of life and it has seriously depleted available natural resources in the region to less than half over the same period, placing the region on the brink of ecosystem bankruptcy (AFED 2012). Population growth has been a primary driver of these changes, however higher incomes, increased consumption and lifestyle changes have also played a role. This suggests that the region has reached, and even crossed, critical ecological thresholds that support growth and wellbeing in the region.

The vast deficit in the region's ecological resources is largely bridged by imports and an overexploitation of finite local resources, which is unsustainable in the long term. This raises questions regarding economic security, which can be easily impacted by food price spikes, disruptions in global supply chains and trade restrictions.

ESCWA: Land Use, Urbanization, Water Security and Desertification

The Arab region has the lowest freshwater availability per capita of any region in the world; 13 Arab countries are among the world's 19 most water scarce countries.³⁰ In addition, two-thirds of freshwater resources found in the region are sourced from shared water basins.³¹ Although the region has long suffered from freshwater scarcity due to arid or semi-arid conditions, rapid population growth, urban expansion, economic development and agricultural growth have turned water scarcity into a water security issue.³² The state of water resources is nearing a crisis in many Arab countries, and is worsened by policies that encourage over-consumption and tolerate overexploitation.

By 2015, it is expected that the average annual freshwater availability in Arab countries will be designated as severely water scarce. Expanding economic growth and demands for domestic, agricultural and industrial water uses are draining underground aquifers and drawing into question the future viability and integrity of these systems. The projected population growth in the coming two decades, 90 per cent of which will occur in urban areas, will increase the political pressure to meet these demands especially for domestic and industrial use.³³

Water diversion schemes, agricultural drainage, dam building, urbanization, resource depletion, conflicts and climate change will continue to impact on freshwater environments and ecosystems. The severity

²⁸ World Bank (2012) *From Political to Economic Awakening in the Arab World: The Path of Economic Integration*, The World Bank, available at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/05/25/000333038_20120525021154/Rendered/PDF/688320vol020ES05023020120Box369244B.pdf

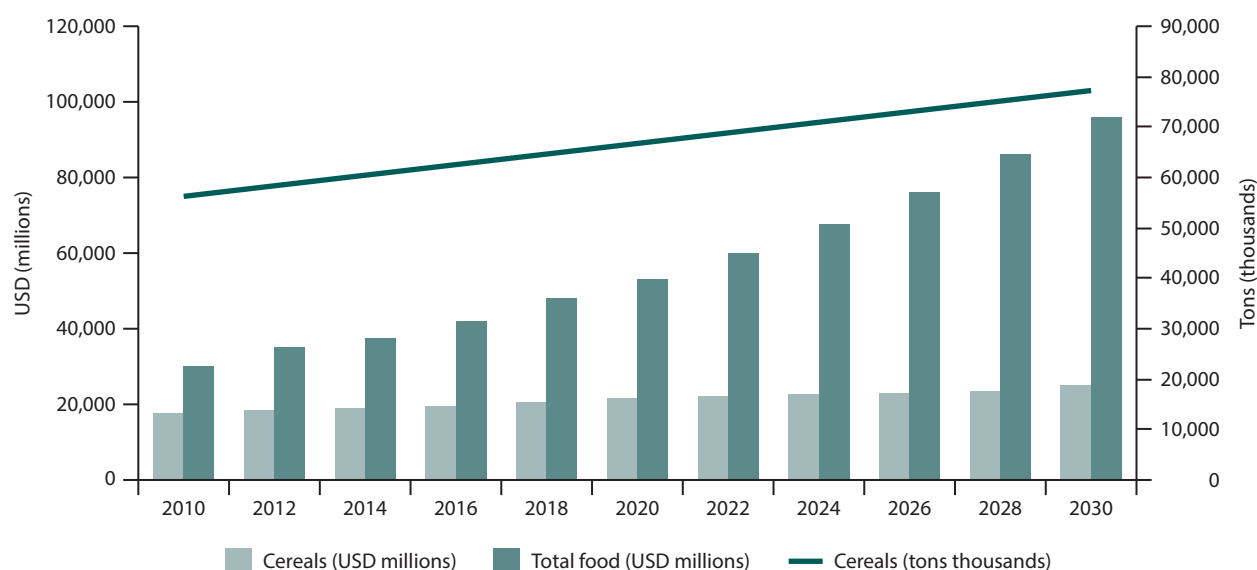
²⁹ IMF (2012) *Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia*, IMF, Washington, USA, available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2012/mcd/eng/pdf/mreo1112.pdf>

³⁰ AFED (2011) *Arab Environment 4: Green Economy – Sustainable Transition in a changing Arab world*, available at: <http://afedonline.org/Report2011/PDF/En/Full-eng.pdf>

³¹ Arab Ministerial Water Council (2011) *Arab Strategy for Water Security in the Arab Region to Meet the Challenges and Future Needs of Sustainable Development 2010-2030*.

³² ESCWA (2011a) *Background Paper on Addressing New and Emerging Challenges to Secure Renewed Political Commitment to Sustainable Development in the Arab Region*, E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/WG.5/6, United Nations, Beirut, available at: <http://css.escwa.org.lb/sdpd/1545/EmergingEn.pdf>

³³ UAFED (2011).

Figure 2.16: Projection of food import bill in Arab countries, 2010-2030

Source: AFED (2011)

of water shortages has forced many countries to augment supply by investing in expensive water systems including seawater desalination, wastewater treatment for reuse, and tapping non-renewable water supplies from deep aquifers.³⁴ Current and worsening water scarcity in the region also poses significant constraints to economic development, health and well-being. More than 45 million people totalling over 10 per cent of the population in the region lack access to clean water or safe sanitation.³⁵

While agriculture is an important sector in many Arab countries for both GDP and employment, past agricultural policies and practices have aggravated soil erosion, land degradation, water logging, soil salinity and water pollution. Increased land degradation and desertification has been witnessed in Iraq, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and most countries in the Arabian Peninsula over the last decade (ESCWA 2011a). Around 15.3 million hectares (ha) of the region's crop lands have been affected by land degradation, while 42 per cent are classified as slightly degraded and 12 per cent are considered to be severely to very severely degraded (ESCWA 2007). Rangelands, forests and woodlands have also become degraded in the region and are affecting the livestock industry and biodiversity, all the while increasing the risk of landslides and rockslides.

Food security is both an environmental and socio-economic challenge for the countries of the Arab region.³⁶ Perhaps no other region in the world today faces such daunting challenges to food production, related to the limited arable land available, severe water shortages and poor soil fertility. Arab countries import at least 50 per cent of the food calories they consume and, as the largest net importers of cereal, are more exposed than other countries to severe swings in agricultural commodity prices (World Bank, FAO, IFAD 2009). The escalating food import bill (estimated at USD30 billion in 2008 for main food commodities) has caused large trade deficits and strained the public budgets of Arab countries (AFED 2011).

The Arab region's heavy dependence on food imports meant that the region was greatly affected by the surge in food prices in 2007 and 2008. This had a significant effect on inflation, income distribution, health and human welfare, which was predominantly felt by the poor and vulnerable groups who have little to no savings to draw upon. This contributed to unrest in Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Jordan and Tunisia, while tensions rose in other Arab countries as well (ESCWA 2011a). This vulnerability will continue in coming years driven by strong population growth, low agricultural productivity, and dependence on global commodities markets.

³⁴ AFED (2010) *Arab Environment: Water – Sustainable Management of a Scarce Resource*, available at: <http://www.afedonline.org/Report2010/main.asp>.

³⁵ UAFED (2011).

³⁶ ESCWA (2011).

Table 2.1 Potential effects of climate change on economic activity and employment

Geographical location	Main climatic drivers	Expected potential effects on economic activity and employment
General	Increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events	Negative impact on forestry productivity Negative impact on employment
Northern Europe: mid- and high-latitude regions	Rising temperature, high atmospheric CO ₂ concentration	Positive impact on agricultural productivity Positive impact on employment overall
Southern Europe, Mediterranean region, Caucasus, Central Asia	Rising temperatures, droughts	Negative impact on agricultural productivity Negative impact on employment at local level
Southern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia	Rising temperatures	Negative impact on livestock productivity Negative impact on employment at local level
Mediterranean regions	Higher fire risk due to rising temperature, drought	Negative impact on forestry productivity Negative impact on employment at local level
Fisheries communities (Iceland, Baltic Sea, Spanish and Portuguese coast, Caspian Sea, Black Sea)	Changes in sea surface temperature, wind regime, water run-off, ice melt, or marine currents	Negative impact on fisheries productivity Negative impact on employment, possibly significant at local level

2.2.2 Economic Activities and Climate Change

Each Regional Commission faces very distinctive socio-economic and environmental circumstances of their respective region with regard to climate change: ECE region as the host of most Annex I Parties to UNFCCC; ECLAC region as the hotspot of land-use change and forestry; ESCAP region as the global centre of economic growth and the major victim of climate-related disasters; and ESCWA region as the global centre of oil exporting economies. These different regional conditions require developing regional approaches to addressing region-specific challenges by facilitating member governments and major stakeholders to jointly harness knowledge and resources, and develop effective policy measures and programmes, and to build regional-level capacity building programmes. In this regard, Regional Commissions, working with regional partners and other United Nations bodies, have mobilized their normative, analytical and technical capabilities to undertake collaborative initiatives and actions on climate change.

ECE: Climate Sensitive Production Activities and Employment

Although the impacts of climate change will be most deeply felt in the developing world, industrialized countries are far from immune and the damages to economies may be particularly significant in Western Europe and the former Soviet Union (ETUC 2007), where economic activity and employment in the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors is expected to be impacted by various climatic drivers (Table 2.1). Currently agriculture, forestry and fisheries are substantial areas of employment in the ECE region: in 2008, 37 million people worked in these sectors in the ECE, including over 13 million in the European Union and 24 million in the economies in transition in the EECCA and SEE. While an important source of employment, conventional agriculture produces high levels of CO₂ emissions (accounting for about one tenth of GHG emissions in the ECE region), degrades land and depletes natural capital. Thus sound management of agro-ecologies is of great importance.

Table 2.2 Renewable in electricity consumption mix
(percentage)

	1990	2000	2005	2010
Czech Republic	2.3	4.1	4.6	7.6
Kazakhstan	8.4	14.7	11.6	11.4
Poland	2.6	3.2	3.7	7.6
Romania	17.7	28.5	34.0	34.1
Russian Federation	15.3	19.1	18.6	15.1
Turkey	40.4	25.0	24.6	26.2
Ukraine	3.6	6.7	6.7	6.0
Uzbekistan	11.8	12.5	17.5	22.4

Source: Enerdata (2010)

The region's diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, ranging from the Mediterranean to Arctic habitats, are also under threat, due in large part to overexploitation of fisheries. About 45 per cent of assessed European fish stocks are endangered as a result of unsustainable fishing. Water shortages and extreme weather events associated with climate change will have significant impacts on the labour market in those countries.

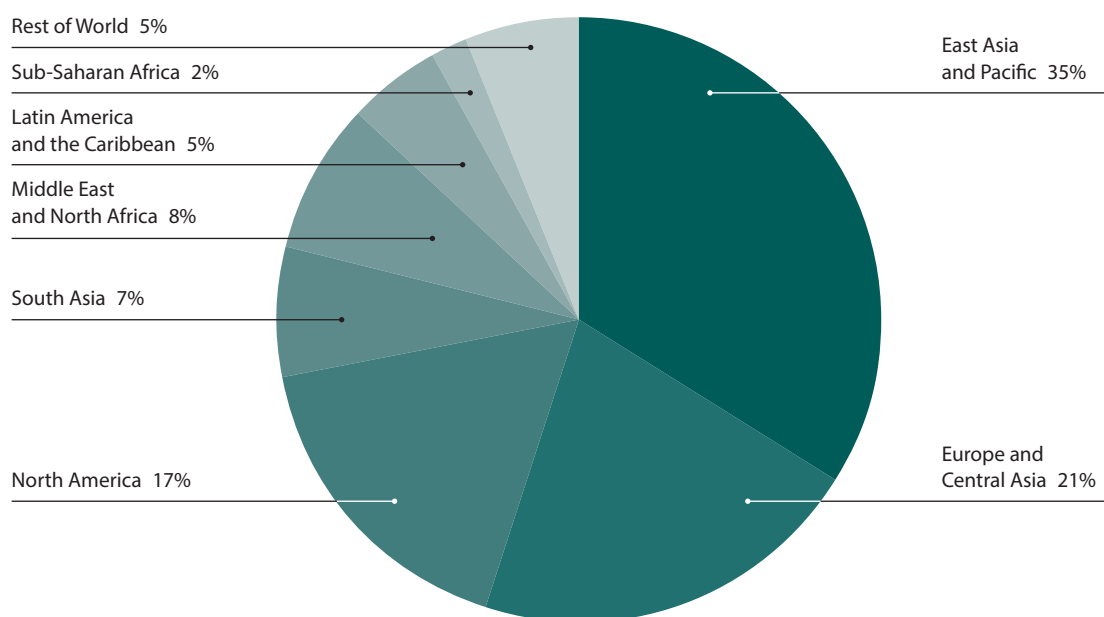
Although the prospects for adding green jobs, for example in the growing renewable energy sector, are considerable, many countries have been slow to expand green jobs; the shares of renewables in the energy mix are quite high in Romania, Turkey and Uzbekistan, in most of the Eastern European and CIS countries this potential has not been fully exploited (Table 2.2).

In order to ensure that innovation and adaptation of new green technologies do not negatively impact the distribution of income, complementary labour market policies that provide increased access to education and retraining will be necessary. Other labour market policies to minimize the adjustment costs for workers due to climate change will also be warranted.

ECLAC: Land Use Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The total CO₂ emissions contributed by the Latin America and the Caribbean region accounts for nearly 8 per cent of global emissions, when excluding emissions associated with land use changes. Once the land use change is included, this global share jumps to 12 per cent.

Pasture and expanding livestock production is reducing forest areas and the destruction of plant cover, especially deforestation for timber and agricultural purposes, are major contributors of GHG emissions. Such massive deforestation negatively impacts the biological diversity and ecosystem composition of South America as well as having important implications for regional and local climate conditions. Nevertheless, high deforestation rates in the Amazon led the Government of Brazil to establish the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon in 2003. This Action Plan, which adopts an integrated approach to command and control actions, land regularization and transformation of the production models, has demonstrated positive results. Since 2005 there has been a marked decline in deforestation rates.

Figure 2.17: Aggregate greenhouse gas emission excluding land-use change emissions by region, 2009

Source: ECLAC, based on World Development Indicators information.

Table 2.3 Latin America (selected countries): Disaster-related losses

(Number of persons and households)

	Dead	Injured	Disappeared	Homes destroyed	Homes damaged	Persons affected	Population in 2009	Period
Argentina	3,377	22,470	810	53,973	141,381	23,271,305	40,164,561	'70-'09
Bolivia ^a	1,190	1,133	254	6,249	8,200	832,980	10,187,067	'70-'09
Chile	3,184	6,811	640	101,877	278,087	8,052,836	19,983,720	'70-'09
Colombia	35,898	26,447	2,812	183,106	681,404	22,688,062	45,103,268	'70-'09
Costa Rica	516	51	62	8,796	50,800	32,405	4,509,290	'70-'09
Ecuador	3,019	2,535	1,228	12,074	58,785	1,293,799	14,032,233	'70-'09
El Salvador	4,541	15,087	535	180,277	202,701	343,817	7,124,374	'70-'09
Guatemala	1,953	2,789	1,113	20,941	105,985	3,339,301	14,009,133	'89-'09
Mexico	31,442	2,882,359	9,273	432,812	2,781,635	59,882,327	106,116,969	'70-'09
Panama	339	1,292	39	13,534	70,678	345,782	3,304,461	'89-'09
Peru	40,994	65,675	9,136	438,376	398,237	2,218,035	29,330,481	'88-'09
Venezuela ^b	3,015	379	1,059	56,285	158,288	2,932,101	28,143,584	'70-'09

Source: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), 2011 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Revealing Risk, Redefining Development* (online) <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2011/en/home/download.html>

^a Plurinational State of; ^b Bolivarian Republic of.

Figure 2.18: Areas most vulnerable to climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean according to expected impacts by 2050



Source: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Vital Climate Change Graphics for Latin America and the Caribbean 2010* (online) www.grida.no/publications/vg/lac2/

ECLAC: The Economic Costs of Climate Change

Climate change will impose increasing economic costs to the region, estimated to be over 1 per cent of GDP annually in most areas. Vulnerability to natural disasters in terms of both population and physical assets are significant (Table 2.3). In 2012, damages and losses from more than 90 natural disasters in the region since 1972 were approximately USD213 billion.³⁷ More vulnerable subregions are Central America and the Caribbean that are affected mainly by tropical storms, hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. ECLAC's reports show that natural disasters hit the countries' poorest, the hardest.

In 2010, the region was hit by some of the costliest disasters in lives and economic losses: the major earthquakes in Haiti and Chile and extreme hydrometeorological events. Climate change has increased the severity and frequency of the latter events and heightened their impact, potentially delaying what was already a fraught development process in Central America and the Caribbean, as economic, structural, ecological and human losses have combined. Preventing risks and mitigating impacts should be a policy goal at the country level and part of a larger framework of regional and global cooperation.

³⁷ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "La estimación de impacto económico y social de los desastres naturales en América Latina, 1970-2010", Santiago, Chile, unpublished. Figure in dollars of 2000 year

The risk and vulnerability to the effects of climate change on coasts is particularly important in Latin America and the Caribbean considering that approximately 50 per cent of the region's population and many of its economic activities are concentrated within 100 km of the coast. El Niño and la Niña, for example, have major impacts on the region's coastal activities, as does the Atlantic multi-decadal oscillation (AMO), particularly in Argentina and the southern part of Brazil. Climate change poses additional threats: recent research has observed that average sea levels could rise by approximately 1 metre by the end of the twenty-first century. Variation in other coastal agents, such as waves, swell and seawater surface temperature, may also embody significant risk and cause damage such as port lost days, coastal erosion or coral bleaching.

In particular, the erosion of beaches as a result of climate change will impact coastal protection and tourism, which will affect the eastern and southern Caribbean and the coast of Brazil. Certain areas of Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Mexico are also considered to be at high risk. Port infrastructure operability will be threatened by climate-driven changes in navigability and access, and by the breaching of port defence structures owing to variations in swell and sea levels. The ports facing the greatest risk of economic losses due to access problems are: Buenos Aires (Argentina), San Antonio (Chile), Río Grande (Brazil) and Manzanillo (Mexico). The degree of security currently offered by maritime defence structures in the region will be heavily reduced throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region. Finally, the permanent flooding caused by higher sea levels place the entire coast of Latin America and the Caribbean at risk, affecting large populations and ecosystems.

ESCAP: Climate Change, Environmental Technologies, and Comparative Advantage

Changes in climate conditions and unforeseen consequences of new environmental technologies have contributed to instability in food prices and commodity markets. For instance the rise in food prices in 2010 was caused by adverse climate conditions, which affected major suppliers such as the Russian Federation, Canada and Kazakhstan. The unforeseen effects of technologies that try to address environmental issues include the rise in price of food crops due to increasing production of biofuels. Traditional food crops are converted into biofuels. For instance, since the use of biofuels have been

encouraged in the United States in 2010 by the extension of tax credits for ethanol producers, more than one third of the country's corn production was estimated to have gone into ethanol production.

The effects of climate change also affect trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region by changing the comparative advantages. While there are expected new trade and investment opportunities, potentially damaging effects include increased vulnerabilities in important economic sectors and impact production, trade, and transportation patterns in the region. Examples include loss of agricultural productivity due to natural disasters, damaged transport infrastructure for trade such as ports and production sites due to the inundation of coastal areas, decreased competitive advantages in trade due to a decrease in biodiversity and traditional knowledge, and loss in labour productivity due to diseases.

Advancing new environmental technologies has implications for the trade and investment sector as well. The task is to replace investment and trade in conventional fossil fuel-based technologies by climate-smart technologies. Although evidence shows that Asia and the Pacific is emerging as active participants in CSGT trade (the region accounting for 34.4 per cent of world trade in CSGTs in 2009), the lack of a viable market keeps global and regional trade in CSGT hovering around only 3 per cent of the total. Other factors hindering greater investment and trade in new environmental technologies include persistent domineering use of fossil fuels, lack of conducive government policies to make energy-efficient technologies and services to have strong competitiveness in the market.

2.2.3 Urbanization and the Environment

Cities have become increasingly significant as drivers of national and regional economies and harnessing urban transformation is now accepted as essential to the development prospects of a majority of countries. Yet recent decades of economic growth and resultant changes in consumption and production patterns have increased levels of environmental degradation, and vulnerability. There are also evident costs arising from social and economic inequality, inefficient use of resources and energy, and high levels of emissions resulting from unsustainable urban growth patterns, amongst others. Furthermore, urban resource footprints are impacting negatively on surrounding regions through resource extraction and as a result of urban regions being used as 'sinks' for increasing

amounts of pollution and waste (ECLAC 2011). Though urban growth has been associated with improved levels of development, negative consequences include large-scale environmental degradation, increased vulnerability and decreased resilience, persistent poverty and inequality, and gaps in the provision of basic services, particularly in meeting the needs of the poorest. As it is evident that cities will play a critical role in future regional development prospects, it is urgent that such impacts be managed and levels of inequality be addressed.

ECE: Housing and Urban Planning

The region covered by the UNECE houses less than a fifth of the world's population but is characterized by high levels of urbanization. Urban residents represent more than 73 per cent of its population and by 2050 the figure is estimated to rise to 85 per cent. This high level of urbanization presents serious challenges for sustainable development and climate change adaptation. The region is already responsible for approximately 45 per cent of the world's energy consumption and 40 per cent of its GHG net emissions. Demographic changes, including migration, ageing, and a decrease in the population growth rate, are additional factors affecting housing and urban development in the UNECE region. The economic and financial crisis also affected Europe seriously; housing programmes in many UNECE member States faced budget cuts and reduced human resources.

Key challenges in housing and urban development in the region according to the survey of opinions of UNECE member States conducted in 2012,³⁸ are inefficient use of energy in the residential sector, limited access to affordable, quality and healthy housing, urban sprawl, risks to residential buildings from natural and human-generated disasters, including the impacts of a changing climate and earthquakes.³⁹ To address these challenges governments must strengthen their focus on promoting sustainable development and developing green economies, which reduce carbon emissions and pollution, promote social inclusion and encourage job creation.

