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Commission on Sustainable Development
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Report of the regional implementation meeting for Asia and the Pacific

1. The Asian and Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting on Rio+20 Outcomes was held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 April 2013, convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

2. It was attended by more than 170 participants, including representatives of Governments, Major Groups¹ and entities within the United Nations system.

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following ESCAP members: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Turkey; Tuvalu;

¹ Since the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 - the Earth Summit - it was recognized that sustainable development could not be achieved by governments alone. This notion is reflected emphatically in the landmark outcome document of that Summit, "Agenda 21", which formalized this concept by recognizing nine sectors of society as the main channels through which citizens could organize and participate in international efforts to achieve sustainable development through the United Nations. These nine sectors are officially known as "Major Groups" (<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups.html>).

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

4. Representatives of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, the State of Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen attended as observers.

5. Opening statements were made by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Mr. Young Woo Park, Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific of the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and Mr. Daniele Ponzi, ADB Lead Environment Specialist. Mr. Nurlan Kapparov, Minister of Environmental Protection of the Government of Kazakhstan, delivered a message by video. Ms. Kim Lee Choy, United Nations Association of Malaysia, delivered a special address on youth.

6. The meeting elected the following Bureau:

(a) Chair:

Mr. Vannak Chhun (Cambodia)

(b) Vice-Chairs:

Mr. Ahmed Saleem (Maldives)

Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi (Samoa)

Mr. Askar Tazhiyev (Kazakhstan)

(c) Rapporteur:

Mr. Yuba Raj Bhusal (Nepal)

7. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): regional perspectives on global processes:
 - (a) Main outcomes of Rio+20, current state of global processes and implications for Asia and the Pacific;
 - (b) Perspectives from the region on global processes:
 - (i) Institutional framework for sustainable development: global and regional dimensions;
 - (ii) Sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015;
 - (iii) Means of implementation: sustainable development financing and technology development and transfer;
 - (iv) The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.
5. Rio+20 follow-up: national priorities, implementation of regional arrangements, areas for regional collaboration and the role of ESCAP.
6. Other matters.

7. Adoption of the report with Chair's summary.

8. Closing of the meeting.

8. During the three-day meeting, participants discussed the institutional framework for sustainable development, sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015, as well as means of implementation. They presented the perspectives of Governments, Major Groups and the international community on those and other aspects of follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). A side event, entitled "Sustainable Development of Asia-Pacific Small Island Developing States: Oceans of Opportunity", was held on 22 April 2013.

9. The Report of the Asian and Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting on Rio+20 Outcomes was adopted on 24 April 2013.

10. The Chair's summary of the views, experiences, achievements and challenges of countries in the region that had been expressed during the meeting is contained in annex I to the present document; a summary of the above-mentioned side event is contained in annex II.

11. The participants agreed that the present report, including annexes, should be brought to the attention of the global process to develop sustainable development goals and other relevant global processes.

Annex I

Chair's summary

A. Agenda item 4

Main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: regional perspectives on global processes

Sub-item (b) (i)

Institutional framework for sustainable development: global and regional dimensions

1. Under this agenda sub-item, the main themes that emerged from the discussions included the need for coherence and integration, as well as the need for the high-level political forum to add value to existing institutions. The need to respect the Rio Principles,² in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as set out in principle 7 thereof, was stressed, along with stakeholder engagement.

2. The following issues were also raised:

(a) **Functioning of the high-level political forum:** Government delegations reiterated several aspects of the agreed functions of the high-level political forum as had been stated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

² See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

(Rio+20), entitled “The future we want”³