ECLAC: Urbanization and Demography

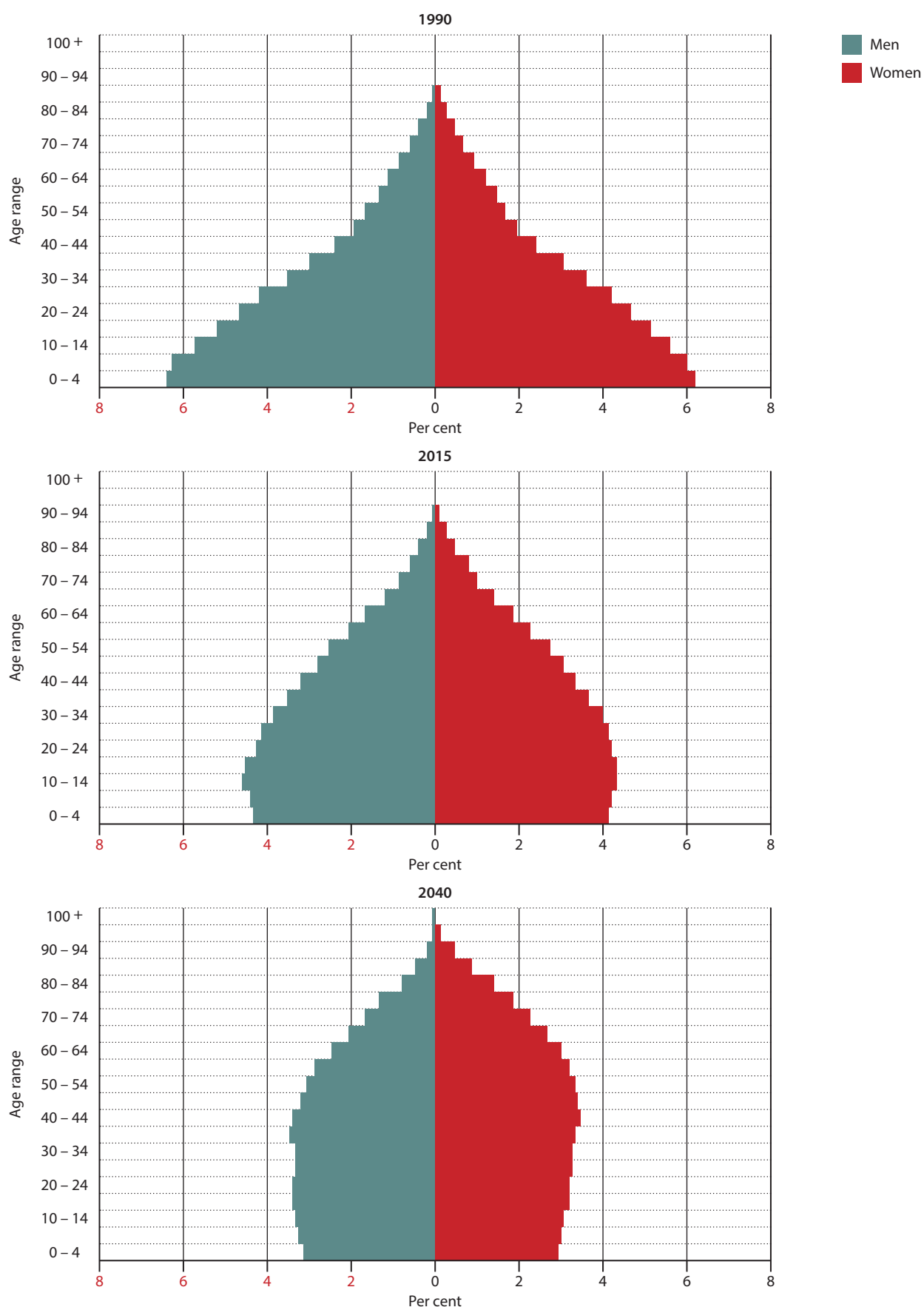
Latin America and the Caribbean have become an "urban continent", with high levels of urbanization and urban growth: over 80 per cent of the population lives in cities and this figure is projected to reach 85 per cent by 2030. Large metropolitan areas or "mega-cities" are commonplace. In 1950, Buenos Aires was the only city with a population of more than 5 million; by 2015 there will be nine cities in that category, of which Mexico City and Sao Paulo, will surpass the 20 million mark. In the LAC region, the old urban-rural dichotomy is disappearing as rural areas are increasingly specialized and integrated into global production chains, establishing functional links to the dominant cities. This ever strong dependency between cities and rural areas, added to urban sprawl and the emergence of vast suburban and peri-urban areas, is redefining the historical limits (ECLAC 2011).

Today, the continuing urban sprawl exacerbates the urban divide in the region's cities. The countries of Latin America have undergone profound demographic changes, like reduced population growth, some have zero growth that will turn negative in the second half of the 21st century and a shifting age structure. The rapid drop in fertility and steady decline in mortality since the mid-twentieth century have reflected in an average life expectancy at birth of 74.2 years in 2010-2015. The demographic transition has led to two major changes: a reduction in demographic dependency and population ageing (Figure 2.19).

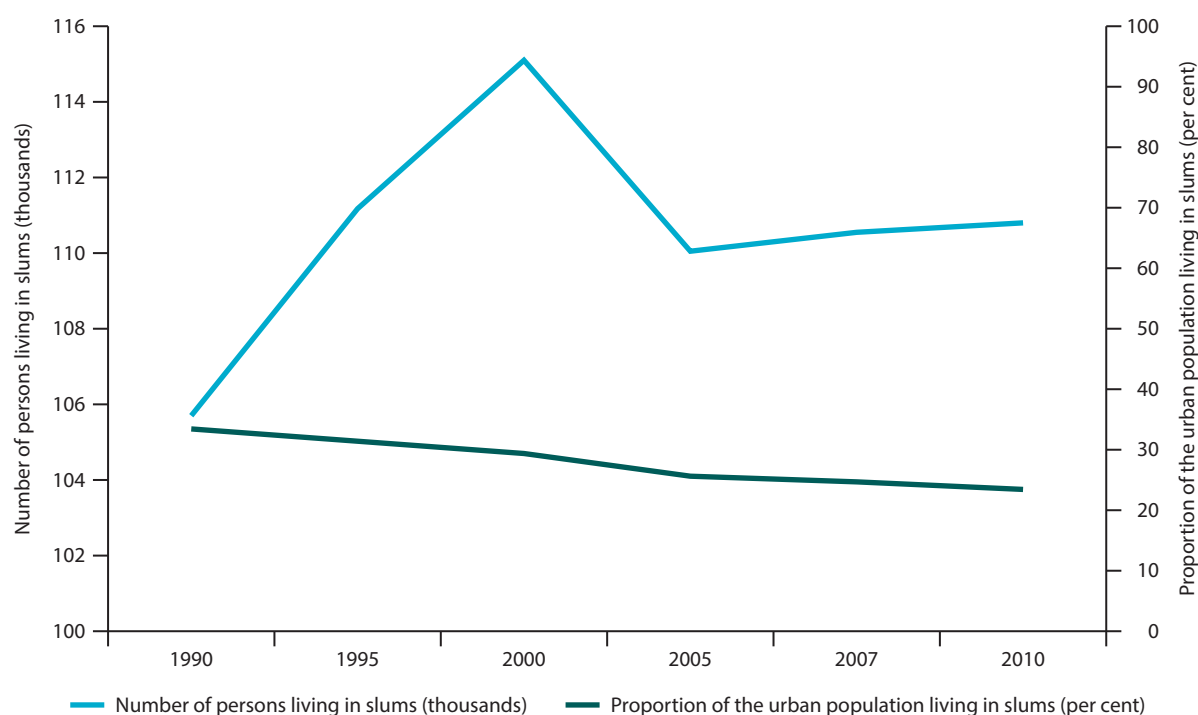
The reduction in the dependency ratio due to the decreasing share of children has given rise to a demographic dividend, in which the burden borne by people of working age is lower than in earlier and future periods. Dependency rates in the region will remain at a historic low for the next 15 years, and the population will be concentrated at working ages. The dependency ratio will rise again, this time due to the rapid growth of the older population, with an increasing demand for older adult health care, economic security and social protection, among other requirements.

³⁸ Please see Report on the outcome of the survey on challenges and priorities in Housing and Land Management in the UNECE Region at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=32586>

³⁹ Please see Report on the outcome of the survey on challenges and priorities in Housing and Land Management in the UNECE Region at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=32586>

Figure 2.19: Population distribution by sex and age, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990, 2015 and 2040

Source: CELADE, Population Division, ECLAC, 2013

Figure 2.20: Urban population living in slums in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990-2010

Sources: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011*. *Cities for All: Bridging the Urban Divide*, Earthscan, 2010.

Notes: Figures are based on estimates, since not all the countries have data on informal settlements and the interpretation of the indicators may vary from one country to another.

ESCAP: Mega-cities, Consumption Patterns and the Environment

Approximately 1.9 billion people or 46 per cent of the Asia-Pacific population lives in urban areas. Between 1980 and 2010, Asia-Pacific added more than a billion people to its cities – more than all the other regions in the world combined – with a further billion people set to become city dwellers by 2040 (ADB 2012a). The increased significance and role of cities has been seen as a driver of the region's development, but much of this growth has also been characterized and accompanied by environmental degradation and persistently high levels of inequality. Despite relatively high levels of economic growth, the Asia-Pacific region still accounts for over half of all slum dwellers worldwide.

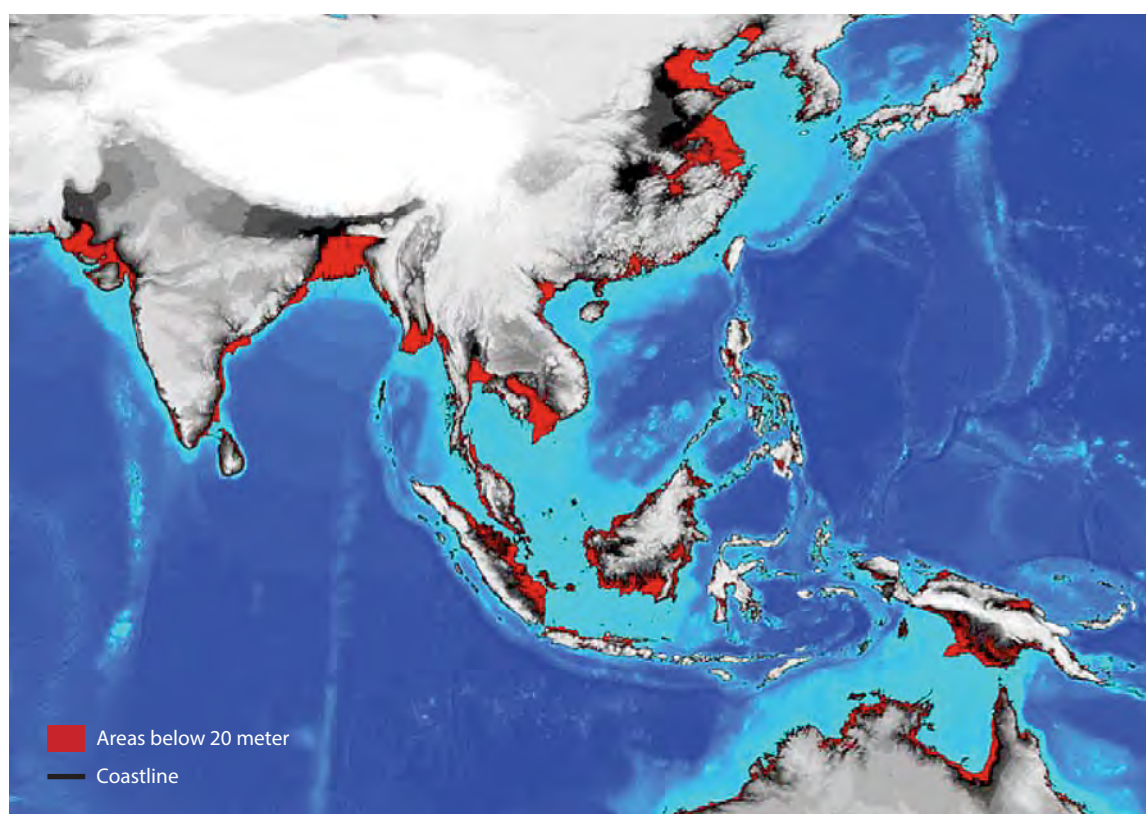
Urban growth patterns in recent decades have been marked by the increasing numbers of 'mega-cities' and 'mega-urban regions'. Eleven of the 21 mega-cities in the world are in Asia-Pacific, including six of the world's 10 largest cities – although it is important to note that much of the region's urban growth is being driven by the rise of small and medium sized towns and cities

(ESCAP 2011b). While cities play an increasingly critical role in national, regional and global economies, they are notably vulnerable to disasters and the projected impacts of climate change. Approximately 54 per cent of Asia's urban population – particularly the poor – are living in low-lying coastal zones (UN-HABITAT 2008). Managing environmental vulnerability and socio-economic inequality in the context of urban-led economic transformation remains a critical challenge for the region.

Rising income levels and urbanization pose a major energy challenge in the Asia-Pacific region. The region leads the world in terms of economic growth as well as urbanization. GDP growth in 2013 for developing Asia is projected at 6.6 per cent (ADB 2012b),⁴⁰ and Asia's increase in the proportion of urban population was the highest in the world from 1990 to 2010.

Accompanying these trends is an increase in both the absolute amount of energy consumption as well as the intensity of energy use. Primary energy demand in the region is projected to increase from 4,025.3 million tons of oil equivalent (mtoe) in 2005 to 7,215.2 mtoe

⁴⁰ Forty-four developing member countries of the Asian Development Bank and Brunei Darussalam.

Figure 2.21: Land area less than 20 metres above sea level in Asia, 2010

Source: ESCAP, UNHABITAT (2010) *The State of Asian Cities 2010/11*. Bangkok, Thailand pp185.

in 2030, an average annual rate of 2.4 per cent – faster than the world average.

Such rapid growth in energy use has consequences in both economic and environmental aspects. Economically, the energy demand has made the region highly vulnerable to the volatility of energy prices and price shocks due to their heavy reliance on imports. Most countries in the region, with production of only 9 per cent of the world's crude oil supply while consuming about 30 per cent,⁴¹ are net oil importers who are dependent on fossil fuels. Along with higher vulnerabilities, the countries' financial abilities to meet their energy demands are continuously challenged. Such growing energy demand places great burden on the economy by necessitating capital investments estimated to be between USD7.0 trillion and USD9.7 trillion during 2005-2030 (ADB 2009).

Environmentally, the high consumption of energy and certainly the increasing coal consumption (share of

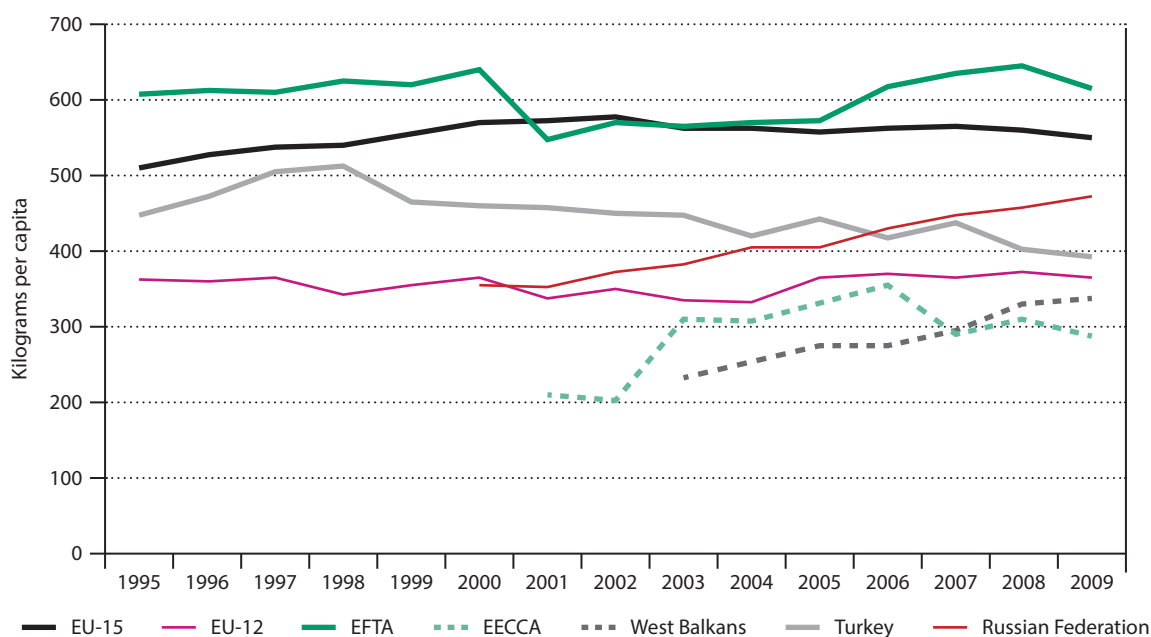
coal consumption increased from 40 per cent to 81 per cent in 1999 and 2006) have led to an increase in coal-related GHG emissions from the region. Overall, the Asia-Pacific's share of energy-related CO₂ emissions out of the total global emissions is expected to increase to 55 per cent in 2030 from 45 per cent in 2005.

ESCWA: Rural to Urban Migration

Over 55 per cent of the Arab region's population lives in cities, with high rates of rural to urban migration, especially in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia (DESA 2007). This has been driven largely by the reduced income and employment opportunities in the agricultural sector as well as the growing youth population. Rapid urbanization has also been accompanied by the growth of large cities, namely Algiers, Amman, Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Jeddah and Riyadh (UNDP 2010).⁴² This trend is set to continue, with the Arab region projected to see its

⁴¹ Based on 2009 data for Asia from International Energy Agency, Energy Statistics, accessed from <http://www.iea.org/stats/index.asp> on 07 March 2013.

⁴² UNDP (2010) *Population Levels, Trends and Policies in the Arab region: Challenges and Opportunities*, Research Paper by Barry Mirkin for Arab Human Development Report, UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdrps/paper01-en.pdf>

Figure 2.22: Municipal waste generation by groupings and selected countries in the Europe and Central Asia, 1995-2009

Source: UNEP Calculations based on Eurostat, OECD and national data.

urban population more than double, increasing by 251 million between 2010 and 2050. This places a major stress on governments to provide basic services such as energy, water and sanitation as well as decent work,

as well as worsening environmental problems associated with land degradation in abandoned rural areas and increased pollution in expanded urban areas.

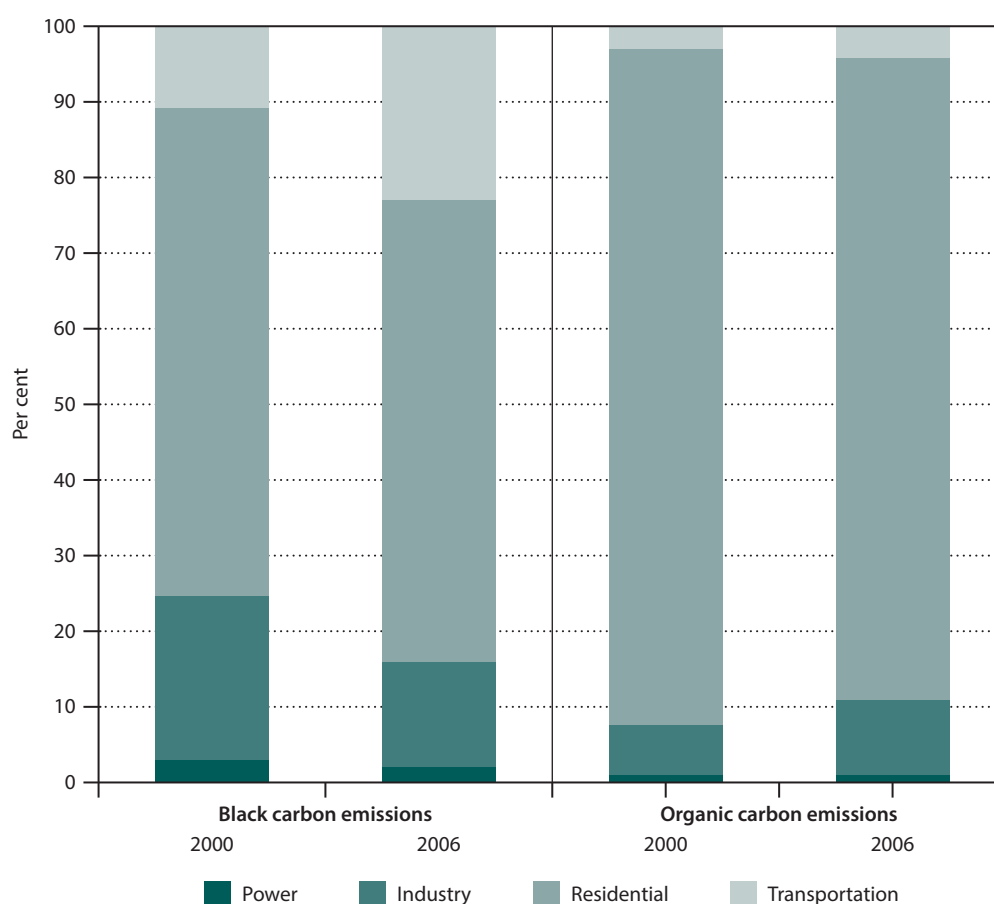
2.3 Environmental-Social Inter-linkages

Many problems of resource depletion and environmental stress arise from disparities in economic and political power, and these inequalities sharpen as a system approaches its ecological limits (WCED 1987, Chapter 2 Section II). The observation made by WCED is still valid and forms the backbone of this third section. As such, sustainability requires attention to equity as well as conservation. Access to ecological services is distributed unequally, depriving certain social groups of their rights to common goods provided by Nature. In many cases, not only deprivation but also victimization arises as a key issue in the environmental and social interface when vulnerable groups are inevitably exposed to systemic environmental hazards and sudden events, a situation to which no region in the world can claim immunity. As a result, a strong, cohesive, and able society that can sustainably exercise the rights and duties for environmental assets and services is essential for sustainable development. This section explores the

inter-linkages between the social and environmental dimensions and challenges faced in each of the regions.

2.3.1 Environmental Services and Accessibility

Accessibility, affordability, and inclusiveness have an impact on health and the environment. Lack of accessibility to modern energy services can lead to the use of sub-optimal energy sources, which are inefficient as well as detrimental to human health and the local environment. The disease burden from solid fuel use is most significant in populations with inadequate access to clean fuels, particularly poor households in rural areas of developing countries. Furthermore, social tension can arise from sharing resources or from sharing the responsibilities of pollution. While the lack of accessibility is one issue, another is the overconsumption due to behaviour and

Figure 2.23: Black carbon emissions from different sectors in Asia, 2000 and 2006

Source: US EPA (2012) *Reducing Black Carbon Emissions in South Asia, Low Cost Opportunities*, pp52.

lifestyle changes that heavily rely on high-energy consumption and exploitation of natural assets without internalizing the environmental costs.

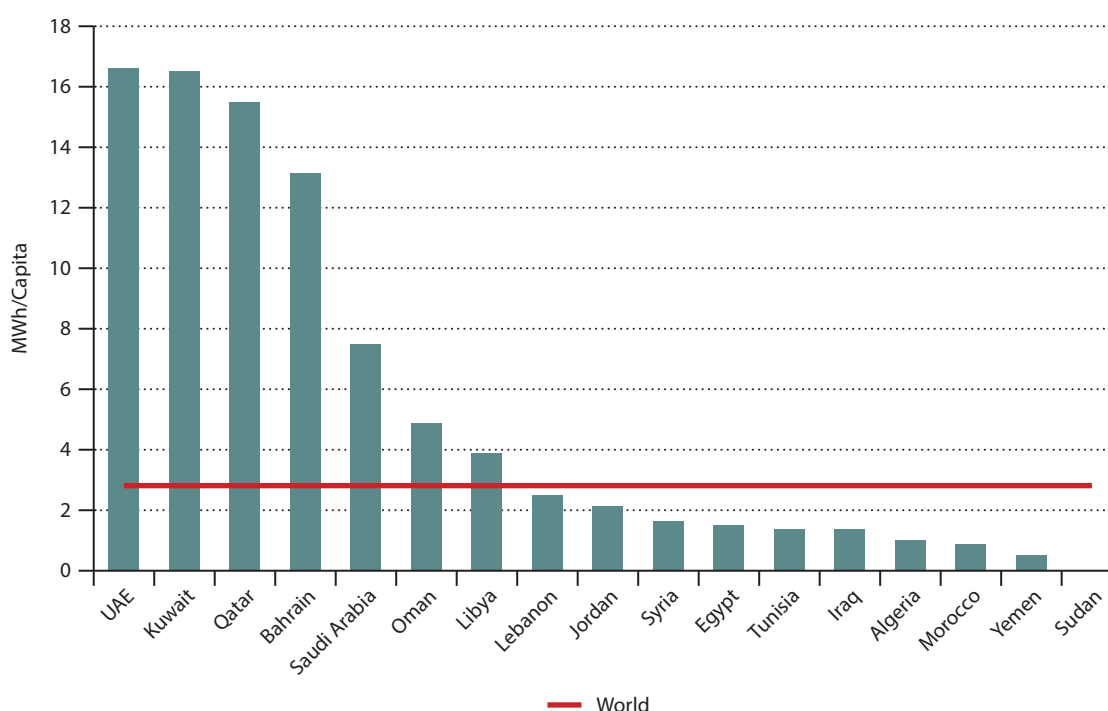
ECE: Hazardous Disposal Behaviour and Environmental Quality

Waste generation from consumption and environmentally hazardous consumption behaviour is of great significance for the ECE region. In the EU, space heating accounts for some 70 per cent of household energy consumption and water heating for some 14 per cent (EEA 2007), with similar proportions estimated for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. Energy efficiency of interior heating and electric devices has been increasing, but those gains have been more than offset by the rising demand from behavioural changes. Growth in the number of dwellings, floor area per dwelling and increased average room temperatures are increasing total energy demand for space heating in

most EU-15 countries. Another example of the environmental effects of growing household consumption has been the increase in municipal waste generation (Figure 2.22) in the West Balkans, Russia, and the rest of the EECCA. In recent years, the West Balkan countries have reached the waste generation levels of the new EU member States (EU-12).⁴³

Electric and electronic goods waste now represents one of the fastest-growing components of waste in the EU (EEA 2007). For many smaller electric and electronic goods, the most critical environmental impacts arise from disposal rather than usage because of their high content of heavy metals and other hazardous substances. The quantity of electric and electronic goods for disposal is dependent both on ownership levels in the population and their replacement rates. Today, replacement is more often driven by changing fashion and small technical advances than by the useful lifespan of an appliance (in particular for mobile phones and computers). Replacement rates of

⁴³ Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, Denmark, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, France, Portugal, Ireland, Italy and United Kingdom.

Figure 2.24: Average per capita electricity consumption in Arab countries, 2008

Source: Data from “Key World Energy Statistics, IEA 2010” available at <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/6410011e.pdf?expires=1391999608&id=id&accname=ocid195767&checksum=518A7AF39D4086A3491154AFA1B99AE2>, selected indicators for 2008 (p. 48-57). Based on IEA data, AFED created the graph, available at <http://afedonline.org/Report2011/PDF/En/Full-eng.pdf> (p.77)

electronics are lower in EECCA and SEE countries, but ownership is rapidly increasing (EEA and UNEP 2007).

ESCAP: Energy Access, Health Risks and Resource Security

Energy access, affordability and quality continue to be important issues in developing Asian countries as a whole, as they remain home to about 800 million people without access to electricity (IEA, UNDP, UNIDO 2010). Such a lack often leads to reliance on energy sources and methods that have high environmental and health hazards. For instance, having no access to electricity pushes families to use traditional brick kilns, coke ovens, biomass cook stoves, and open burning. Due to such practice, short-lived climate pollutants (SLCP), specifically black carbon emission becomes a key problem.⁴⁴ In developing countries, a large proportion of black carbon emissions come from residential heating and cooking, and industry (Figure 2.23).⁴⁵ Furthermore, while residential fuel use – primarily biomass combustion for cooking – comprises 26 per cent of black carbon emissions globally; it

accounts for approximately 60 per cent in Asia.⁴⁶ It contributes to upper respiratory tract infections in a large number of women and children, in particular. Women and their youngest children are the most exposed because of their household roles. Solid fuel use is most firmly associated with acute lower respiratory infections (including pneumonia) in young children, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer in women (and to a lesser degree in men) (WHO 2004). A focus on household energy consumption, especially in rural areas is required. In 2009, a majority of countries had set ambitious targets for supplying electricity to its people, but few had set targets for improved cooking fuels (ESCAP 2012b).

In addition to health and environmental problems, the tension arising from scarce resource availability and accessibility is another pertinent issue. Water security is a prominent case for Asia-Pacific, where as many as 466 million people lack access to clean drinking water (ESCAP 2011c). As populations grow and urbanization rates soar, regulatory regimes in many places are unable to reduce pollution loads; thus the stress on

⁴⁴ Bond, T.C., et al. (2004) as cited in US EPA Reducing Black Carbon Emissions in South Asia, Low Cost Opportunities p. 10.

⁴⁵ US EPA (2012) report to Congress on Black Carbon.

⁴⁶ Bond, T.C. and Zhang, Q et al. (2009) as cited in US EPA 2012 Reducing Black Carbon Emissions in South Asia, Low Cost Opportunities p. 36.

regional water resources intensifies. Despite the increasing need for water sharing arrangements to avoid environmental and economic disasters, competition and sensitivity over the resources are present in many places of the region. Furthermore, the financial needs entail a total of USD59 billion to meet the MDG target of access to water and USD71 billion to meet the MDG target of access to sanitation (ESCAP 2010c).

ESCWA: Energy Insecurity in the Midst of Energy Abundance

While the energy sector in Arab countries is a significant contributor to meeting global energy demand, not all countries in the region are energy rich. GCC countries are among the highest consumers of energy in the world, and installed capacity in urban areas remains a challenge even in these resource-rich countries. Other Arab oil producing countries such as Iraq, Sudan, Yemen and Libya face serious challenges in providing access to energy services, including electricity. In the region as a whole, approximately 60 million people lack access to affordable energy services or experience a lack of electricity supply, mostly in rural or remote areas (REN21, 2013). The energy consumption disparity among countries within the region has implications for efforts to achieve sustainable development in an inclusive and equitable manner.

The Arab energy system today is heavily dependent on fossil fuels to meet domestic demand, with oil and natural gas accounting for nearly 98.2 per cent of total energy consumption in 2011 (OAPEC, 2012).⁴⁷ For countries outside the GCC, uncertainty over medium-term policy agendas in many countries, rises in food and fuel prices, and reduced economic activity in trading partners (most notably Europe), have created a marked decline in exports in recent times, while their import bills continue to grow. In addition, tourism is recovering only slowly and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows remain subdued. Consequently, there has been a slowdown in economic

growth in all non-oil producing countries and estimations show that these countries grew by a meagre 0.8 per cent in 2011,⁴⁸ which will spill over to the labour market by reducing employment creation.⁴⁹

Energy security is also becoming a serious concern for oil-importing countries because of volatile and increasing oil prices. Reducing the size of the energy import bill is a priority for these countries due to the significant burden on public finances and vulnerability to global oil price volatility. With the demand for electricity escalating in these countries, the policy of building more power plants and providing energy subsidies will no longer be economically sustainable.⁵⁰ For example, GCC economies are among the most energy intensive in the world, with all of them (except for Oman) having energy intensity of at least twice the global average. As highlighted in the figure below, per capita energy consumption is among the highest in the world.

On the other hand, in the context of booming oil prices and growing social demands, government expenditure on wages and salaries has been rising dramatically in most oil exporting countries in recent years, increasing the vulnerability to a negative oil price shock. This is especially the case for GCC countries, where hydrocarbon-related activities comprise a high proportion of total government revenue. In 2009, growth rates slowed in a number of countries as a result of the global economic downturn and falling fuel prices (for example, Qatar reduced from 15.01 per cent to 9.0 per cent, Oman from 12.26 per cent to 3.4 per cent, and Kuwait from 6.4 per cent to -2.7 per cent) (ESCWA 2011a). The economic crisis also lowered FDI in Arab countries and, combined with the sharp decrease in oil revenue, had a significant impact on investment in oil, construction and desalination projects. For these countries, as for the region more broadly, the medium-term challenge is to increase resilience to external shocks and to generate enough jobs for a young and rapidly growing population, in particular private sector jobs.⁵¹

⁴⁷ AFED (2011) *Arab Environment 4: Green Economy – Sustainable Transition in a changing Arab world*, available at: <http://afedonline.org/Report2011/PDF/En/Full-eng.pdf>

⁴⁸ ESCWA region only.

⁴⁹ ESCWA (2012).

⁵⁰ AFED (2011) *Arab Environment 4: Green Economy – Sustainable Transition in a changing Arab world*, available at: <http://afedonline.org/Report2011/PDF/En/Full-eng.pdf>

⁵¹ IMF (2012).

2.3.2 Vulnerable Groups and Environmental Hazards

Many environmental hazards brought on by climate change or industrial pollution disproportionately affect more vulnerable groups in society. The impacts of climate change are not bound to the places in which they occur, but at times have even more far-reaching consequences inciting conflicts and competition for resources, increasing migration, and threatening global public health.⁵² Climate change also bears upon gender issues, adversely affecting women due to their overexposure to natural hazards and weakening their participation in public life and thus disempowering them even further.

In terms of exposure to natural disasters, groups that are especially vulnerable to disasters consist of women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities as well as poor and marginalized populations and some migrant workers. Warning services and emergency services in the period prior to, and following, the disaster events often fail to meet the various needs of the vulnerable groups without a specific planning system and strategies that incorporate separate needs.

ECE: Climate Change, Gender, and Access to Health, Water and Food

Women are particularly exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change as they form an essential part of the agricultural workforce in rural areas, are primarily responsible for managing household food consumption, and are generally responsible for securing water for rural households. Women therefore have unique insights and knowledge, for the effective design of climate change coping strategies. These insights are unlikely to be fully utilized if women are not fully integrated into their economic and political systems and have access to, and control over, economic assets, including land.

While climate change is often framed in terms of environmental and economic concerns, it will also have significant health consequences. Climate change

related public health risks for the pan-European region include: the increased frequency of extreme weather events (heat waves, droughts, floods, fires); sea-level rise, with consequences for coastal areas and settlements; permafrost melting in the north, with risks to infrastructure; aggravation of current environmental problems regarding air quality and water quality; risks to food security; and a change in the geographical distribution of infectious diseases, with possibilities of localized outbreaks of new or re-emerging infectious diseases (e.g., dengue).⁵³

In the pan-European region some of the impacts of climate change are already seen⁵⁴ in vector and allergen distribution, as well as more frequent and intense heat waves and heavy precipitation events. The 70,000 deaths from the 2003 heat wave provided a wake-up call as to what could happen if no action is taken.⁵⁵

ESCAP: Vulnerability, Exclusion and Disaster Risk Reduction

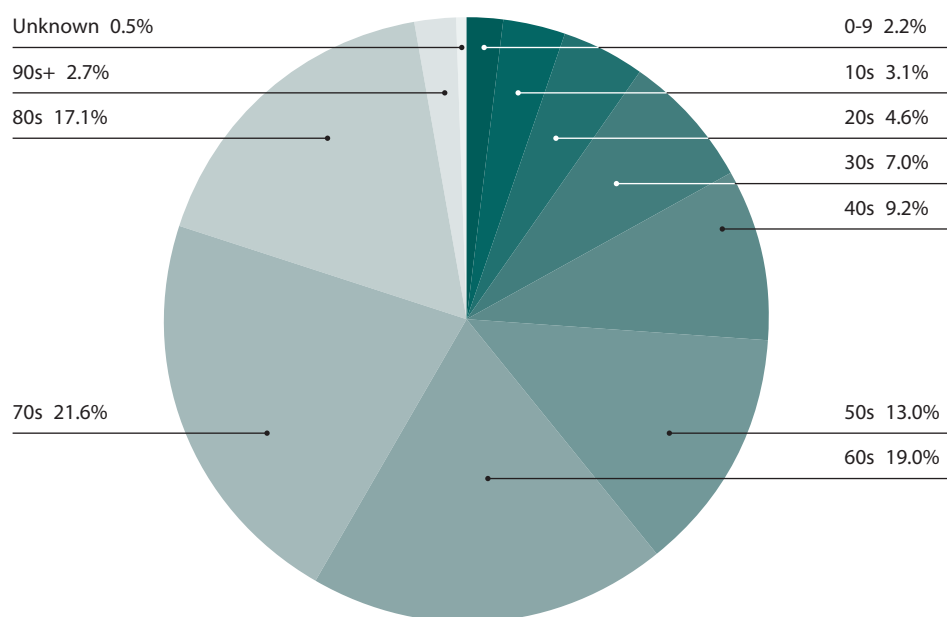
Asia-Pacific countries are among the most vulnerable to adverse impacts of environmental changes, including rising sea levels, changing patterns and amounts of rainfall and flows of river water, droughts, severe floods and heavier and more frequent storms (ESCAP 2010a). Persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are at higher risk of death, injury and additional impairments, as a result of exclusion from disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes. Public service announcements are often issued in formats and language that are not accessible by persons with disabilities. In addition, emergency exits, shelters and facilities tend not to be barrier-free. Regular participation of persons with disabilities in emergency preparedness drills and other disaster risk reduction measures at the local and district levels could prevent or minimize risk and damage when disasters occur. Physical and information infrastructure that incorporates universal design principles would improve the chances of safety and survival (ESCAP 2012c, 30).

⁵² Stern, N. (2007) *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵³ Menne, B. et al. (2009). *Protecting health in Europe from climate change*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe. http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/74401/E91865.pdf. Accessed 7 November, 2011.

⁵⁴ Climate change refers to a change in the mean and/or the variability of climate and its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. UNFCCC, in its article 1, defines climate change as: "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" (IPCC, 2007, Glossary).

⁵⁵ Robine, J.M. et al. (2008) Death toll exceeded 70,000 in Europe during the summer of 2003. *Comptes Rendus Biologies*, 331(2):171–178.

Figure 2.25: Age distribution of deaths in Rikuzentakata, Japan, 2011

Source: ESCAP (2011) *Who is vulnerable during tsunamis? Experiences from the Great East Japan Earthquake 2011 and the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004*. ESCAP, pp5.

Older persons in particular are at a high risks of being affected by disasters. For example, during the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in 2011, age disaggregated statistics of the victims in Rikuzentakata City shows that the elderly population (60 years and above) were disproportionately affected by the tsunami (Figure 2.25). Furthermore, the pre-tsunami population of persons aged 60 and above was 34.9 per cent in Rikuzentakata, higher than prefectural average (27.2 per cent) and also higher than Iwate, Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures combined (31 per cent). In the three prefectures, 65 per cent of victims were aged 60 or above (ESCAP 2011d).

The vulnerability of children in the dangers of natural disasters is also vivid. Children were disproportionally affected during the past three tsunamis in Japan. But efforts to address their needs have shown results with distinct improvements. For example, in the Great East Japan Earthquake, children were evacuated promptly from school on a school day afternoon. Some cities such as Kamaishi City in Iwate prefecture had a zero mortality of schoolchildren during the tsunami thanks to systemic and effective tsunami education, which is mainstreamed into all school curricula (ESCAP 2011d). In contrast, Aceh in Indonesia had a higher mortality rate observed amongst young children (0-9 years) as well as the elderly (70 and above). This also holds true for Sri Lanka (Figure 2.26) with high mortality amongst children and older persons, compared to young adults (ESCAP 2011d).

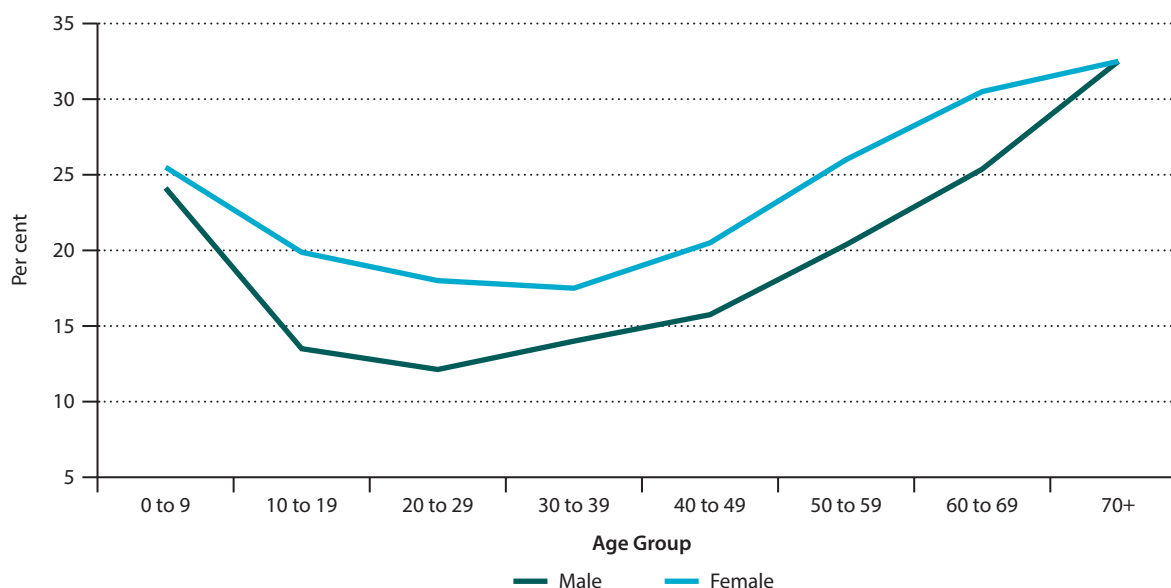
ECLAC: Civil Society Participation and the Bias against the Environment

The need of more mechanisms enabling civil society to participate in decision-making and the dissemination of information on the benefits of protecting the environment (and the costs of degradation) perpetuates the bias towards activities that yield short-term private profits to the detriment of the environment. The type of investment today will determine the future production structure and its socio-environmental sustainability. Therefore ensuring proper governance, norms and proper costing of natural resources and the environment is a requisite to generate growth without impairing the planet's resilience and survival.

The Earth Summit provided a major boost in Latin America and the Caribbean to environmental protection, the creation of environmental legislation and institutions (United Nations, 2010) and the legal recognition of rights to access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters. Principle 10 and the wave of democratization that swept through the region during the 1990s, provided for public participation through environmental authority consultative committees as well as through formal mechanisms for project evaluation and for drafting regulations. In this context, rights of access are considered indispensable for the good governance of the region's natural resources and can help to prevent and avoid conflict. Even though there has been

Figure 2.26: Internally displaced persons, by age and sex, in Ampara district, Sri Lanka, due to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004

(Total number of internally displaced people: 3,533)



Source: ESCAP (2011) *Who is vulnerable during tsunamis? Experiences from the Great East Japan Earthquake 2011 and the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004*. ESCAP, pp9.

progress in incorporating the right of participation into national legislation, proper implementation continues to be a challenge.

A further concern in the region is the growing number of socio-environmental conflicts relating to the management and exploitation of natural resources. A 2011 report produced by the Office of the Ombudsman of Peru states that 55 per cent of the 214 social conflicts identified concerned socio-environmental issues (Ombudsman of Peru, 2011). In fact, most of them were between mining companies and the local communities that fell within their sphere of influence.

The backdrop to the socio-environmental conflicts in the region is poverty, especially in rural areas, despite the burgeoning economy and the rapid expansion of extractive activities, including mining, oil and gas exploitation, as well as fisheries, forestry and hydroelectricity. In many cases, political representation and social fragmentation crises are coupled with a weak State that is unable to provide nationwide coverage. The region still faces the challenge of building and strengthening democracy and the surest way of achieving this is to narrow social gaps and to ensure that growth is inclusive, that natural resources are exploited in an environmentally and socially responsible manner and that the authorities and citizens adopt dialogue as both a means and an end

(United Nations, 2012). Recognizing the need for agreements to ensure the full exercise of rights of access, in the framework of Rio+20, Latin American and Caribbean countries signed the Declaration on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (A/CONF.216/13). In the Declaration, signatory countries committed, with the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) as technical secretariat, to develop and implement a plan of action for 2014 in order to advance the implementation of a regional instrument for the rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters.

To date, 17 member countries of ECLAC have signed the Declaration on the application of Principle 10, launched at Rio+20. In addition to the Declaration, a Roadmap as well as a Plan of Action to 2014 has been approved. Signatory countries also agreed on a shared vision and seven inspiring principles: equality, inclusion, transparency, proactivity, collaboration, progressivity, and non-regression. Currently the member States that are signatories to the declaration are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

2.3.3 Institutional Capacity and the Environment

Citizen participation and institutional capacity are fundamental to safeguarding natural capital and ensuring the sustainable use of environmental services. The lack of effective and integrative civil participation is raised as a significant factor preventing effective management of the environmental assets. Enabling civil participation is seen to entail having proper governance channels for including wide participation in decision-making and also having apt tools such as accessible and comprehensive recordkeeping to better engage the wide range of stakeholders. Good governance, ensuring rule of law, accountability, and transparency, is basic to earning the trust of citizens. In particular, a governance system that channels in the voices of various vulnerable groups has the extra value of understanding of diverse needs.

A lack of institutional capacity hampers effective implementation of targeted agricultural and rural development policies and support programmes. Some of the impediments to implementation include the narrow sectoral nature of many policies and legislations, excessive reliance on command-and-control mechanisms rather than economic and market-based instruments, and (in some regions) weak participation of major public groups. For citizens to participate in an informed manner in the decision-making process, countries must strengthen their capacity to produce, process, and disseminate environmental statistics and indicators at the national level. The establishment of an international agreement can help to advance the effective implementation of Principle 10, guaranteeing access to information, citizen participation and justice in decision-making, especially to disadvantaged persons.

ESCAP: Lack of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Providing Basic Services

Universal coverage or social protection or any provision of information and services by public institutions is limited when a person is not accounted for in the official statistics. Civil registrations make records of vital events in people's lives and constitute the foundation for establishing the legal identity and accompanying rights of individuals in a society. Furthermore, civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS)

constitutes a fundamental and powerful tool for effective governance, especially with regard to sustainable development. CRVS first facilitate social inclusion and improve social capital by enabling wide coverage of persons to have access to public services and public goods. Meanwhile, CRVS also enhance governance in terms of building effective institutions, by giving greater control with clear metrics. As public policy decisions are made more transparent and accountable when based on scientific evidence, having quality CRVS is the fundamental step towards building the necessary scientific evidence.

CRVS play an important role in the governance of disaster risk reduction. This is because government preparation for rapidly responding to disasters requires reliable data, including accurate information on the situation of the poor and the most vulnerable. Using new and innovative technology to gather data over a wide coverage can induce participation of communities and citizens. Such involvement of community contributes to community empowerment and the building of social capital. In light of natural disasters or economic shocks, having the local community engagement to capitalize on their own knowledge and capacities is one of the most effective and sustainable methods to build resilience.

All countries in Asia and the Pacific have a CRVS system; however, the quality, completeness and functionality of these systems vary considerably. As of December 2012, 51 countries/areas in the region had assessed their CRVS systems, using the standardized, rapid self-assessment tool developed by the University of Queensland's Health Systems Information Knowledge Hub (HISHub) and the World Health Organization (WHO and HISHub 2010). The results reveal the diversity of the state of CRVS systems in the region, with less than one-third of countries having satisfactory systems, and more than 40 per cent classified as weak or dysfunctional.⁵⁶

ECE: Political Will, Institutional Capacity and Implementation

Many countries in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus and Central Asia have established National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSDs) to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination and stakeholder consultation on

⁵⁶ Mikkelsen, L. (2012). "Improving civil registration and vital statistics systems: lessons learnt from the application of HIS HUB tools in Asia and the Pacific", University of Queensland: HISHub Working Paper Series, No. 24.

Box 2.2 The amalgamation of problems

Water, Food Security, Domestic Instability and International Conflict: Egypt and its annual consumption of 18 million tons of wheat can demonstrate a number of links between climate change and security. The Nile River watershed, already prone to climate-related conflict over water and farmland among Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia (whose total population is approaching 300 million), supplies almost all of the water necessary for producing half of Egypt's annual wheat consumption. The strenuous dependency is further aggravated by the fact that the Republic of Korea and Saudi Arabia have purchased fertile land in the Nile watershed to produce crops to feed their people. International conflict is inevitable if the local forces decide to seize the crops for their own use (Steinbruner et al. 2012, 121). The other half of Egypt's 18 million tons of wheat consumption is supplied by import. A recent study (Sternberg 2013) drew links between the 2011 Egyptian revolution that toppled President Mubarak and the climate factors that curtailed wheat production in 2010 for the countries of China, Canada, Australia, Russia, and Ukraine. The shortage in the supply of wheat and the consequent increase in its price had a serious economic impact on Egypt, also the largest wheat importer in the world. Sternberg hence demonstrated the case of natural hazards causing food security problems, which in turn affected social unrest and political instability (Werrell et al. 2013, 7-14).

Drought, Internal Migration, Social and Political Unrest in Syria: A recent report (Werrell et al. 2013) argues that Syria's social unrest that began in 2011 was in fact preceded by years during which the social contract between citizen and the government was eroded away by many factors, including a number of significant consequences resulting from climatic change. From 2006 to 2011, up to 60 per cent of Syria's land experienced the worst drought ever recorded – precisely at a time when Syria's population was exploding and its corrupt and inefficient regime was proving incapable of managing the stress. In 2009, the United Nations and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported that more than 800,000 Syrians lost their entire livelihoods as a result of the great drought, which led to a massive exodus of farmers, herders, and agriculturally dependent rural families from the Syrian countryside to the cities. Such massive internal displacements from rural to urban centres and significant discontent among agriculture-dependent communities are suggested to be contributing factors of social and political unrest in Syria (Werrell et al. 2013, 24-27).

Water, Electricity, Civil Unrest in Pakistan: Pakistan's economy depends heavily on water from the Indus River, which is in high demand by the agricultural sector (21 per cent of annual GDP), industrial sector, increasingly urbanizing domestic uses, and finally for hydroelectric power generation (37 per cent of Pakistan's electricity). Despite this heavy reliance, new stresses are brought on by the recent hydrological events and changes in the Indus system: a mass flooding in 2010 and severe drought and water shortage in 2011, and the changing mass balance of the Karakoram glaciers in the headwaters of the Indus system. Frequent power outages linked to these events and changes have led to increasing civil unrest over the past five years. In 2011, the largest city, Karachi, saw an average of at least six protests against power outages per day (Steinbruner et al. 2012, 122-123). These stresses on water uses are expected to increase if the government proceeds with its plans to increase hydroelectric capacity as it is cheaper than importing fossil fuels.

sustainable development. However, the NCSDs have not been properly equipped with resources to effectively carry out their mandates. In many cases, they lack permanent secretariats and are not sufficiently elevated in the political hierarchy to have any real effect. And many countries' environment ministries suffer from drastic cuts and frequent restructuring that impede continuity and capacity. Weak in both form and function, the participation of key stakeholders has been limited and tools to support implementation and to evaluate progress have been lacking. Challenges also remain in terms of ensuring coherence in the division of responsibilities among the relevant institutions and strengthening coordination and cooperation in order to avoid gaps and overlaps.

Regarding the development of environmental law, the Caucasus and Central Asia sub-region faces major challenges despite the fact that many environmental laws and regulations were adopted following the first cycle of Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs). Implementation of the laws is undermined by a lack of consistency, unclear division of responsibility, and democratic deficits. Despite the transposition of EU environmental legislation into the national legal systems of States aspiring to membership in the EU, the slow pace in enacting necessary secondary implementing legislation, the degree of complication and fragmentation, as well as weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms hinder the development of an effective legal system. Hence the task of the

sub-regional governments consists in addressing the lack of consistency within and between ministries and capacity issues, as well as the unclear division of responsibilities that underpin monitoring and enforcement. For Eastern Europe, although some degree of legislative progress has been achieved, environmental concerns continue to rank low on the political agenda of Eastern European governments.

Considering that on average agriculture accounts for about one tenth of GHG emissions in the ECE region, sound management of agro-ecologies is of great importance. In spite of the large agricultural potential of the Caucasus and Central Asia, agricultural productivity and profitability vary widely across the countries of the subregion.

2.4 Conclusions

This chapter surveys the main challenges commonly shared among all Regional Commissions, drawing from the individual commissions' accounts and reports. This chapter, therefore, serves as a building block for subsequent chapters to provide clear prescriptions for ways to meet these challenges in the context of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. Some conclusions that can be drawn are:

Connecting the Social and Economic Dimensions

- Today, in spite of economic growth, persisting inequalities fuel and aggravate widespread poverty, which erode social cohesion, subsequently increasing social tensions. Weakened social- and human-capital lead to a poor economic and investment environment for growth.
- The so-called "Arab Spring" and political transitions in the region have been partly driven by the failure of developmental strategies. New development pathways that give greater prominence to the interdependent issues of economic and social inclusion are thus called for.
- Efforts to make the development process more inclusive will thus be at the centre of attention in the years to come; although education, democratization processes and increased consciousness of gender equality values have modified some norms governing gender relations, data reveal greater disadvantages for women in terms of education, health and nutrition among some of the countries with the highest proportions of people living below the poverty line.

- Various shortcomings of income indicators need to be evaluated and adjusted to reflect a range of challenges in terms of inequality and poverty, investment and saving, production and innovation, infrastructure, education, health, gender and the environment, among others.

Connecting the Economic and Environmental Dimensions

- Economic and environmental concerns have become increasingly intertwined with the advent of rapid industrialization and globalization; the adverse impacts of resource exploitation and mismanagement are being felt by the whole of the international community and particularly by most vulnerable members.
- There is a growing awareness that resource exploitation and mismanagement are linked to the unsustainable reliance on primary commodities and environmental degradation.
- Economic growth patterns that do not internalize the environmental costs lead to increasing production costs in the long term, while economic practices that do not heed to ecological limits risk bankrupting the sources for economic vitality.

Connecting the Environmental and Social Dimensions

- From the very outset, the concept of sustainable development has incorporated the goal of equity; however, access to ecological services is distributed unequally, depriving certain social groups of their rights to common goods provided by nature

- While the amalgam of environmental pressures, need for economic vitality, the lack of adequate governance, and the precarious state of social wellbeing is felt more acutely in some parts of the world, it should be remembered that these are challenges to which no region in the world can claim immunity.
- Accessibility, affordability and inclusiveness to public services have an impact on health and the environment; poor access to clean energy sources can lead to an increased use of dirty sources that are detrimental to public health.
- Social tensions can arise from shared resources. While the lack of accessibility is one issue, another is overconsumption due to behaviour and lifestyle choices that heavily rely on unsustainable energy sources and exploit natural resources without internalizing the environmental costs.

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CHAPTER 3

Regional Dimensions of Implementing Integrative Solutions

The previous chapter highlighted the many interlinked challenges faced by Regional Commissions which underscore the need for an integrated approach to decision making and programming. This chapter examines the various strategies adopted by Regional Commissions to address these interlinked challenges in the pursuit of sustainable development. The chapter's organization reflects the structure of Chapter 2, in that each section focuses on the inter-linkages among three dimensions of sustainable development. But its value lies in the approach taken, studying the four foundational elements of international cooperation with a view to understanding programmatic priorities and activities of the Regional Commissions. The chapter begins by elaborating on these four elements, which are: normative, technical, capacity building and assessment.

Section 1 will then focus on the integration of the social and economic dimensions, followed by a similar review of the pair-wise integration of the economic and environmental dimensions (Section 2), and social and environmental dimensions (Section 3). For this purpose, each section will draw upon the experience of the five Regional Commissions with regard to the four functional elements.

Based on this framework, the chapter reviews Regional Commissions activities and institutional arrangements that endeavour to capitalize on the synergies whilst minimizing the trade-offs arising between two inter-linked dimensions. The chapter does not attempt to be comprehensive; rather, the main intention is to provide an illustrative account of activities that endeavoured to close the gap between dimensions and to use this to show how different elements are manifested in work programmes and organizational structures. Each of the selected activities introduced in

this chapter embody the effort to connect two dimensions and to help understand what gaps or impediments still exist in moving towards full integration across all three dimensions.

The Four Elements of Global Policymaking and Cooperation

International cooperation is generally structured around four main functions that generate relevant norms translating them into action: normative, technical, capacity building (or operational), and assessment.

As such, these four functions form a synergistic pattern: technical analyses help overcome the obstacle of ignorance by creating a common understanding of the problems and solutions at hand, mobilizing support across functional groups in society, and providing guidance on implementation; normative agreements can help overcome distrust by creating frameworks for joint and complementary actions, facilitating the inclusion of all States into the framework, and providing reassurance on fundamental questions of equity and fairness; capacity building removes structural obstacles to action by disseminating the skills and capacities required to do the job; and monitoring injects an important degree of credibility into global agreements by establishing deadlines.

It should be noted that the involvement of a larger set of stakeholders into the policy process is motivated by a desire to reduce or eliminate obstacles to action by building common ground, acknowledging alternative perspectives and concerns, facilitating the sharing of lessons and solutions, and creating platforms for cooperative action.

The same could be said for the shift towards transparency and disclosure. Sustainable development agreements have placed great emphasis on these questions, which is reflected in a number of concepts and practices, including access to information, prior informed consent, corporate reporting and monitoring, and verification. Setting norms and standards alone will not suffice, rather the goal shall be to bring all countries and actors together in a common pursuit of collective goals.

- **Normative**

The UN system has facilitated norm setting and the negotiation of international law on economic, social, and environmental matters. In particular, UN-sponsored conferences have given a major impetus to the identification and analysis of global and regional problems, and the formulation of universally applicable norms and specific policy options. The regional dimension is relevant on substantive as well as procedural grounds. On the one hand, there is now a large potential and demand for the development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements; and on the other hand, there is a greater need for regional processes and regional political configurations to feed into the difficult global negotiations that lie ahead.

- **Technical**

The main objective of technical work is to create a common understanding of problems as well as potential solutions. Because of the rapid pace of change, the emergence of new challenges, and the formulation of new normative frameworks, the need for analytical and technical work has increased exponentially. There is a need for the collection of

information on new goals and targets, and a deeper analyses of the technical foundations of new concepts and their bases for action, and compilation of relevant lessons from experience. There is a particular need to assess the potential for international cooperation, the nature of barriers to effective action, the potential of pilot programmes, and the type of technical and financial support needed to put them into action. Regional analyses can help identify the potential winners, prepare the ground for a richer global analysis, and guide the analytical energies at national levels.

- **Capacity Building**

Capacity building needs in developing countries have become ever more complex, and there is a call for more efficient and effective approaches. The landscape of capacity building is highly diverse, as carried out by bilateral aid programmes, UN agencies, global and regional Multilateral Development Banks, international NGOs, funds, treaty secretariats, specialized agencies, and Regional Commissions. The regional contribution has always been seen as a complement to these institutions, focusing on addressing unique goals (e.g., for regional integration), unique challenges and unique priorities (e.g., ICTs) within a region (e.g., on energy and water).

- **Assessment**

Regional forums and ministerial councils effectively provide an opportunity for thorough and large-scale policy assessment. Some regional bodies have begun to experiment with innovative mechanisms such as peer reviews, regional reports (e.g., on human development), and others. However, a more systematic approach to the role is necessary.

3.1 Integrating Socio-Economic Inter-linkages

3.1.1 Technical

ECLAC: International Trade and Inclusive Development

The work of the International Trade and Integration Division has striven to ensure that international trade translates into inclusive development, increasing employment and overall productivity while reducing productivity differentials between small and large firms as well as among different types of workers and territories. Substantial progress has been made on the understanding of the aggregate determinants of the link between international trade and social

development. Some of these include the types of products or services being exported, the diversification of the export basket, the degree to which export growth is linked to new products and destination markets, the linkages of the export sector to other sectors of the domestic economy, and the type of direct and indirect employment associated to export activities. Several case studies show that the presence (or absence) of complementary policies explain the positive (or negative) impacts of international trade on employment, poverty, and inequality.

Box 3.1 Collaboration among substantive division, subregional headquarters and regional institute

The impact of international trade on inclusive development in this region is assessed in the document *Comercio y desarrollo inclusivo: Creando sinergías* ("Trade and inclusive development: Creating synergies", LC/G.2562, in Spanish only), published by ECLAC in April 2013. This document was a team effort of ECLAC's International Trade and Integration Division, ECLAC's Economic and Social Planning Institute ILPES and the subregional headquarters in Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago. It is one of a series of documents of ECLAC that deepens the analyses and recommendations of the Commission's 2010 main document *Time for equality: Closing gaps, opening trails*. This topic was also part of ECLAC's 2012 flagship report *Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy*, and a book published in 2010 entitled *Comercio, pobreza y políticas complementarias en América Latina* ("Trade, poverty and complementary policies in Latin America", LC/W. 365, in Spanish only).

Under a similar collaboration that includes the ECLAC's International Trade and Integration Division, the Economic Development Division, ILPES and the subregional HQ in Mexico is the 2013-2015 Development Account Project on the Internationalization of SMEs. Moreover, assessment work is underway with construction of a Latin American input-output table to assess the employment and production linkages related to international trade.

The micro-determinants of the linkages between international trade and inclusive development, such as the heterogeneity of workers, firms, consumers and regions explain the different reactions to increasing trade flows. Recently, some micro databases have become available in the region, which help investigate these heterogeneous responses.

Another line of research is the use of input-output and supply use tables to evaluate the participation of countries and sectors in regional and global value chains. These will help to assess the value added, employment and wages associated to the participation in value chains.

ECLAC: Gender equality and women's empowerment

One of the key driving forces of democracy is its aim to achieve equality in the exercise of power, in decision-making, in mechanisms of social and political participation and representation, in diverse types of family relations, and in social, economic, political and cultural relations, and that it constitutes a goal for the eradication of women's structural exclusion.⁵⁷ Since 2007, The Division for Gender Affairs acts as Secretariat of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.⁵⁸ This Observatory analyses the fulfilment of international gender-equality goals and targets; provides technical support and training for producers of official statistics in National Statistical Offices and Machineries for the Advancement of

Women in countries to help them process statistical data and generate relevant indicators; and provides annual reports in key areas such as violence against women, access to decision-making and political representation, and paid and unpaid-work. The Observatory devises strategic gender equality indicators and analytical tools readily available for both policymakers and governments. It also maintains an up-to-date oversight of women's physical, economic and political decision-making as it pertains to gender equality providing annual reports to offer a diagnosis of inequalities between men and women in key areas such as paid and unpaid work, time use and poverty, access to decision-making and political representation, gender violence, health and reproductive rights.

The analysis matrix⁵⁹ for identifying fair gender equality policies aims at analysing public policies, which, in the context of specific historical processes, produce results that lean towards a fairer distribution, recognition and representation, and strengthening women's achievements in the three areas of concern of the Gender Equality Observatory: Physical autonomy; Autonomy in decision-making; Economic autonomy.

ESCAP: Poverty Reduction and Trade

Similarly, ESCAP's Trade and Investment Division (TID) has examined the connection between trade facilitation and poverty reduction. Culminating in the study on Trade Facilitation and Poverty Reduction

⁵⁷ Quito consensus: <http://www.eclac.cl/publicaciones/xml/5/29555/dsc1i.pdf>

⁵⁸ <http://www.cepal.org/oig/>

⁵⁹ http://www.cepal.org/oig/noticias/noticias/8/47918/2012-830_Matriz_de_analisis_ingles_WEB.pdf

Box 3.2 Trade and inclusivity and poverty reduction

The link between trade facilitation and poverty is an area that could be capitalized on by heightening the understanding of their complex relationship. Import and export structures, the poor's role in the trade chain, and comparative advantages of the poor are some of the factors influencing the relation. Research on trade and poverty reduction is much in need for greater knowledge on the causal relationship among trade, inequality, and poverty within countries. Suggestions are made that under free trade and competitive conditions, trade promotes growth, and growth reduces poverty while reducing trade costs can also have a profound impact on poverty.⁶⁰ While poverty reduction can be achieved as trade leads to growth of a country's overall welfare via trickle-down mechanisms, trade expansion can more directly contribute by increasing employment (labour input), and lowering goods price, so as to promote consumption and economy growth. At the same time trade increases revenue that provides possibility for poverty reduction.

International trade affects employment, household incomes and other social variables indirectly through different transmission channels, including the production structure, employment and imports to households. An increase in exports may have several positive productivity and employment effects related to greater specialization and scale economies. Imports of intermediate products may also increase competitiveness of industries, whereas imports of final products may have negative effects in terms of displacement of local producers and workers. The final impact of international trade on social variables will greatly depend on complementary policies, including education and training, innovation, investment and infrastructure and social safety nets.

(Forthcoming 2013), a Consultation Meeting on Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction was organized in March 2012.⁶¹ The meeting, attended by invited experts from universities, research institutes, and other international organizations, discussed the connection in agricultural trade, identified supply side constraints, and reviewed available indicators.

Research on agricultural trade facilitation has been emphasized given the importance of this sector for poverty reduction and food security. For developing countries in the Asia and Pacific regions, the poor rely on agricultural and industrial processing sectors.⁶² ESCAP studies have shed light on findings that support the facilitation of agricultural trade for poverty reduction, as the millions of farmers, petty traders, and small and medium enterprises are part of the agricultural supply chain (ESCAP 2011, 18). The study has found that almost 70 per cent of the rural poor depend on agriculture for their livelihood in the Asia-Pacific, amounting to millions of people in the region who are poor and vulnerable to economic shocks (ESCAP 2011, 19). The intermediaries such as wholesalers are mostly small and medium enterprises that are also producers at the same time. In any case

SMEs are major sources of rural as well as non-rural employment and therefore their success can contribute to poverty reduction. While the number of SMEs is growing in the region, because they are more vulnerable to economic shocks, the competitiveness of SMEs should be heightened. In this regard, studies have shown that reducing days to clear exports could enable SMEs to increase their share of exports in total sales.⁶³

As a result of studies on trade facilitation and poverty reduction, the long-term impact of agricultural trade facilitation for poverty reduction has been identified, and priorities and feasibilities of trade facilitation improvements for reducing inefficiencies have been better understood. The value added of ESCAP includes greater technical knowledge in this field as well as attention paid to the relationship in the context of different comparative advantages of the poor across different countries, as well as the possibility of holistic approaches that can consider intra- and inter-regional trade structure.

One of the priority areas of the ESCAP Social Development Division's (SDD) gender programme is

⁶⁰ De, Prabir (2012) Trade Facilitation and Poverty Reduction in Asia and the Pacific, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). As presented at the ESCAP TID 5-6 March 2012 Consultation Meeting on Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction, Bangkok Thailand.

⁶¹ <http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tfpoverity.asp>

⁶² Zhang, Delian (2012) Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction, International Poverty Reduction Centre in China. Written Notes for the ESCAP TID 5-6 March 2012 Consultation Meeting on Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction, Bangkok Thailand. (Accessed on 17 June 2013), available at: <http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tfpoverity-zhang-note.pdf>

⁶³ World Bank (2010) Doing Business 2011: Making a Difference for Entrepreneurs.

Box 3.3 Long-term impact of agricultural trade facilitation for poverty reduction

Source: ESCAP (2011), p. 18.

Box 3.4 Gender and economic vitality

Through economic empowerment, women are better able to control and manage financial resources and improve their standard of living and the lives of their children through greater investment in their education, healthcare, etc. Such economic power better enables women to escape abusive relationships, enhancing overall human security. Ensuring a greater role for women in the economy is crucial for sustainable development.

Through the work on women's economic empowerment, the inter-linkages between social and economic policy issues are brought to the fore by relating employment, entrepreneurship, and access to credit to means of reducing poverty, improving food security and increasing access to basic needs such as education, healthcare and housing. The economic empowerment of women also contributes to enhanced participation of women in decision-making. In a similar light, eradicating poverty among women reduces wasted human resources, inequality and environmental degradation. Through the work of gender programmes, the values reaffirmed in *The Future We Want* – such as inclusive and equitable economic growth with greater opportunities for all and improved basic standards of living – can be promoted.

women's economic participation and empowerment. SDD analyses the relationship between gender issues and economic vitality, including the review of barriers to women's participation and empowerment emanating from policy, legal instruments, and cultural practices. The channels for heightening entrepreneurship and providing greater access to credit and assets are also examined. Furthermore, such technical knowledge has been gathered through national studies that are conducted through primary research on the needs and challenges identified by women entrepreneurs. These studies are coming together into a publication along with good practices and policy recommendations that were identified at national and regional consultations. This technical knowledge gathered by ESCAP will be disseminated to governments, businesses and non-governmental organizations across the Asia and Pacific region.

ESCWA: Active Labour Market Policies

Recent protests in the region have revealed the social and political costs of high levels of unemployment, underemployment and informality, in particular among the youth population, and the need to develop and implement policies that enhance labour and socio-economic opportunities for all. With the aim of informing and supporting public intervention in labour markets, ESCWA has led technical work on active labour market policy (ALMP). ALMP is an instrument used by governments around the world to improve the functioning of labour markets, improve the employment situation and assist people in upgrading their skills in line with market needs.

Building on earlier research on labour-market policies, ESCWA provided analysis on economic and active labour market policies and their respective impact on

employment in the Arab region. A technical paper entitled *Active Labour-Market Policies in Arab Countries*⁶⁴ discussed how programmes throughout the region affect a narrow share of the unemployed, and women in particular have inadequate access to such programmes.

The research revealed that there is insufficient coordination between various service providers, which ultimately limits their effectiveness in combating unemployment. The role of economic policies in fostering employment creation and the experiences of ESCWA member countries were analysed in the study of *Economic Policy in the ESCWA Region and its Impact on Employment*.⁶⁵ The study identified structural weaknesses in many economies which are caught in low-wage, low-productivity equilibrium with dire constraints on employment.

The study recommended a series of measures to directly or indirectly provide incentives for the creation and uptake of private sector jobs in new and existing sectors that add more value and require higher skills. For example, governments are reminded to rationalize fiscal policy to reduce disproportionate State spending and surplus employment, and provide universal access to subsistence social security, income support and essential social services. In addition, governments should build modern fiscal systems to smooth and broaden the public income stream; streamline bureaucracies and rules to create a more predictable investment environment; and execute targeted migration management in GCC countries to incentivize the import of higher-skilled expatriate labour.

ESCWA: Arab Spring and Fiscal Space

Underlying causes of the so-called Arab Spring related to unemployment, poverty and inequality have been highlighted in most countries. Ongoing political transitions and conflict in some countries continue to weigh on growth throughout the region. In response to social demands and rising food and fuel prices, governments have significantly expanded spending on subsidies creating fiscal vulnerabilities. Stronger growth is urgently needed to spur job creation and provide the population with tangible benefits through

growth-oriented structural reforms. New policies are needed in the short and long term and must also deal with the current social tensions arising from inequality and social and economic vulnerability. However, many governments in the region operate under severe fiscal constraints, making most kinds of reform difficult to implement.

In response to this key challenge, ESCWA undertook an analytical study that aimed to assess the impact of recent uprisings on fiscal space in Arab countries and their capacity to finance the development transformations that the people demanded.⁶⁶ The study confirmed that fiscal space in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings is more constrained than it was before. Nevertheless, the study found that basic social protection was affordable for most countries within current spending, if expenditure on subsidies was switched to social protection. Regional development will play an important role for countries with restricted fiscal space in the short term. Those findings were discussed at the first *Arab Economic Forum* organized by ESCWA (Beirut, 23-24 November 2012). The deliberations resulted in the suggestion to develop a fiscal space index for the region to facilitate the development of policy recommendations at the regional and subregional levels.

3.1.2 Normative

ECE: Empowering Women for Sustainable Development

ECE highlights the gender gaps persisting in the region, as well as the benefits of addressing gender issues together with sustainable development. ECE establishes that improving the understanding of societal dynamics should ensure the development of adequate responses that involve wide and equal participation in decision-making and implementation. This has led to studies examining the importance of women's contributions to sustainable development. One Discussion Paper *Empowering Women for Sustainable Development* reveals the still unequal distribution of income between men and women, and finds that the monthly Gender Pay Gap in the region ranges from less than 5 per cent in Serbia to over 40 per cent in some countries of Central Asia and the

⁶⁴ ESCWA (2012) *Active Labour Market Policies in Arab Countries*, available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/E_ESCWA_SDD_12_1_e.pdf

⁶⁵ ESCWA (2012) *Economic Policy in the ESCWA Region and its Impact on Employment*, available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/E_ESCWA_SDD_12_2_E.pdf

⁶⁶ ESCWA (2012) *Report First ESCWA Arab Economic Forum, Beirut, 23-24 November 2012*, available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/E_ESCWA_EDGD_13_WG-1_Report_E.pdf

Caucasus. Furthermore, women's knowledge, skills and role in educating and socializing children, in particular regarding the use and protection of natural resources, is highlighted (ECE 2012c, 15). Finding that a two-way relationship exists between gender issues and sustainable development, ECE has contributed to building technical knowledge on the need for a gendered approach towards sustainable development.

In addition, many of the ECE member countries are facilitating gender-based discussions on sustainable development. Member States are in close dialogue with environmental and women's organizations and various other networks with the aim of integrating gender equality goals on an equal footing with those of sustainable development. ECE finds that such dedicated awareness-raising on the interface between gender equality, environmental protection and sustainability can enhance the integration of gender perspectives in sustainable development debates and which in turn contributes to ultimately increasing women's participation in decision-making (ECE 2012c).

ECE also provides valuable policy platforms that actively involve women's organizations and women's NGOs. At the Beijing+15 Regional Review Meeting in 2009, women's organizations actively participated in discussions pertaining to the remaining challenges of gender equality. In September 2010, ECE co-organized with the Regional Cooperation Council and the Government of Turkey the first Forum for Women Entrepreneurs in South-East Europe gathering "fifty-nine women entrepreneurs, policymakers, representatives from Chambers of Commerce and regional organizations to discuss what support is needed for women entrepreneurs in South-East Europe, ranging from improved access to training and finance to role models and networking opportunities. A similar opportunity was provided by a policy seminar in September 2011, on Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia, organized in collaboration with UNDP in Geneva, at which women's business organizations, NGOs and policy makers discussed the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in rural areas.

ESCAP: Sustainable Development and Foreign Direct Investment

The Trade and Investment Division of ESCAP is developing the *Investment Promotion Handbook on Sustainable Development in Small, Landlocked, and Resource-rich Developing Countries*, due for completion in 2013. The Handbook, to provide guidance on

policies to attract FDI for sustainable development, receives input from the collective endeavours of members in the *Asia-Pacific FDI Network for Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries*. The Network has been meeting to address modalities for strengthening regional cooperation among concerned countries, with a focus on attracting FDI in support of their goals towards sustainable development. By facilitating the exchange of best practices and knowledge, the Network has provided the platform for devising the norms to be developed into the investment promotion handbook. Furthermore, the Network has also acted as a conduit to transferring global issues to regional contexts. ESCAP TID, in its capacity as the Secretariat for the Network, has delivered the results of *Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum: Innovation and Collaboration for the Future We Want* and of the *2012 Asia-Pacific Business Forum* to the Network's meetings. Such processes contribute to a wider and deeper reflection of global conversations at regional level.

3.1.3 Capacity Building

ECE: Gender and Entrepreneurship

Recent gender-related activities by the UNECE have been targeted at increasing training and networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Specifically, the UNECE collaborates with the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre in Haifa and Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation to organize biannual training workshops for women entrepreneurs from Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. These workshops focus on two main goals. First, creating and establishing support systems and networks for women entrepreneurs at a national and local level, and second, training and educating women in information and communications technologies (ICTs).

Through these joint efforts more than 300 women entrepreneurs received training in ICTs and have been given the opportunity to improve their network and support systems at a local and national level since 2006. Additionally, starting in May 2012 new initiatives were established to further develop capacities specifically focusing on women entrepreneurs from the South-East Europe region.

Finally, UNECE works to construct a picture of local and national business environments for women entrepreneurs by addressing concerns such as lack of training, networks, credit or market information. These

efforts are managed through periodic reviews and research on country assessments of the economic environment for women entrepreneurship development.

ESCAP: Inclusivity and Trade

Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) is co-organized annually by ADB and ESCAP to enable sharing of experiences and knowledge among the countries of the region. The APTFF was established in 2009 to promote trade facilitation as an important component of a comprehensive strategy for national and regional development. It is particularly focused on developing countries, landlocked developing countries and the least developed countries.

ESCWA: Participatory Governance

The upheavals that swept the Arab region in 2011 have changed the political landscape of many Arab countries. Demand for dignity, equity, social justice and greater participation in political and socio-economic decision-making were central themes of those uprisings. Responding to Arab demands for political change, ESCWA initiated a regional project to operationalize a participatory approach in public policy processes. Participatory democracy is the process through which all groups of society have a genuine opportunity to be politically active and the responsibility to significantly contribute to decision-making, particularly on issues that affect their lives.

To advance these objectives, ESCWA developed a manual and toolkit to guide users through a step-by-step participatory procedure towards achieving democratic governance. The manual was vetted by representatives of Government institutions, civil society organizations, academic and media institutions, and United Nations agencies in a subregional workshop (Beirut, 16-19 April 2012).

In addition, ESCWA continues to respond to the requests of member countries for advisory and technical support services within the field of participatory democracy, civic engagement and consensus-building. ESCWA has provided a number of capacity-building initiatives on leadership skills, citizenship, communication and participatory mechanisms to support the involvement of civil

society associations and youth groups in national dialogue processes.

In 2012, ESCWA developed a specialized website on Participatory Development in Western Asia that hosted an e-seminar on participation and democracy. The e-seminar generated 130 responses from 11 experts, social practitioners, and civil society actors from six Arab countries (namely Algeria, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia). It presented a rich array of perspectives and some actionable recommendations on the process of transition to democracy. For example, that the process of transition to democracy requires reinventing governance, establishing a new social contract, building trust and rekindling hope; that the role of women in the process of change in the Arab region is paramount; that civil society is a major player in the success of national dialogue, and so civil society must adapt and make changes in the process; and that fighting corruption, nepotism and cronyism, and ensuring transparency are among the most pressing reforms required in current political transition.

ESCWA: Migration and Development

In the Arab region, the potential for migration to contribute to development is large. The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council constitute some of the most important countries of destination for migrants in the world, both by absolute numbers of migrants and in terms of migrants' share of the population. At present, however, it is hard to say what the impact of migration on development in the region has been. Further work is needed to explore and address the inter-linked issues of migration and development, migration data and regional cooperation.

Within its continued effort to support member countries in dealing with and mainstreaming migration into the development policies, ESCWA has undertaken a joint project with ESCAP on *Strengthening National Capacity to Deal with International Migration: Maximizing Development Benefits and Minimizing Negative Impacts*. In addition, ESCWA worked with the American University in Cairo to upgrade the University's database to include modules on research experts and research centres on migration in the Arab region.⁶⁷ The database will enable greater networking among researchers and member countries and facilitate access to expert knowledge on migration

⁶⁷ ESCWA (2012), Annual report, p. 31.

Box 3.5 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: Addressing the social and economic linkage in ageing and economic implications

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) focuses on three priority areas: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. The adoption of MIPAA in 2002 represented the first time that Governments agreed to link questions of ageing to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights.

With respect to the economic implications, MIPAA strives towards greater recognition of the contribution of older persons to economic activities, and calls for ensuring accommodative changes for the ageing labour force,⁶⁸ thereby facilitating the retention and productive fulfilment of older workers in the workforce.⁶⁹ The objectives to create a greater inclusive society necessitates placing employment at the heart of macroeconomic policies, ensuring that labour market policies aim to foster higher rates of growth in production and employment.

issues. The project will be a cornerstone to strengthen partnerships with the League of Arab States and the International Organization for Migration in preparation for the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013. The project will enable ESCWA member countries to maximize the benefits of their contributions to that important global event.

3.1.4 Assessment

ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA: Ageing and Development

All Regional Commissions carry out a regional review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA),⁷⁰ which is part of their important normative role. Examining the roles of Regional Commissions in the arena of international cooperation and action on ageing shows how the Regional Commissions facilitate effective implementation of an internationally adopted plan. The Regional Commissions carry out various measures following international adoption of a plan, ranging from setting commitments, carrying out comprehensive assessment of implementation at national levels, to drawing regional and international implications from surveys of country-level achievements and challenges.

The Commission on Social Development decided in its forty-second session in 2004, to undertake a review of the Madrid Plan every five years, requesting the Regional Commissions to promote and facilitate the implementation, review and evaluation of the Madrid Plan of Action, and raise awareness of it at the regional level (ECOSOC 2004, Resolution 42/1 para 7).⁷¹ With the Economic and Social Council Resolution 2010/14 deciding to conduct the second global review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action in 2013 at the fifty-first session of the Commission for Social Development, the resolution again encouraged the Regional Commissions to continue to facilitate the review and appraisal exercise at the regional level. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) asked Regional Commissions to consult with relevant regional bodies as appropriate as well as member States and other UN organizations to organize regional conferences for reviewing national appraisal results in 2012. Hence all five Regional Commissions had convened such review.⁷² The regional review and appraisal reports signify the role of Regional Commissions in outreach to member States for collection of surveys and input. The findings from the information received from the members and associate members of respective Regional Commissions allow a globally adopted Plan to be thoroughly assessed in terms of progress on implementation.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, World Assembly on Aging & United Nations (2003) para 23.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, World Assembly on Aging & United Nations (2003) para 27.

⁷⁰ World Assembly on Aging & United Nations (2003) Political declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. New York: United Nations.

⁷¹ ECOSOC (2004) Commission for Social Development Report on the forty-second session E/2004/26. E/CN.5/2004/8. Resolution 42/1 Modalities for the review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, pp 16-18.

⁷² ECA from 30 November to 2 December 2011, ECE from 19-20 September 2012, ECLAC from 9-11 May 2012, ESCAP from 10-12 September 2012, and ESCWA from 7-8 December 2011.

Box 3.6 Finding creative ways for inter-linkages between business and inclusivity

Through a competition programme to receive the *ESCAP-Sasakawa Award for Disability-Inclusive Business in Asia and the Pacific*, ESCAP evaluates and promotes businesses that recognize the added value of diversity. The competition awards disability-inclusive businesses, defining them as businesses that have an organizational culture which recognizes the added value of diversity and provide enabling working environments to gain exposure to an expanded potential workforce. Businesses are also evaluated for delivering inclusive products and services to reach a wider consumer base and for creating business opportunities for entrepreneurs. Such inclusive business models also have benefits in the business sense, adding further value and business potential. The Award, developed in partnership by ESCAP, the Nippon Foundation (TNF), and the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability (APCD), recognizes the leadership of companies that embrace such values and structure.

WIn support of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, the ESCAP-Sasakawa Award not only publicly recognizes and rewards businesses but also helps to raise awareness regarding the opportunities available to the private sector for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in businesses, and to catalyse Asia-Pacific leadership in disability and inclusive business.



ECA works in partnership with the AUC and other regional and subregional bodies such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) on ageing issues. The First Review and Appraisal of MIPAA, conducted jointly by the ECA, AUC, and Help Age International in 2007, identified several challenges facing the African member States in implementing MIPAA. It found that there was a low level of understanding and awareness of the link between population ageing and the development agendas. Other obstacles to implementation were the lack of data, inclusive dialogue, and capacity in public institutions and the civil sector. The ECA conducted the second assessment based on the theme “Advancing the health rights of older persons”, discussing the demographics and status of older persons in Africa. ECA’s review points out that

Africa’s complex household structures, due to the inclusion of extended families, render the ageing issue more difficult. Specifically with regard to their economic condition, ECA finds that older persons are among the poorest in all societies, without resources and access to opportunities to participate in income generating activities. This is due to the literacy gap, unpaid family labour, structural constraints in entrepreneurial and general economic activities, and the denied access to insurance or credit schemes.

ECE released the result of the review in a Synthesis Report,⁷³ which is based on 40 individual submissions. Member States in the region had devised and adopted a more targeted Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) following the adoption of MIPAA in 2002, and

⁷³ ECE (2012) Synthesis Report on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the UNECE Region: *Ensuring A Society for All Ages Promoting Quality of Life and Active Ageing*, available at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/Review_and_Appraisal/ECEReport.pdf

Box 3.7 Methodological stages to evaluate the national advances in the implementation of the Brasilia Declaration

2007 Brasilia Declaration	Inventory and general evaluation of actions	...in legislative, administrative, programmatic and institutional aspects.	Strengthening of implementation of Brasilia Declaration	National Report
	Identification and analysis of best practices	...from the perspective of the rights of older persons.		
	Definition of key actions	...to be taken to strengthen the protection of the rights of older persons in the next five years.		
Commitment	National review and evaluation		Results	Document

countries were requested by ECE to report on progress made in implementing MIPAA/RIS after the first five years. The findings from country reports were published and disseminated at the León Ministerial Conference in 2007. The second appraisal cycle began in May 2011, and its results were organized in a synthesis report informing the discussions at the Ministerial Conference in Vienna in September 2012 for adopting an outcome document to shape future actions. Based on such assessment processes, ECE shepherded a new Declaration at the 2012 Vienna Ministerial Conference on Ageing *“Ensuring a society for all ages: Promoting quality of life and active ageing”*.

The ECE Working Group on Ageing was established as an intergovernmental body for regional cooperation in the implementation and monitoring of RIS/MIPAA. The Working Group developed and adopted the *Guidelines for Reporting on National Follow-up to the UNECE RIS of the MIPAA* to help national focal points on ageing prepare their reports for the second appraisal cycle. ECE encouraged the use of the prepared Guideline and participatory approach to prepare the national reports on updates of activities under each of the 10 RIS commitments and priorities for the future. Through the Synthesis Report, ECE Secretariat not only catalogued the achievements, challenges, and good examples across the countries, but also extrapolated the available information into advice on the desired role for international cooperation in the ECE framework and beyond.

The ageing issue and the economic implications have been brought closer together through continued review and renewal of declaration. ECE RIS/MIPAA review observed and recognized that the continuing global

financial crisis has affected the older members and especially older women in most countries of the region (ECE 2012b, para 6), due to the introduction of fiscal austerity measures that affected pensions and various social benefits (ECE 2012a, 2). The ECE member States are further committed to achieving higher employment rates for older men and women carrying out pension reforms to adapt to increasing longevity and growing numbers of older persons in the informal sector [ECE 2012, para 10 items I (b) and (e)].

ECLAC countries have also adopted the Brasilia Declaration in December 2007, which makes recommendations in three major areas including economic security, health, and the environment. The economic security area recommends actions to improve the coverage of pensions (item 10) and to promote dignified work for all older persons, allocating loan support, training and marketing programmes that are conducive to a dignified and productive old age (item 11). For the second cycle of national review and appraisal, ECLAC carried out an assessment of progress made since the adoption of the Brasilia Declaration, following the methodological stages shown in Box 3.7.

While the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) – Population Division of ECLAC is providing technical assistance to countries to enhance effectiveness in implementing the lessons learned, evaluation of initiatives as best practices is also being guided by a set of qualification areas set by the ECLAC Secretariat, including those on content and operational requirements. The guide designed by ECLAC Secretariat to support member States review and evaluate the implementation of commitments of the Brasilia Declaration provides a set of thorough

Box 3.8 CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC

In its role as technical secretariat of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) – Population Division of ECLAC is responsible for the regional monitoring and review of a wide range of population and development issues, including population estimates and projections; the determinants and consequences of population trends; socio-demographic inequality; child and maternal mortality; sexual and reproductive health; youth; population aging and older persons; indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant populations; international and internal migration; socio-demographic information sources, including the 2010 round of population censuses; and human resource training in demography and population and development.

CELADE also acts as technical secretariat of the Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean, and as such is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the region. Likewise, CELAD2E has worked collaboratively with the Statistical Conference of the Americas, the coordinating body on statistical matters of which ECLAC is the Technical Secretariat. This has facilitated setting common agendas not only for the censuses but also for vital statistics and other information sources.

CELADE has made historically a very important contribution to the formation of human resources in demographic analysis and population and development, through training activities to strengthen the capacity of countries, its officers, planners and researchers. These training activities have been recently consolidated with the implementation of the Regional Intensive Course on Demographic Analysis, which is conducted in the second half of each year at the headquarters of ECLAC.

CELADE's systematic effort in monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD-PA) in Latin America and the Caribbean has helped reaffirm the ICPD-PA in a consensual and systematic way since 1994. It has also strengthened South-South cooperation and facilitated the participation of various stakeholders, including civil society, in the evaluation of the achievements of ICPD-PA. Assessing successful policies and best practices related to the ICPD-PA, and identifying gaps and weaknesses in its fulfillment has been key to strengthen the political will and technical capabilities dedicated to its implementation in the region.

In conducting its activities, CELADE has sought close interaction with other United Nations agencies, multilateral organizations, and through agreements with donor countries. In this sense, for example, CELADE actively participates in the Regional Advisory Committee on Health Statistics, the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Strengthening Health Statistical Systems, the Interagency Group for the Reduction of Maternal Mortality, and Interagency Group for the Estimation of Child Mortality. In particular, CELADE has maintained regular cooperation with the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs with respect to, among other things, the population estimates and projections that are updated every two years. Similarly, collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund has contributed significantly to deepen and broaden the scope of the work programme of CELADE.

evaluation criteria to help assessment of progress in separate areas of work: legislative and administrative area, programme area, and institutional area.

ESCAP resolution 67/5 requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices on ageing, including the monitoring and implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. As part of this effort, the ESCAP secretariat conducted a regional survey on progress made in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action, by compiling data on national actions, the development of new policies and programmes, and examples of good practices from the region. For the regional survey, ESCAP received information from 30 members and associate members

who provided input related to the national coordination and policy framework. The Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Review and Appraisal of MIPAA presented the findings from the collected national surveys, leading to the Meeting's recognition of the need for countries to ensure not only financial security and sustainability for a growing number of older persons, but also to provide social protection systems that encompass employment, pensions, health services and the provision of enabling and supportive environments. The findings from the review and appraisal relating to integration of ageing dynamics within the context of development – employment, in particular – identified main obstacles impeding older persons from gaining and retaining

Box 3.9 Review and assessment outline provided by ESCWA for the second review of the MIPAA**Situation of older persons**

- 1 Demographic trends and social, economic, health indicators
- 2 Major achievements under MIPAA

Capacity to approach and formation of policies on ageing

- 1 Institutional body for monitoring and training
- 2 Obstacles to implementation

Existing policy and legislation

- 1 Provision of income security and social protection
- 2 Policies on poverty reduction and participation in society and development
- 3 Integration of policies for older persons into social plans and policies

Box 3.10 Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS/POA) remains a blueprint for these SIDS and the international community to address national and regional sustainable development that takes into account the economic, social and environmental aspects that are the pillars of a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development. This process began with the SIDS/POA that resulted from the Barbados Meeting in 1994 and was followed by the 5-year Ministerial review that took place in 1999. The 10-year review of this programme to assess progress made in implementation of the SIDS/POA took place in Mauritius in 2005 and realised the Mauritius Strategy (MSI). SIDS are now embarking on a 20 year review of the BPoA and a 10 year review of the MSI.

Box 3.11 ECLAC Subregional Headquarters, Port of Spain

Climate change activities integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. ECLACPOS has also conducted assessments of the economic and social impacts of climate change in the Caribbean and has addressed the increasing impact of natural disasters. These assessments conducted cost-benefit analyses of adaptation and mitigation strategies and made policy recommendations for the short, medium and long term.

ECLACPOS has been promoting the use of knowledge networks – namely Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs – for knowledge capture and sharing among Caribbean SIDS. ECLACPOS has also been liaising with relevant organizations that focus on public sector management and especially in the use of these tools in improving governance within that sector. Additionally, there is communication with ESCAP in utilization ICT in disaster risk management (DRM) utilizing a methodology that has worked in the Asia/Pacific region.

employment as 1) discrimination; 2) mobility and accessibility limitations; and 3) rapid changes in required skill sets (ESCAP 2012, para 24).

ESCWA's Social Development Division held the Second Regional Review Meeting of MIPAA in December 2011. ESCWA took note of the member countries challenges in implementing the first priority direction of MIPAA, identifying concerns in the economic conditions of most countries that impede job creation for older persons, the official retirement age being set at 60 years of age, as well as the high proportion of older persons without social insurance in agricultural and informal sectors – for whom the pension system is not available.

ESCWA facilitated preparation of national reports by providing an outline that requests review and assessment of 1) the situation of older persons; 2) national capacity to approach and formulate national policies on ageing issues; and 3) existing policy and legislation.

ECLAC: Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States

ECLAC's subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, located in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (ECLACPOS), has worked as the regional focal point for implementing the MSI in the Caribbean. In its role as Secretariat of the RCM, ECLACPOS seeks to provide

oversight in implementing the MSI, collects and collates information relevant to all aspects of sustainable development into a single matrix, and distributes this to Caribbean member States on an annual basis. ECLACPOS has also begun developing indicators for tracking progress in implementation of the MSI. The indicators take into consideration the MDG indicators as well as those developed by DESA and the World Bank, thereby ensuring coherence and avoiding duplication. They are being used as a monitoring mechanism for progress made in the implementation of the MSI. ECLAC also prepared the MSI+5 report which focused on achievements of the thematic areas of the MSI and is currently preparing the regional report of the MSI+20 that will address progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the MSI as well as address new and emerging issues such as innovation and partnerships.

ESCAP: Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States

ESCAP's Pacific Office, located in Suva, Fiji has played a lead role in facilitating the preparations for and participation by Pacific SIDS in the UN Sustainable Development process relating to MSI+5 review, the Rio+20, the Third SIDS Global Conference in Samoa 2014 and the post-2015 development agenda. The role includes funding, technical assistance and logistics for national reports, regional syntheses and meetings. Positive results are seen in the way in which climate change and oceans have remained the highest of priorities; social inclusion and health particularly NCDs highlighted as a SIDS priority for the post-2015 development agenda; and green economy adopted as a SIDS priority for UN assistance.

3.2 Integrating Economic-Environmental Inter-linkages

3.2.1 Technical

ECLAC: Fiscal policies for sustainable development

ECLAC's Division on Economic Development has been a pioneer in calling for fiscal covenants in the region to strengthen the State on the basis of a higher and more progressive tax burden, as each country's degree of development permits. In this approach, "an explicit or implicit political agreement between the various sectors of society as to what the State should do to legitimize the amount, composition and orientation of public expenditure and the tax burden necessary to finance it" (ECLAC 1998, 9). Over time this concept has been expanded by the Division through its work programme to encompass many of the key issues important to sustainable development in the region, including but not limited to: maintaining sufficiently rapid and stable economic growth, extending the coverage of social protection systems, boosting investment in infrastructure, health care and education, supporting industrial policies needed for structural change, and responding to the challenges associated with climate change.

Within this framework of a fiscal covenant, fiscal policies for sustainable development are conceptualized by the Division to include both revenues and expenditures. These measures seek to generate new revenues to fund investments in health, education, and infrastructure, while improving the state of the environment by realigning the incentive

structure of the economy. Additionally, fiscal policies in the form of tax incentives and subsidies can play a critical role in mobilizing private investment in low-carbon technologies, such as in renewable energy.

In terms of generating new knowledge related to fiscal policies for sustainable development the work programme of the Division provides a number of concrete examples. Ongoing research facilitated by the Division is looking into the existence and effectiveness of environmental taxes in the region as applied to motor vehicles, including those related to the consumption of fuel (ECLAC 2013c forthcoming). Additionally, this work has led to a deeper look at subsidies related to the consumption of fuel in the region and policy options for their reform, which is a particularly difficult proposition for many countries (ECLAC 2013d forthcoming). In both cases, research will bring policymakers a comprehensive regional perspective that incorporates aspects of each of the three pillars of sustainable development, equipping them with policy options for implementation or reform of environmental taxes and fossil fuel subsidies. The latter issue is especially pressing as policymakers have frequently voiced in regional forums that the reform of subsidies is a top priority in the coming years.

The Division has also conducted research in conjunction with other Divisions within ECLAC on the tax systems of the region for aligning tax policies and administrations with international best practices

(ECLAC, 2012a). In addition, the Division also tackled the issue of the effectiveness of government expenditures, especially those carried out by sub-national governments who are often responsible for spending decisions but not for generating revenues (ECLAC, 2012b). Research on both topics resulted in publications that were widely disseminated. This project, in particular, highlights the great potential for Regional Commissions, including ECLAC, to leverage inter-divisional cooperation to tackle multi-faceted challenges facing their regions.

ESCAP: Greening of Economic Growth

The Environment and Development Division (EDD) of ESCAP has been at the forefront of establishing and exploring the Green Growth approach. Aware of Asia-Pacific's status as the fastest growing region with increasing production and consumption, ESCAP highlighted the two sides of economic growth:

1) source of serious threat to environmental sustainability and 2) basis for achieving the desired goals of the MDGs and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Hence substantive questions such as 'how to improve environmental sustainability of economic growth', 'how to promote effective environmental governance and performance', and 'how to harness environment as the driver of growth and business opportunity' (ESCAP 2005) helped to guide discussion on green growth. The accumulation of substantive capacity of ESCAP in leading and promoting the idea of green growth culminated in the embracing of the concept by 52 member and associate member countries of ESCAP at the 2005 Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific. The Conference endorsed Green Growth as a policy focus and a powerful strategy to merge poverty reduction and growth with environmental sustainability. Such broad acceptance signalled an end of a beginning, initiating greater technical work on green growth.

Having established a significant technical foundation allowed ESCAP to launch a number of sectoral programmes that involve technical assistance, norm-setting initiatives, and capacity building exercises under the concept of green growth. Such a multi-dimensional analytical scope of work has branched out to a number of sectors such as water infrastructure, energy sector, and urban development. In turn, these sectors are brought together via the common thread of eco-efficiency as a tool for steering the traditional approach towards one that is in harmony with green growth. From such a point of

departure, ESCAP EDD Policy Section has initiated the "Greening of Economic Growth" series that provide policymakers with practical guidance to green growth policy tools and actions. Thus far the series have included *Payments for Ecosystem Services* (2009) and *Measuring Resource-use Efficiency and the Impact of Economic Activities on the Environment* (2009). Most recently in 2012, EDD Policy Section produced a seminal publication *Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific: turning resource constraints and the climate crisis into economic growth opportunities*. Created under the East Asia Climate Partnership with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) for the project Development of a Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for East Asia, the publication further sheds light on the economic strategies in the context of climate issues. The technical knowledge provided by ESCAP includes a better understanding of a different growth trajectory that would shift away from the business-as-usual option of resource-intensive growth strategies. In recognizing the need for improving resource efficiency and investing in natural capital, the report provides guidance on realizing the concept of green growth into transformative agents of economic systems. In this regard, a toolkit of policies and strategies to drive the necessary transformation towards a green economy through green growth is provided to the policymakers. With a comprehensive list of tools and examples of success stories, Environment and Development Policy Section's (EDPS) latest work on low carbon green growth continues to refine and provide practical approach to utilize the new concept.

The ESCAP Pacific Office has played a lead role in the Pacific advocating the use of green economy as a tool for sustainable development. It published its Pacific Perspectives of 2012 dedicated to case applying "*Green Economy in a Blue World*". At least eight of the 13 Pacific SIDS are able to prepare national reports for the SIDS 2014 Conference and the post-2015 development agenda, indicated they had either adopted green growth or were interested in it. The Melanesian Spearhead Group whose membership includes the largest of Pacific SIDS has already adopted a Green Growth Road Map and the Pacific SIDS as a group advocated the inclusion of green economy in the SIDS Inter-regional meeting (Barbados) outcome. As part of the institutional support the SIDS wants from the UN for the implementation of the outcomes of the 2014 conference and the post-2015 development agenda, the UN is now being asked specifically to support those SIDS that are either working with green economy

approaches or considering their adoption. The Pacific has had success in ramping up support for strong climate change action, a coherent approach to oceans and the inclusion of health and non-communicable diseases as priorities on the SIDS agenda. More recently the Pacific has established a new regional body dedicated to promoting sustainable development through green economy.

ESCWA: Inclusive, Green Economies

The Sustainable Development and Productivity Division of ESCWA has accumulated significant experience to date in building a common understanding of key sustainable development challenges in the region and their solutions, in particular across the food, energy and water nexus. In the post-Rio+20 context, a complementary area of focus in the coming years will be on developing appropriate region-specific policy options for the transition to the green economy. Pre-requisites for the green economy in the Arab region include the generation of new job opportunities in green sectors, supporting the integration between policies targeting water, energy and food security, and mobilization of adequate financial resources and facilitating technology transfer. Initial phases of this work are providing the technical basis for the 'greening' of key economic sectors as well as mapping out success stories and progress to date in the region, the development of policy tools and guidelines, and exploring investment priorities and enabling environments.

The Division is working with regional partners including ESCAP, UNEP and UNIDO to build capacity in the region to design and implement effective policies for green production sectors. The aim is to build the capacity of policymakers, civil society, business support institutions and industry associations in developing green production sectors in the ESCWA member countries through the design and implementation of effective policies and programmes.

To support this work, ESCWA has undertaken a regional mapping exercise to review and assess existing green policies, programmes and institutions in the region and "green" support services developed at the international, regional and national levels. The initial mapping work is being used to prepare a regional

guideline on the formulation of policies and programmes for the development of green production sectors. A series of pilot projects are also being implemented in Lebanon, Oman and Jordan to establish green production helpdesks in partnership with the concerned entities to support SMEs and increase their competitiveness in green markets.

ESCWA has also recently collaborated with GIZ/BMZ and partnered with the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)/Arab Network for Food Sovereignty to assess the functioning of regional agricultural value chains to identify ways to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness, or in other words to "green" them. So far, this work has assessed the major issues facing agricultural value chains in the region and proposed ways to enhance the way these value chains work to improve their structure, conduct and performance, enhancing resource-use efficiency and reducing waste while also improving food availability, food quality and livelihoods.

3.2.2 Normative

ESCAP: Green and paperless trade

ESCAP is working towards harmonizing "green standards" to promote trade and technology transfer. By identifying tariff and non-tariff barriers that impede the trade on environmental goods, services and technologies, ESCAP's Trade and Investment Division endeavours to promote trade in such goods via preferential market access. In particular, serving as the Secretariat to the longest effective trade agreement in Asia-Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA),⁷⁴ ESCAP aims at utilizing APTA as a means of promoting trade in environmental goods.

Most of the normative trade facilitation work of ESCAP has focused on the development of paperless trade, i.e. the conduct of trade transactions on the basis of electronic rather than paper documents. While adoption of paperless trade procedures also brings potential environmental benefits, key benefits in the context of Rio+20 come in the form of increased transparency and simpler procedures allowing for a more inclusive participation in trade. ESCAP member countries adopted the Commission Resolution 68/3 on *Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for*

⁷⁴ The *Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA)*, previously named the *Bangkok Agreement*, signed in 1975 as an initiative of ESCAP, is a preferential tariff arrangement that aims at promoting intra-regional trade through exchange of mutually agreed concessions by member countries.

Box 3.12 International trade and investment and sustainable development

Rio+20 emphasized the importance of international trade and investment for development and sustained economic growth, and also reaffirmed the critical role that a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, as well as meaningful trade liberalization, can play in stimulating economic growth and development worldwide, thereby benefiting all countries at all stages of development, as they advance towards sustainable development. However, green technologies are often produced in developed and more industrialized developing countries using intermediate inputs (parts and components) originating from a wide variety of developing countries that are integrated in global value chains. Trade in intermediate goods, which accounts for about 40 per cent of world merchandise trade, is thus an important entry point for developing countries to contribute to the greening of world trade and production. Participation in value chains and trade also allow for access to an environmentally appropriate technology for production of non-traded goods. Overall, economies can generate economy-wide gains, such as employment, improvement in technology and skills, productive capacity upgrading, and diversification into higher value-added production and exports. The Outcome document of the Rio+20 also highlights development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements as appropriate. In this regard, many Regional Commissions have undertaken normative roles to promote preferential trade in environmental goods, services, and technologies through regional trade agreement.

inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation in 2012. ESCAP secretariat is currently supporting the implementation of that Resolution, which sets the stage for regional arrangements for cross-border paperless trade facilitation.

ESCAP: Regional Agenda Setting for Greening of Growth

Through the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development (MCED) in Asia and Pacific, which has been held every five years since 1985, EDD has facilitated the development of Asia-Pacific sustainable development agendas. This gathering of ministers of environment and development has assessed the state of sustainable development, identified regional perspectives and priorities and decided on concerted actions in response to imperatives posed by global and regional environment challenges. Each MCED conference adopts a ministerial declaration, and a five-year regional action programme, and – in the last two Conferences – endorsed specific programmes to follow up on the Conference agreements. The fifth MCED⁷⁵ in 2005 adopted the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth) – a 10-year regional initiative that has thus far engaged 10 countries in research, capacity building, network and partnership development, and pilot project implementation. The Initiative presents a justification, targets, policy areas and follow-up

activities to realize the theme that was presented at the MCED, which was Green Growth. The Initiative identified three targets, (a) Improving the environmental sustainability of economic growth; (b) Enhancing environmental performance in pollution control and ecosystem management; and (c) Recognizing that environmental protection presents an opportunity for economic growth and development, which were endorsed by the Conference.

The most recent MCED in 2010 resulted in the adoption of the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative,⁷⁶ which was based on member countries’ recognition of green growth as one of the approaches supporting rapid economic growth, the achievement of MDGs, and environmental sustainability. Upon the proposition by Kazakhstan – a member State to both ESCAP and ECE hosting the sixth MCED in 2010 and the seventh Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in 2011, ESCAP delivered the substantial materials to bring about the formal Initiative to bridge the environmental policies and best practices between the two regions. As a result, ministers and heads of delegations from Asian and Pacific member States unanimously endorsed the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative, calling for a partnership and regional, interregional and inter-sectoral cooperation between Europe and Asia and the Pacific.

⁷⁵ See ESCAP, *The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.F.31).

⁷⁶ ESCAP, Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative: Europe-Asia-Pacific Partnership for the Implementation of “Green Growth”, 2010.

ESCWA: Regional Coordination on Sustainable Development

ESCWA has forged strong linkages with the League of Arab States and other regional organizations and has been instrumental in the development and adoption of a suite of regional strategies and frameworks to address key sustainable development challenges. In particular, ESCWA has worked with the League of Arab States and the regional office of UNEP through the technical secretariat of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR), as well as through supporting the work programmes of regional intergovernmental councils and committees, including the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), the Arab Water Council, and the Committee for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

Through its work with these and other councils and committees, ESCWA has supported the development of regional strategies on water security, sustainable production and consumption, education, sustainable agricultural development, climate change, disaster risk reduction and other priority issues. ESCWA is currently working with LAS and UNEP to update the Sustainable Development Initiative for the Arab Region which will provide the overarching framework addressing key sustainable development challenges in the region and implementing commitments agreed at Rio+20.

3.2.3 Capacity Building

ECE: Economic Benefits from Environmental Quality

ECE strives to promote evaluation of economic benefit for environment and human health. Subsequent to the sixth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Belgrade in October 2007, ECE prepared *Guidelines for Developing National Strategies to Use Air and Water Quality Monitoring as Environmental Policy Tools* (ECE 2012d). Especially targeted towards Eastern European countries, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, the Guidelines were devised to provide guidance with respect to revising air and water quality monitoring programmes to make monitoring a practical tool for environmental policy. Furthermore, the Guidelines provide a comprehensive range of norms to follow, including target setting, devising pollution abatement strategies, and finally assessing progress in achieving policy targets and the effectiveness of abatement measures (ECE 2012d, 9).

Through the Guidelines, ECE proposes a number of measures, including integrating air quality monitoring data with emission inventories, remote sensing activities, as well as with assessment of health and environmental effects. Similarly, for water quality monitoring, the Guidelines suggest integrating water quality monitoring with monitoring activities for drinking water quality and for water quantity, climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, and discharge inventories. The Guidelines furthermore encourage integration with modelling activities that can facilitate comparative studies with other monitoring networks, international standards and guidelines. Modelling helps to bring economic aspects and the environmental impacts together, by predicting future developments in air quality, which can be then compared against targets to measure technical and economical feasibilities. More importantly, the Guidelines strive to link the monitoring activities to establishing assessments of health and environmental effects. This is to promote integrated air quality monitoring as an exercise that can provide scientific basis for dose-effect relationships and, where possible, to evaluate economically the benefits for the environment and human health resulting from emission reductions (ECE 2012d, 15).

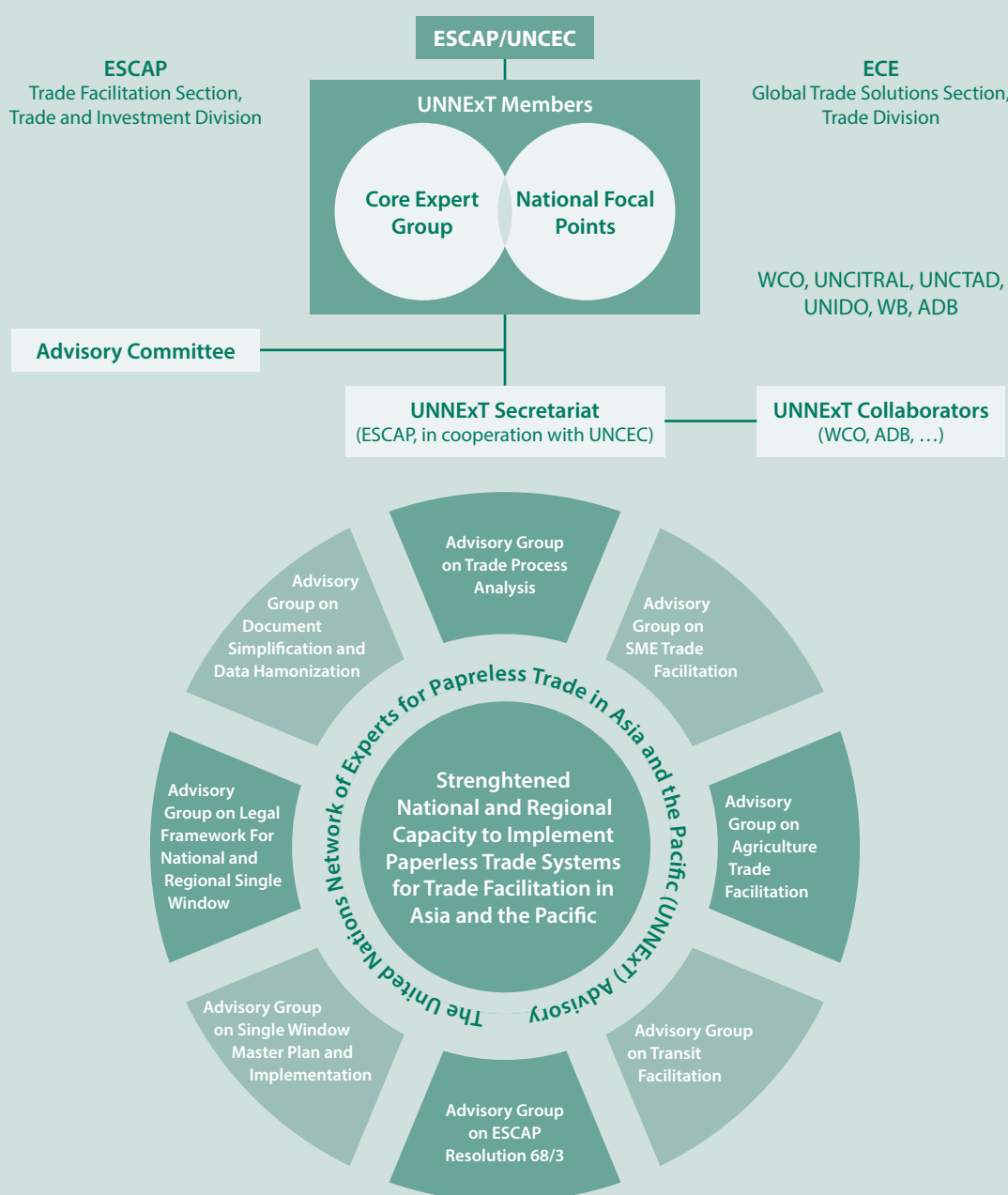
Finally, the expected economic costs are key determinants of whether or not a measure for improving or monitoring the environmental quality is implemented. As such, the Guidelines contain thorough analyses of costs as well as fund mobilization.

ECE & ESCAP: Paperless Trade

Both ESCAP and ECE Secretariat provide capacity building in the areas of trade facilitation and electronic business. ESCAP TID has delivered a growing number of capacity building activities on trade facilitation and paperless trade, including national and regional workshops and specialized advisory services. Member States, in particular LDCs and LLDCs, request such capacity building activities to the Regional Commission. The capacity building is carried out with the support of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT). UNECE and UNESCAP have jointly established the UNNExT, which provides capacity building in transition economies in Asia and Central Asia with the implementation of electronic trade systems and trade facilitation, supporting national, sub-regional and transcontinental Single Window and paperless trade initiatives.

Box 3.13 United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

Established in 2009 by UNESCAP and UNECE, the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) is a community of knowledge and practice for experts from developing countries and transition economies from Asia and the Pacific involved in the implementation of electronic trade systems and trade facilitation. Its emphasis is on training, knowledge sharing, and application of international standards that are developed by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), the World Customs Organization, and other relevant organizations. The Regional Commissions convene legal experts, data harmonization experts, process analysis experts, trade facilitation research (data and indicators) experts, customs/trade and transit logistics experts, trade facilitation capacity building and training experts, trade/transport facilitation, institutional and public-private sector partnership experts to form the Core Expert Group. This group is directly involved in delivering UNNExT activities to build capacity in specific areas.



Source: UNNExT Work Programme, http://www.unescap.org/unnext/unnext.asp#wp10_11

UNNExT Secretariat, provided by ESCAP in cooperation with ECE, provides an array of activities that include trainings and capacity building programmes at national and regional levels. Such programmes rely heavily on peer-to-peer support, inviting experts and practitioners with know-how and experience in paperless trade systems to those with less advanced systems. Knowledge sharing activities also provide new and specialized knowledge sharing mediums, organizing subregional and regional thematic events to discuss emerging paperless trade facilitation issues. The advisory services offered by the Network entails countries submit requests, upon which the ESCAP/ECE Secretariat identifies the most appropriate available expert for the delivery of services according to the nature and the scope of services requested.

ECE has developed a comprehensive Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG), which is an interactive online tool to help countries understand and develop a strategic approach to trade facilitation and electronic business implementation. ECE also provides interactive and participatory style training in the use of the Guide – see <http://tfig.unece.org>.

The ECE intergovernmental body on trade facilitation and electronic business, UN/CEFACT, develops a host of UN Recommendations, standards and tools aimed at improving the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transition economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and so contributing to the growth of global commerce – see www.unece.org/cefact

ECLAC: Climate Change

ECLAC trains decision-makers and negotiators at national and local levels in relevant topics such as REDD, assessment of the socio-economic aspects of climate change, impacts of climate change on the coasts, adaptation and mitigation strategies to climate change, environmental governance, carbon footprint, clean development mechanism and risk management.

The Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division (SDHSD) of ECLAC has contributed to Latin American countries in strengthening technical capacities through the realization of numerous courses and workshops held since 2011, on topics related to understanding the causes, consequences and policy options to address climate change.

Additionally, climate variation may also affect the coastal and marine dynamics such as sea level rise, salinity, winds, hurricanes and waves, among others. Those changes may impact beaches, port infrastructure, coastal ecosystems and populations caused mainly by events such as flooding and erosion (CEPAL 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d, 2012e). ECLAC is analysing these changes in the region and provides the analysis and georeference data to the public through an online viewer using Google Earth.⁷⁷ It also held a workshop in 2012, “Methodology, tools and databases for assessing the impacts of climate change on marine coastal areas of Latin America and the Caribbean” to further improve of the capacities of the countries from, The Ibero-American Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC)⁷⁸ to discuss the problems caused by climate change in coastal marine areas.

ECLAC’s Division of International Trade and Integration, in close collaboration to the SDHSD, also organizes programmes on trade and climate change. Within the framework of the United Nations Development Account (7th tranche), the Divisions have been implementing since 2012 the project titled “Strengthening the national capacities of export sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean to meet the challenges of climate change”. The project, which runs until 2014, works with four participating countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic) to promote coordinated efforts by the private and public sectors in participating countries: 1) disseminate knowledge about the “carbon footprint” concept as it applies to food exports, and 2) measure and reduce the carbon footprint. In order to achieve these goals, the project activity includes training workshops for government officials, producers, exporters and academics and a pilot project to measure the carbon footprint of two selected export

⁷⁷ <http://www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getprod.asp?xml=/dmaah/noticias/paginas/5/48025/P48025.xml&xsl=/dmaah/tpl/p18f-st.xsl&base=/dmaah/tpl/top-bottom.xsl> <http://www.c3a.ihcantabria.com/>

⁷⁸ The Ibero-American Network of Climate Change Offices (Red Iberoamericana de Oficinas de Cambio Climático, RIOCC, 21 countries are members of RIOCC: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Box 3.14 Inter-divisional collaboration

Increasing synergies have been established between the project and ECLAC's yearly International Carbon Footprint Seminar, organized since 2009 by ECLAC's Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division. Since 2012 the seminar has been co-organized with the International Trade and Integration Division. The seminar allows the dissemination among a wide audience of the latest developments in terms of methodologies for the quantification of the carbon footprint in international trade, new public and private standards such as carbon footprint labelling, and good practices (private, public and public-private) to reduce the carbon footprint of exported products.

products in each participating country (in progress as of June 2013). Halfway through its intended duration of three years, the project has positioned the issue of the relationship between international trade and climate change among public officials and exporters in the four participating countries. The training workshops held during 2012 involved more than 400 people and have led to similar workshops being held in other countries (Argentina, Peru and Uruguay) in the first half of 2013. Moreover, the activities conducted in the four participating countries have sparked the formation of public-private roundtables on trade and climate change. Information about the project and links to its training materials⁷⁹ are provided online, disseminated through more than 50 websites. The publication *"Huella de carbono y exportaciones de alimentos. Guía práctica"* (Carbon footprint and food exports: practical guide, LC/W.503, in Spanish only) – released in November 2012 – was prepared within the framework of the project. The guide provides various existing methodologies for measuring the carbon footprint of traded goods, especially in the agricultural sector; an overview of the main climate change-related initiatives (with trade impacts) applied by developed countries; and a selection of business experiences in meeting climate change-related requirements in export markets. The guide is targeted at a broad audience of non-specialist stakeholders, including inter alia small businesses, government officials from different agencies, academics, students and civil society organizations.

ESCAP: Green Growth

Since the adoption of the Green Growth approach at the fifth MCED in March 2005, over one thousand regional policymakers have attended policy dialogues, leadership and capacity development events, and national green growth workshops, and have participated in online e-learning courses on green growth policies and tools. Via the green growth online

e-learning facility, ESCAP organized seven six-week training of trainers' seminars, which benefitted 450 policymakers from more than 50 countries in the Asia-Pacific and five other regions. These seminars were made available by ESCAP through the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth, and in partnerships with the UK Government, SIDA, Asian Institute of Technology, and other international, regional and national stakeholders.

Pilot projects have provided financing for pro-poor community-based renewable energy use, supported the development of payments for ecosystem services mechanisms and policy, improved the eco-efficiency of urban environments across the region, and raised awareness of the use of eco-efficiency indicators at the national level, while also enabling poor local communities to generate income from resource saving and the acquisition of new technical skills.

ESCAP: Eco-efficiency

In an effort to monitor changes in the policy landscape, ESCAP has also issued flagship reports on sustainable development and developed eco-efficiency indicators that were piloted in both Cambodia and Viet Nam as part of its work on green growth indicators. EDD has played a key role in building the capacity of national government to produce state of the environment reports, starting as far back as 1985. *The State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific Reports* produced since 1985 are the most prominent regional reviews on sustainable development and have now evolved to address sustainability issues more directly and focus on specific themes. The series has now evolved to address sustainability issues more directly and to focus on specific themes. EDD published *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific* (2012), a joint report with the ADB and UNEP, which analyses the trends and drivers for the future development of the Asia-Pacific region to sup-

⁷⁹ Project's website (in Spanish): http://www.cepal.org/comercio/cambio_climatico/

port action towards implementation of green growth policies and initiatives in the lead up to, and following, the Rio+20 conference. The result of this collaboration is the establishment of the first online regional database on material flows, which makes data available to researchers and policymakers.

ESCWA: Green Technologies and Rural Livelihoods

The Rio+20 Conference recognized the role of the green economy as an important tool in transitioning towards sustainable development and achieving poverty eradication. In particular, the Rio+20 outcome document emphasizes the critical role that technology can play and calls on countries to create enabling conditions to foster environmentally sound technologies, particularly those that support a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. To this end, United Nations entities are called upon to identify options for facilitating mechanisms to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies including through capacity building.

Many countries of the region have experimented with environmentally-sound technologies, particularly those related to renewable energy, energy efficiency or integrated water resources management in a bid to ensure access to sufficient, safe and affordable energy, food and water. This is especially critical in rural communities where there is an urgent need to improve social and economic conditions. However, many applications of these technologies did not go beyond the basic demonstration stage, and did not prove their capacity to cost effectively adapt to the needs of the receiving communities. Furthermore, a great number of the implemented applications failed to tap into the wealth of local/indigenous knowledge and techniques and as a result were unable to meet the aspirations of rural communities. Thus, their impact was modest and usually limited to some of the urban population.

In this context, ESCWA intends to build capacity in designing, implementing and mainstreaming green technology initiatives into development programmes, particularly those that build on local knowledge, skills and resources. The work will also support the development of a knowledge sharing platform so as to encourage the exchange and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices while strengthening the

linkages between policy-makers, development-practitioners and capacity building-providers for the benefit of stakeholders particularly those at the local level.

The project will benefit from ESCWA's multi-disciplinary and holistic approach, which links normative with operational work. The project will also build on the achievements of previous projects in the area of technology, energy and water management, including recent projects on strengthening capacities on developing green production sectors in the ESCWA region; on capacity building on climate change mitigation for poverty alleviation in Western Asia; and on developing capacities of Arab countries for climate change adaptation by applying integrated water resources management tools.

ESCWA will also cooperate closely with relevant international and regional organizations, notably UNIDO, ESCAP and ECA. ESCWA will also partner with national counterpart institutions: Government entities and technology centres, in order to capitalize on their comparative advantage.

3.2.4 Assessment

ECLAC: Climate Change and Fiscal Policy

The DDSAH together with the EC, GIZ, and the French Cooperation have developed Logical Frameworks to monitor the achievement of the objectives of the Projects EUROCLIMA and Fiscal Policy and Climate Change. Furthermore, the collaboration that has provided the basis for assessment work on climate change in the region should be highlighted, as the work has been built upon the common interest of the governments and international organizations to address climate change concerns. It has required the participation of national ministries such as Finance, Environment and Planning to lead the process involving others with responsibilities in this area (Agriculture, Energy, Forestry, Water, Health, Education and Social Security) and technical involvement from recognized institutions (e.g. climate modelling by the National Institute for Space Studies-INPE-Brazil, or sea level rise by the University of Cantabria, Spain) and sub-regional bodies (Mercosur and Andean Community). The activities have been supported by the governments of the UK, Denmark, and Spain, and the EC and IADB.

3.3 Integrating Environmental-Social Inter-linkages

3.3.1 Technical

ECLAC: Human Settlements

As the world's most urbanized region (ECLAC 2010), Latin America and the Caribbean require special policies to enable its cities to fulfil their key role in attaining development goals. Latin America is also the only region where interurban migration (from city to city) accounts for about 50 per cent of urban population growth. Currently, however, populations are moving from one urban area to another, and the region is now faced with not only mega-cities, but "urban regions" (ECLAC 2013a).⁸⁰ As such, the region's population location and mobility patterns demarcate the necessary technical knowledge that ECLAC aims to provide. This knowledge is necessary for devising national and subnational policies that take into account the diagnostic review of geographically disaggregated current and future conditions.

The contribution of ECLAC to technical knowledge has targeted challenges in the areas of water consumption, pollution and treatment, solid waste management, and air pollution and GHG emissions. The technical approach combines social trends and history with population and demographic changes (e.g. ageing, zero growth, migrants, gender), and urban patterns (urban regions and mega regions). Such holistic approaches, with deep connections to the region, enables the consideration of various factors in combination of poverty, pollution, informal housing, etc.

In reflection of such approaches, projects are developed based on a pool of experts and consultants with different expertise; moreover, the multi-sectoral approach is used as a common methodology for urban sustainable development programmes. As an example, a project on urban low carbon roadmap addressed four sectors – housing, water and sanitation, transport and waste – using a package of instruments comprising fiscal, technological, normative and economic tools.

ESCAP: Disaster Risk Reduction and Information and Communication Technology

The Committee on ICT has been an agenda-setting forum to assess the state of ICT within the context of sustainable development, identify regional perspectives and priorities and decide on concerted actions in response to imperatives posed by global and regional challenges. ESCAP's Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD) plays a role in providing the regional perspective to the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, an initiative aimed at improving the availability, international comparability and quality of ICT statistics, including defining a core list of ICT indicators.

ESCAP's working paper entitled "Who is vulnerable during tsunamis? Experiences from the Great East Japan Earthquake 2011 and the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004" examined the mortality and people's behaviour in the case of tsunami in various countries of the region, reaching the conclusion which emphasizes the importance of having a global standardized methodology to collect data in pre- and post-disaster contexts.

3.3.2 Normative

ECE: Education for Sustainable Development

The ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was adopted by ECE ministers, vice-ministers and other representatives of environment and education ministries in Vilnius, in 2005. The UNECE recognizes that "education is a key agent for change towards sustainable development, by building the capacity to make informed judgments and choices in favour of sustainable development" (ESCAP 2007b, iii). The lack of opportunities to question life-style choices, and the underlying social structures that produce these choices are targeted by the ECE's ESD Strategy, which sets out concrete measures of re-orienting education towards sustainable development (ECE 2012e, 6). The ESD Strategy sits at the nexus between environmental sustainability and social policy, promoting an education that involves providing guidance and leadership in formal and informal learning through enhancement in the

⁸⁰ Urban regions refer to territorial areas of cities converging within 100 km distance of each other.

competences of educators, leaders and decision makers at all levels of education. Based on this, ECE has continued to foster and expand the programme on ESD Strategy.

In 2007, at the Sixth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference the ministers committed to improving the ECE Strategy for ESD, noting that the Strategy remained a unique example of regional implementation of ESD. In 2008, the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development requested the establishment of an expert group, focused on competences in ESD (ECE 2008, para 27) which would provide recommendations to policy-makers on how to develop competences and how to integrate ESD into relevant policies and a range of core competences for ESD educators. The Expert Group’s report, *Learning for the Future: Competences in Education for Sustainable Development*, set out general recommendations and a range of core competences in ESD for educators. The set of core competences are categorized into four clusters: 1) understanding the challenges facing society both locally and globally, and the potential role of educators and learners; 2) having the ability to develop practical skills and action competence in relation to education for sustainable development; 3) contributing to the development of partnerships and an appreciation of interdependence, pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; and 4) having personal attributes and the ability to act with greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility in relation to sustainable development (ECE 2012g, 13). More recently, the Expert Group have developed a tool-kit to facilitate subregional workshops on competences in ESD (ECE 2013, para 8).

The ECE Strategy for ESD is the regional implementation pillar of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The UNECE Strategy for ESD and the UNESCO International Implementation Scheme for the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) put forward a wide range of topics which serve as potential avenues for sustainable development to be integrated in national curricula.⁸¹ ECE works with UNESCO to jointly compile a collection of good practices in ESD in the UNECE region.

ECE: Water Convention

ECE’s Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) represents a regional example to integrate environmental concerns (increasing water stress) in a transboundary context thus influencing the peaceful cooperation and co-existence of different countries, peoples and cultures. The Convention, with its holistic approach, acknowledges water resources’ integral role not only in the ecosystems but also in human societies and economies. Such an integrative basis allows the scope of objectives to expand and cover a broader range of environmental impacts on human health, and socio-economic conditions.

The principles and provisions of this Convention, including the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle (ECE 2009), have furthermore provided the basis to several bilateral or multilateral agreements between European countries. An example is the Danube River Protection Convention in 1994, which develops the Convention’s provisions in a more specific subregional context. Other examples are the agreements on the rivers Bug, Meuse, Rhine and Scheldt, on Lake Peipsi, as well as on Kazakh-Russian and Russian-Ukrainian transboundary waters. The most recent examples include the 1999 Rhine Convention and the European Union’s Water Framework Directive. ECE has also contributed to the development and materialization of the Convention’s general principles and requirements leading to the adoption of the Protocol on Water and Health, in 1999, and the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters, in 2003.

Initially negotiated as a regional instrument, the ECE Water Convention was amended in 2003 allowing accession by all UN Member States. The amendments entered into force on 6 February 2013, turning the Convention into a global legal framework for transboundary water cooperation. It is expected that non-ECE countries will be able to join the Convention at the end of 2013.

⁸¹ The range of topics cover the following: peace studies; ethics and philosophy; citizenship, democracy and governance; human rights; poverty alleviation; cultural diversity; biological and landscape diversity; environmental protection; ecological principles and an ecosystem approach; natural resource management; climate change; personal and family health (e.g., HIV/AIDS, drug abuse); environmental health (e.g., food; water quality; pollution); corporate social responsibility; indigenous knowledge; production and/or consumption patterns; economics; rural/urban development, environmental technology; and sustainability assessment.

Box 3.15 Education for sustainable development, the regional consultation meetings

The Rio+20 conference outcome document includes the countries' resolve to "promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNCED 2012, para 233)". Towards this end, regional consultation meetings are held, each reflecting on the challenges and successes of the UN Decade for ESD to formulate future priority action areas. Such collected views inform the drafting of post-Decade programme framework by UNESCO, the lead agency for the UN Decade of ESD, which is subsequently transmitted to the UN General Assembly.

A key strength of the Convention lies in the fact that the Water Convention is part of a larger environmental legal framework set up in the ECE region to address the most important issues of transboundary cooperation. Together with other environmental conventions and protocols on air pollution,⁸² industrial accidents,⁸³ environmental impact assessment,⁸⁴ and access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice,⁸⁵ the environmental legal framework of UNECE is reinforced as the different Conventions and protocols provide rich experience and knowledge in maintaining and fortifying the legal mechanisms. Similarly, the partnerships with numerous international and non-governmental organizations that foster transboundary water cooperation play a key role in increasing the relevance of the Convention. For example, the International Water Assessment Centre – the Convention's collaborative centre based in Bratislava – is an important operational asset. Other success factors identified by ECE include the Convention's delivery of authoritative expertise and advice on strategic and technical issues, its evolving nature according to the changes observed through the monitoring of the implemented work, assistance through projects, workshops, seminars, capacity-building exercises, etc., and the Convention's contribution to conflict prevention and promotion of security and cooperation (ECE 2009). Lastly, the various services provided by ECE, the permanent secretariat, are also significant attributes. ECE facilitates exchange of knowledge, elaborates on guidelines, develops legally binding protocols, and carries out capacity building activities (ECE 2012f), which altogether comprehensively support the works of the Parties and the subsidiary bodies.

ESCAP: Disaster Risk Reduction and ICT

ESCAP's Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD) conducts research and analysis on opportunities and challenges related to ICT for socio-economic development. Particular emphasis is lent to reducing the digital divide in the Asia-Pacific region and to increase opportunities for the poor and the vulnerable groups by enhancing ICT infrastructure and by reducing broadband costs for increased Internet penetration. While the ICT topics in this regard include ICT infrastructure, e-governance, ICT statistics, and the fixed and mobile broadband connectivity, the Division's work also involves research and analysis on social media for development and disaster risk reduction.

ECLAC: Democracy and Sustainable Development

ECLAC's Sustainable Development Unit serves as Secretariat to the Declaration on Application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this capacity, ECLAC is committed to advancing implementation of regional instruments. The arrangement has led to an agreement on a roadmap for the formulation of an instrument on the application of Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a consensus was reached in the text that information is the cornerstone of all free and democratic societies. Furthermore, agreement on taking active measures to bring environmental information into the public domain, doing everything possible to guarantee ready, rapid, effective and practical access to that information was made. This also recognized the importance of promoting participation in all sectors of society in furthering the issues that form the region's environmental agenda.

⁸² Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979).

⁸³ Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (1992).

⁸⁴ Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991).

⁸⁵ Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (1998).

Box 3.16 Inclusive sustainable development: Overcoming gender inequality and promoting wide participation in environmental matters

UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) offers valuable entry points for gender issues to be heard; as an environmental framework, based on the notion of participation, it provides avenues for the involvement of women and environmental NGOs in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements by setting out minimum requirements for public participation in various categories of environmental decision-making (ECE 2012c, 22-23).

The Sustainable Division and Human Settlement Division is undertaking research and supporting regional processes in environmental democracy and Principle 10 pursuant to resolution 648 (XXXIII) on the programme of work of ECLAC (2012-2013) and in its capacity as technical secretariat of the Declaration on the application of principle 10, as requested by the signatory countries (A/CONF.216/13).⁸⁶

At the Second meeting of the focal points appointed by the Government of the signatory countries of the “Declaration on the application of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in LAC”, countries adopted the Plan of Action to 2014.⁸⁷ As part of the Plan of Action to 2014, signatory countries agreed on the rules of procedures governing the participation of the public interested in the process as well as ECLAC responsibilities as technical secretariat of the Declaration. The plan of action also included the creation of two working groups on 1) capacity building and cooperation, and 2) access rights and the regional instrument. As technical secretariat, ECLAC will support the work of these groups. Both the first and second meetings included the participation of signatory countries (focal points mainly from Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Environment), observer countries, international and Latin American and Caribbean experts in matters relating to access rights, representatives from civil society as well as from United Nations bodies and other multilateral organizations.⁸⁸ Such inclusive participation for the meetings was in alignment with bringing a broad spectrum of voices to the table.

3.3.3 Capacity Building***ECE: Gender Statistics***

By providing training materials and capacity-building workshops, the ECE assists national statistical offices in developing survey modules on gender-sensitive indicators and in producing sex-disaggregated data (ECE 2012c, 12). To this end, ECE has collaborated with the World Bank Institute, producing a number of online training videos and has provided training to national statistical offices in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Furthermore, ECE’s manual, *Developing Gender Statistics: A practical tool* offers further guidance to statistical institutes in the production and use of gender statistics. The tool provides gender-sensitive data on demographic and social developments and the factors that influence these developments through the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) in exploring various gender and generational relationships.

ECLAC: Human Settlements

The SDHSD provides countries in the region with capacity building through a series of e-learning courses and seminars. These activities are aimed at decision-makers and people in charge of the design and implementation of public policy for human settlements and sustainable urban development both at a national and subnational level.

In addition to taking an approach that merges environment protection and social inclusion, the SDHSD also highlights the importance of urban economies in their regional context. Topics covered include, but are not limited to, eco-efficiency,

⁸⁶ Declaration on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (A/CONF.216/13), July 2012.

⁸⁷ Plan of Action to 2014 for the implementation of the Declaration on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and its Road Map. Guadalajara, Mexico, April 17, 2013.

⁸⁸ Report of the first meeting of the focal points appointed by the Governments of the signatory countries of the Declaration on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.3565), January 2013.

sustainable urban infrastructure, buildings, land use planning, stakeholder engagement, and low carbon urban development. The social aspects being addressed include upgrading basic services, ensuring access and improvement to employment, and protecting and upholding the rights to housing, quality of life, and equality.

The ECLAC SDHSD provides technical assistance to MINURVI (Minister and Highest Authorities for Housing and Urban), which is the entity that coordinates intergovernmental cooperation among Latin American and Caribbean countries in the area of sustainable development of human settlements. It is comprised of ministers of State and other governmental authorities, who have responsibility for matters relating to sustainable development of human settlements in their respective countries. The training includes land use planning, conducting evaluation of sectoral policies in order to harmonize them, assessing population mobility and location.

ESCAP: Disaster Risk Reduction and ICT

Regional Advisory Services in Disaster Risk Reduction of ESCAP contributed to: Advise Governments on policies, strategies and programmes for disaster risk reduction in the context of the Hyogo Framework of Action (2005-2015); build national capacity, through conducting training and other group activities for policy makers and government officials, for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into sectoral development planning, effective use of ICT and space application for disaster response and risk assessment, post-disaster need and damage assessment and recovery planning, as well as developing an integrated approach for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; facilitate dialogue and collaboration among member States and relevant regional and subregional institutions to promote regional and subregional cooperation on disaster risk reduction. The overall approach of the Regional Advisory Services is to connect the dots and fill the gaps by networking the national initiatives and programmes with the regional systems. The strategy has been quite successful, for example, in the cases of Afghanistan and Mongolia, by integrating national early warning systems to regional systems, such as Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) to address the capacity gaps. Similarly, Pacific island countries – Palau, Tuvalu, Fiji

and Papua New Guinea were linked to ESCAP's *Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific* (RESAP) education and training networks. However, in some cases, for example Nepal, the contextual needs were related to risk governance issues at local level, for which South-South cooperation strategy was used to address the needs.

ESCAP administers the Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Management and Development, an online knowledge platform for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into national development processes. The Gateway provides information and knowledge products to build the capacity of government ministries, civil society, international organizations, and national development planning authorities to integrate DRR principles, concepts and practices into development processes.

ESCWA: Climate Change, Poverty and Socio-Economic Vulnerability

The Arab region currently faces major challenges related to the sustainable management of water resources and the delivery of water services for domestic, agricultural and industrial use. Climate change and climate variability can increase the risks and the costs of water resources management, impact the quantity and quality of water resources, and generate secondary effects that influence socio-economic vulnerability and environmental sustainability. A clear understanding of these risks and impacts is necessary to inform policy formulation and decision-making in support of efforts to achieve sustainable development in the Arab region.

In this context, ESCWA is leading work on the *Regional Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region* (RICCAR).⁸⁹ Two regional workshops were held as part of the capacity-building and institutional strengthening pillars of the project. The first, *Climate Change Prediction/Projection and Extreme Events Indices in the Arab Region* (Casablanca, 13-16 March 2012) provided national meteorological offices in Arab countries with hands-on computer-based training on climate data management software, climate indices and climate modelling tools and was implemented with the World Meteorology Organization (WMO) and the Moroccan Direction de la Météorologie Nationale.

⁸⁹ See <http://www.escwa.un.org/RICCAR/ri.asp?ReferenceNum=RI>

The second, *Regional Climate Model Applications and Analysis* (Beirut, 2-4 July 2012) provided a forum for the exchange of experience and the review of the process of establishing the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX) domain for the Arab region. ESCWA has also published a guidance document to support the initiative entitled *Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-economic Vulnerability in the Arab region: A Methodological Framework for Pursuing an Integrated Assessment*.⁹⁰

Related to the RICCAR, ESCWA will also lead the project on *Developing the Capacity of Arab Countries for Climate-Change Adaptation by Applying Integrated Water Resources Management Tools*. It will build on the findings of the RICCAR impact assessment and propose integrated water resource management tools for Arab Governments. It will also assess the impact of climate change on water resources and sustainable development in the Arab region through the use of regional climate modelling, hydrological modelling and vulnerability assessment tools. This includes establishing an Arab Domain for framing regional climate modelling applications, which was accepted by the CORDEX, with the support of the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and partners under the RICCAR project.

In addition, and in cooperation with other United Nations entities, ESCWA has undertaken work on *Capacity-Building on Climate Change Mitigation for Poverty Alleviation in Western Asia*.⁹¹ The activities aim to build the capacity of concerned policymakers, planners, executives and representatives of civil society and the private sector to enhance energy security and improve access to energy services in rural areas based on renewable energy technologies. Activities include the following: a training workshop on *Scaling Up the Use of Renewable Energy in Rural Areas in ESCWA Member Countries* (Beirut, 1-2 February 2012), in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Office in Cairo and the Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE); the *Arab Forum on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: Building Financing Partnerships* (Cairo, 23-24 April 2012), in cooperation

with the League of Arab States, the European Union and RCREEE; and a regional workshop on *Enhancing South-South Cooperation and Public-Private Partnerships in Renewable Energy Projects for Rural Development* (Beirut, 27 November 2012), in collaboration with ALMEE.

ESCWA: Sustainable Resource Management in Conflict-Affected Areas

As the incidence of water scarcity and droughts increases in frequency and intensity due to climate change, there are severe adverse implications for sustainable development, in particular for countries and regions in transition settings, such as in the Arab region. Impacts include decreased agricultural production and increased food insecurity, famine, and loss of human life. These issues not only affect human livelihood and hinder sustainable development but also obstruct peace building efforts as well as carrying the risk of invoking repeated violent conflicts. Further, current responses to water scarcity and drought in countries in transitional settings tend towards reactive government and international “emergency responses,” often without incorporating methods that support conflict prevention and peace building strategies. To this end, drought planning, monitoring and implementation in water scarce and transitional countries can be significantly enhanced through shifting drought response from reactive emergency responses to proactive, sustainable, preventative solutions that incorporate measures to support conflict prevention and peace building.

Drought has become a more frequent and major threat to human security in most of the Arab countries in transitional settings that are located in arid and semi-arid areas of North Africa and West Asia where rainfall is low and its distribution is very variable, especially during the last three decades in the region. This area is also host to various local, national and international conflicts and violence. The responses to severe drought in the region’s countries are ex-post (reactive) and tend to emphasize the emergency relief, take effect after or during drought events and do not incorporate methods that support water conflict prevention.

⁹⁰ ESCWA (2011) *Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-economic Vulnerability in the Arab region: A Methodological Framework for Pursuing an Integrated Assessment*, available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/E_ESCWA_SDPD_11_1_e.pdf

⁹¹ ESCWA (2012) *Project Brief: Climate Change Mitigation for Poverty Alleviation in the Arab region*, available at: <http://css.escwa.org.lb/pptcd/ProjectBriefs/11.pdf>

In response, ESCWA is supporting the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on *Strengthening National Capacity of Conflict-Affected Countries to manage Water Scarcity and Drought*. The project's main objective is to strengthen the capacities of national planners, policy makers and stake-holders in water-scarce countries in transition settings in West Asia/North Africa to enhance their effectiveness in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of conflict-sensitive ex-ante (proactive) drought management strategies. These will contribute to building resilience and preparedness as well as reduce the risk, mitigate the severity, and speed up the response to severe droughts by reducing water scarcity and competition in addition to preventing water conflict.

The project responds to a call for urgent action from the Rio+20 Conference on taking effective measures to deal with drought and water scarcity as well as developing disaster risk reduction and community resilience. The project will employ means such as technology transfer, capacity building, regional support initiatives and extension training programmes to address these areas. Further, this project will serve to forward the Secretary General's Five-Year Action Agenda as announced in January 2012, which highlights support for countries in transition as one of the top five priorities for the next five years.

3.3.4 Assessment

ESCWA: Access to Water Supply and Sanitation and Inventory of Shared Water Resources

In response to the call of the Arab Ministerial Water Council to establish a regional mechanism to provide more specific information on access to water supply and sanitation based on local conditions and constraints, the League of Arab States, ESCWA and the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association, with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), are undertaking an initiative to institutionalize a regional mechanism for monitoring and reporting on access to water supply and sanitation services in the Arab region called the MDG+ Initiative.

Through a joint technical cooperation project, ESCWA and the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) developed the *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia* which will be officially launched at the Stockholm World Water Week in September 2013. The Inventory is the first effort led by the United Nations to comprehensively assess all rivers and groundwater resources shared between and by Arab countries in Western Asia. It follows a standardized structure, with nine surface water chapters and 17 groundwater chapters that systematically address hydrology, hydrogeology, water resources development and use, international water agreements and transboundary water management efforts. By providing an up-to-date view of the state and evolution of shared water resources in Western Asia, the Inventory makes an important contribution to the regional debate surrounding shared water resources as well as to further discussion and analysis at the basin level. It targets a wide audience of experts from water, environment and other sectors, including decision-makers, government representatives, academia, donors, specialized agencies, international and non-governmental or civil society organizations.

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter's objective and purpose was to provide an overview of the various strategies adopted by the Regional Commissions in the pursuit of sustainable development, including the four elements of international cooperation; technical, normative, capacity-building and assessment.

While the focus of this chapter is to highlight programmes that have integrated two dimensions of sustainable development, it is acknowledged that some of these succeeded in integrating all three dimensions as is required for sustainable development. Key conclusions from this chapter include:

- The analytical and technical demands have increased exponentially with the emergence of new normative concepts requiring deeper analyses of the technical foundations of these concepts. Regional analyses can help identify the potential winners, prepare the ground for a richer global analysis, and guide analytical efforts at national level.
- The regional dimension is relevant on substantive as well as procedural grounds, making Regional Commissions act as the key facilitator of norm-setting and intergovernmental negotiation on norms. On the one hand, there is now a large potential and demand for the development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements; and on the other hand, there is a greater need for regional processes to feed into the difficult global negotiations that lie ahead.
- Capacity building needs in developing countries have become ever more complex, and there is a call for more efficient and effective approaches. The landscape of capacity building is highly diverse, including those carried out by bilateral aid programmes, UN Agencies, global and regional Multilateral Development Banks, international NGOs, funds, treaty secretariats, specialized agencies, and Regional Commissions.
- The regional contribution has always been seen as a complement to these institutions, focusing on addressing unique goals (e.g., for regional integration), unique challenges and unique priorities (e.g., ICTs) within a region (e.g., on energy and water).
- Regional forums and ministerial conferences effectively provide an opportunity for new norm setting to address region-specific challenges (e.g., green growth approach of ESCAP) and thorough and large-scale policy relevant assessments. Some regional bodies have begun to experiment with innovative mechanisms such as peer review, regional reports (e.g., on human development), and others.

Building on these strategies and work programmes adopted by the individual regions, the following chapter will highlight further areas and strengths which the Regional Commissions can draw upon with a view to facilitating sustainable development in their respective regions.

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CHAPTER 4

Regional Commissions for Sustainable Development: The Way Forward

The Rio+20 Conference reaffirmed the important role of the Regional Commissions, among other regional institutions, in promoting a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The outcome document of the Conference reaffirmed the mandate of the Regional Commissions to “support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development” (UNCED 2012, para 68). To this end, it called for further extension of the much-acknowledged regional actions for promoting

sustainable development (UNCED 2012, para 185), and recommended the prioritization of sustainable development by regional and subregional organizations, in particular to 1) promote more efficient and effective capacity building; 2) develop and implement regional agreements and arrangements as appropriate; and 3) facilitate exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learnt (UNCED 2012, para 100).

4.1 Potentials of Regional Commissions for Promoting Sustainable Development

As the preceding three chapters have attempted to demonstrate, the nature of the challenges lying ahead of the Regional Commissions is similar in scope and depth. While the different and multi-faceted approaches taken by the individual Commissions reflect their position in a unique socio-economic, political and cultural matrix, all Regional Commissions have successfully devised various programmes targeting the interlinkages between different dimensions of sustainable development. As presented in Chapter 3, selected examples of such programmes include gender and entrepreneurship, inclusivity and trade, green and paperless trade, economic benefits from environmental quality, poverty and socio-economic vulnerability, sustainable resource management in conflict-affected areas, ageing and development, green growth/green economy, disaster risk reduction and ICT, democracy and sustainable development, foreign direct investment and

sustainable development, climate change and fiscal policy, and so on.

Aside from what is observed of the Regional Commission's role within the context of sustainable development, they (the Regional Commissions) have unique attributes in the UN system. They give a voice to regional perspectives and concerns, provide a deeper understanding of regional socio-economic problems and their historical contexts, and can help counterbalance the risks from top-down and universal analyses.⁹² Given their unique situation, the Regional Commissions have come to embrace cooperation between regions, countries, institutions, and groups, as well as between ideas, approaches and practices – as an important feature of their activities and a comparative advantage for Regional Commissions in addressing the complexities and intricacies of sustainable development.

⁹² Berthelot, Yves, Editor (2004) *Unity and Diversity of Development Ideas: Perspectives from the UN Regional Commissions*. United Nations Intellectual History Project Series. Indiana University Press.

Forging Partnerships and Creating Mechanisms for Cooperation

The Regional Commissions are placed on an intermediate geographical scale, connecting the global with the national as well as local levels. They operate in a dynamic context, responding to the forces of both globalization and regionalism. With regard to their roles as drivers and promoters of regional solutions, the Regional Commissions effectively work to bridge the gaps between national interests in order to formulate common goals and priorities in their respective regions. On a more global level, Regional Commissions effectively support the reshaping of regional actions in support of global norms, policies and programmes. As such, they have extensive experience of incorporating and accommodating diverging views. Furthermore, the Regional Commissions have played an instrumental part in helping create and support each other as well as other independent regional institutions, thus strengthening south-south cooperation, triangular cooperation and development even further.

To fulfil their mandate in promoting sustainable development, Regional Commissions' capacity for effective and sustained engagement with civil society in their legislative processes, operational work and as a regional platform for global processes on sustainable development requires further investment and support. The General Assembly has invited Regional Commissions to convene annual preparatory meetings for the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development, engaging major groups and other stakeholders.⁹³ Regional Commissions are well-placed to respond to calls from civil society for closer engagement with the UN system at the regional level.

Providing a Regional Platform for Developing Dialogue and Cooperation

The regional platforms hosted by the Regional Commissions are distinguished in a number of ways. First, membership of the Regional Commissions is thoroughly comprehensive and member states are represented equally in all activities. Moreover, Regional Commissions are often the only pan-regional development entities in their respective regions. With such comprehensive membership under Regional Commissions, a unique regional forum with convening authority is established.

Second, the Regional Commissions support regional intergovernmental processes among nation-states, promote inter-agency cooperation and conduct joint efforts with other regional organizations.

Third, not only do secretariats of the Regional Commissions develop and implement various initiatives, but member States also initiate regional cooperation and collective action. The technical cooperation projects have spinoff effects to catalyse discussion, promoting greater understanding of various national positions, as well as the sharing of best practices and information.

The Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) is also an important component of the Regional Commissions. RPTC builds on normative and analytical work and feeds into intergovernmental dialogue. Emerging needs are brought to the attention of Regional Commissions to give necessary technical assistance. Via RPTC, Regional Commissions provide advisory services, training courses, and knowledge networking.

The Operational Mechanism and Wealth of Knowledge

The Regional Commissions are unique bodies that have the capacity to actively support and project a global vision of sustainable development by coordinating and shaping these efforts at a distinctly regional level. The multisectoral constituency of the Regional Commissions allows for inclusivity. Each regional commission houses a diverse array of substantive divisions; the organizational structure of regional commission is expansive yet detailed, and tailored to each region's particular needs. The diversity of substantive divisions working in a common geographical area often necessitates collaborative work across divisions. Such a composition differentiates Regional Commissions from other UN bodies such as the specialized agencies that are mandated to work on a designated issue.

Nonetheless, in certain activities typically specialized agency functions have also been assumed. For example, in the area of transport, ECE has been mandated to service the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and

⁹³ United Nations General Assembly 67/290 Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

Labelling of Chemicals as well as its two Sub-Committees: the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods; and the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. ECE was also mandated to service the United Nations Conference on Road Traffic which resulted in the so called Vienna Conventions (Convention on Road Traffic and Convention on Road Signs and Signals) and which are the key road safety conventions serviced ever since by the Working Party on Road Safety of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC). With its history of more than 70 years, ITC is a unique inter-governmental body specialized in inland transport. It is the custodian of 58 legal instruments, most of which are global in nature.

From among its 17 working parties, the World Forum for Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations ensures that a globalized automotive industry can benefit from global regulations to improve vehicle safety and environmental performance without facing regulatory protectionism on a regional level. On the other hand a number of transport conventions and agreements started as a regional solution and have been expanding thanks to their relevance for other countries and to the benefits from the economies of scale in terms of wider application, such as the International Convention on the Harmonisation of Frontier Controls of Goods, the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) etc.

4.2 Learning Alliance for Concerted Regional Strategies

The norms, standards, conventions, networks and protocols that have been initiated by the Regional Commissions have had reverberating effects. In some cases such initiatives expanded beyond the geographical scope of the commission; for example, 1949 ECLAC (then ECLA) *Economic and Social Survey of Latin America* presented the “import-substitution strategy” as a new developing strategy to address the trade asymmetry between developing and developed countries, which was adopted by most developing countries in the early stage of industrialization. Another example is ESCAP’s call for population control, which led to the creation of UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and green growth approach, which became an underpinning idea at national, regional and global levels for devising practical policies and programmes for pursuing sustainable development. Similarly, numerous ECE conventions became global – such as the Convention on the Transport of Dangerous Goods or the UNECE Water Convention. ECA’s retaliation against structural adjustment policies in 1980s inspired the Program of Action for Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAERD, 1986-1990) and the New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF, 1991-2002), besides contributing to the UN’s views on structural adjustment programmes.⁹⁴

These examples epitomize and further highlight the Regional Commissions’ unique role in bringing the experience and perspectives from the ground to bear upon global goals and policies, in the process creating different frameworks of cooperation and carving out

a distinct niche at the global level. As such, Regional Commissions are more than suitable vehicles for the vigorous exploration of inter-linkages between conventionally separate fields towards sustainable development. In this connection, it is necessary to further clarify the options available to the Regional Commissions, individually as well as jointly, to move forward and realize the potentials of Regional Commissions for advancing sustainable development. In this regard, the logic of this chapter imitates the vision of *The Future We Want*. It asks three questions:

- How the “much-acknowledged” regional actions can be extended?
- How the Commissions could further prioritize sustainable development in their work programmes, especially those pertaining to capacity building, normative (regional agreements), and technical analysis (information exchange, best practices, and lessons learned), as well as assessment of performance?
- How the organizational structures and cooperative arrangements could be strengthened to deliver on the first two challenges?

In other words, how to build on strengths, address the gaps, and act as a team. The likelihood of success is increased by three factors: (a) building on the core strengths; (b) utilizing this opportunity to identify and

⁹⁴ Berthelot, op.cit., pp 31-45.

address the weaknesses in their contribution; and (c) collaborating formally and informally with each other as well as with other relevant entities, including other UN system entities, political forums, as well as civil society, the private sector, and academia.

In order to explicate the “how” questions, this section provides a conceptual framework for developing a coherent regional strategy for the achievement of sustainable development objectives, including the three main elements of the post-Rio+20 agenda, namely: (a) enhancing the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development at national and regional levels; (b) advancing the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (c) implementing goals and policies of thematic and cross-sectional areas. To motivate the discussion of strategic change, the Section reviews the role and experience of the Regional Commissions from the perspective of a learning organization.⁹⁵

The Regional Commissions have, through the years, played the role of learning organizations. They have been both critical and constructive in shaping the international framework for economic and social development. Over time, they have broadened the scope of their purview from economic factors alone to economic and social factors, and more recently, to economic, social, and environmental factors. At the same time, they have increased their engagement beyond governments to include non-government entities, including civil society, business, and media and financial institutions. They have championed key innovations and key sectoral strategies. And they have adapted their internal structures and programmes to emerging realities. Today, sustainable development figures prominently in the mission statements of all the Regional Commissions, their programmes of work, and their organizational structures. New administrative divisions have been created or old ones modified to handle the overall responsibilities, and references have been incorporated in the mandates of the other Divisions as well.

However, there is a question how Regional Commissions can further accelerate the speed of their learning responses in order to match the speed of the emerging challenges, and to supplement and even lead the responses of other partner entities.

For the fact is that the Regional Commissions are not alone in this quest; all UN system entities are engaged in searching for ways to enhance their contribution to sustainable development. This is both an opportunity and a challenge. It is an opportunity because it provides an added potential for exploring synergies. Going beyond the learning challenge, the commissions are exploring what could be called a combination of individual and collective strategy, namely a strategy for each commission but also a strategy for the commissions as a group.

The Learning Commission

Accelerating the speed of Regional Commissions’ learning responses to changing development contexts necessitate them to become more proactive “learning commission”, which would take a systems view of its own core strengths and remaining weaknesses. These strengths have been detailed in the earlier chapters, and include the fact that (a) the Regional Commissions operate at an optimal intermediate scale between the global level, and the national and local levels; (b) their UN status endows them with universality of membership, greater legitimacy (compared to other regional entities), and easier access to the forums for global policy making and assessments; and (c) their relationships with regional political groupings, often more influential vis a vis their member States, provides them with means of converting normative principles into operational policies.

Besides these formal attributes, a systems view would use the perspective of “what has worked”. In other words, what innovative contributions of the Regional Commissions to the sustainable development agenda provide a basis for future action as well as potential models for others to emulate. As mentioned, Regional Commissions have sought to introduce structural changes in their work programmes and operational arrangements, including inter-commission cooperative arrangements. In addition, they have also experimented with a number of innovative practices and ideas in each of the four areas of UN system contribution – normative, operational, technical, and assessment.

⁹⁵ The term “learning organization” was coined by Peter Senge and his colleagues (see Senge 1990, Senge et al 1994, Senge et al 1999) to describe an organization “that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself”, inter alia through (a) systems thinking; (b) individual commitment to learning; (c) mental models; (d) shared vision; and (e) team learning.

Individual Commitment to Learning and Incorporating Sustainable Development

The next questions are how the commissions as a group could benefit from and build upon individual learning, and how can the Regional Commissions further prioritize sustainable development in their work programmes and agendas? How could they contribute most effectively to the development agenda that is taking shape in the light of both the emerging challenges (climate change, planetary boundaries, energy and food insecurity, recurrent economic and social crises, persistent poverty, rising inequality, and widening social unrest), as well as the landmark agreements that are aimed at addressing these challenges (especially Rio+20, Sustainable Energy for All, and the post-2015 agenda)?

At this point, this kind of leveraging of positive experiences happens informally and bilaterally. The review in the Chapter 3 on the efforts of the different commissions to integrate and mainstream sustainable development into their programmes and activities brings out a number of highlights including the Regional Commissions as the innovating entity, in particular. All commissions have taken great efforts to incorporate sustainable development perspectives into their work programmes and operations.

The commissions have tried to institute a commitment to learning among its team members and component programmes. This commitment to learning is visible in the incorporation of new elements into the work of traditional Divisions and programmes. The individual commitment to sustainable development is also visible in several innovative analytical contributions of the different commissions. And all commissions have introduced innovations in capacity building work, which complement the activities of other, technical, or country-based organizations. However, there is still a serious work to harness the experience of the commissions in mobilizing technical experts in key sectors to leverage upwards to build a stronger regional foundation for advancing sustainable development. Also, strengthening Regional Commissions' responses to new calls made in the course of the Rio+20 and Post-2015 requires a more formally structured mechanism to facilitate a broader dissemination of such learning.

Operationalization of the Idea of Sustainable Development

As shown in Chapter 3, Regional Commissions have gravitated towards the concept of sustainable development. However, there is a need to further strengthen the following key elements related to the operationalization of the idea of sustainable development:

- *Normative:* Legislative organs (not only those specifically mandated to oversee sustainable development, but also others, e.g., for trade, finance, human rights, or security) should resolve trade-offs, exploit synergies, and facilitate an integrated and balanced pursuit of all three dimensions of sustainable development.
- *Operational:* Executive entities (again, all entities, including, e.g., those responsible for energy, industry, urban development, agriculture, or labour) to mainstream the three dimensions of sustainable development in their work programmes and outcomes.
- *Technical:* Institutions responsible for analytical work (UN system organizations, research institutions, and think tanks) to provide guidance through conceptual and empirical analyses and compilation of case studies.
- *Assessment:* High-level bodies responsible for assessing progress to incorporate all three dimensions in their reviews.

Furthermore, while the Regional Commissions cover almost all the critical elements of sustainable development, more work is needed on the integration and convergence of these aspects in all three dimensions. For example, the main entities responsible for supporting the implementation of sustainable development decisions, including Agenda 21, JPOI, and The Future We Want, are either designated as environmental entities (i.e., responsible mainly for one of the three traditional pillars of sustainable development) or as the hosts of more than one agenda, including sustainable development.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ ECA had also the similar arrangement by having the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division. The major restructuring of ECA's work programme early 2013 abolished the division and transferred its functions to existing and new divisions including the Regional Integration and Trade Division (food security, agriculture and land) and the Special Initiative Division (natural resources management).

- ECE: Development Policies and Cross-Sectoral Coordination Unit (DPCCU)
- ECLAC: Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division (SDHSD)
- ESCAP: Environment and Development Division (EDD)
- ESCWA: Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD)

It is now widely recognized that the sustainable development refers not to any one of its three dimensions, but to the objective of enhancing synergy and convergence between the dimensions in all sectors and all aspects of the work of national and international bodies. Thus, the ideal secretarial organization would recognize this challenge and address it through its work programme and organizational structure.

In this regard, Regional Commissions have created cross-sectoral or inter-divisional mechanisms for coordinating programmes across the three dimensions of sustainable development and promoting more integrative approaches to simultaneously address to two or three dimensions. However, there is a great need for continuing review of the work programme and organizational structure of the Regional Commissions in the context of global processes with regard to post-Rio+20 and development agenda beyond 2015. Responding to the new development agenda and the expected roles, Regional Commissions may require secretarial unit dedicated to mainstreaming, inter-departmental coordination, and monitoring of progress towards mainstreaming rather than addressing one or more sectoral issues.

The Learning Alliance

Review of roles and programmes of the Regional Commissions presents the evidence of highly innovative and forward-looking programmes, the internalization of sustainable development in myriad activities of the five commissions, evidence of individual commitment to learning in all the organizations, and the gradual inching towards integrative approaches to sustainable development. It is also the case that more could be done to ensure that each of these successes gets disseminated more widely. The opportunities for strengthening learning organizations and building an effective and meaningful alliance may be addressed through a common set of actions at the inter-commission level. These include assuring that work programmes and organizational structures incorporate the key elements (normative, operational, technical and assessment) related to the operationalization of the idea of sustainable development; building joint strategies and programmes for learning lessons from each other; and supporting the lead role of different commissions in different areas and harnessing benefits from the leading commission through inter-regional platforms.

4.3 Conclusions

“The Future We Want”, the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference identified the Regional Commissions, among other regional institutions, as having a significant role in promoting a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and reiterated their mandate to “support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development”. It went on to call for the further extension of the much-acknowledged regional actions promoting sustainable development. The potential of Regional Commissions to actively promote and drive sustainable development is unique within the UN system in that the commissions give a voice to those concerned with regional perspectives, providing a deeper understanding of regional socio-economic problems and their historical contexts.

This chapter has highlighted the need to forge partnerships and create mechanisms for cooperation; throughout the various examples and cases elaborated in this report, the Regional Commissions already work to bridge the gaps between national interests and global action in order to formulate new norms, common goals and priorities in their respective regions, and provide various regional platforms for intergovernmental multistakeholder dialogue and cooperation.

The Regional Commissions have also worked towards establishing regional platforms in a number of ways, namely by means of comprehensive membership, supporting regional intergovernmental processes and by encouraging member States to initiate regional cooperation and collective action; drawing on operational mechanisms and a wealth of knowledge, the multi-sectoral approach of the Regional Commissions allow for inclusivity with each commission housing a diverse array of substantive divisions. Thus, the organizational structure of the Regional Commissions is expansive yet detailed and tailored to each region’s particular needs.

While the Regional Commissions integrate many of the critical *elements* of sustainable development, individually as well as jointly, more work will be needed to ensure the integration and convergence of these elements in all three dimensions of sustainable development in the regions. Moreover, this report points out that greater attention should be directed towards successful cases so as to disseminate them across all commissions.

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This report contains thorough analysis of the regional challenges and opportunities of sustainable development. I commend it to all those interested in enhancing long-term well-being for all people and the planet.

Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations



United Nations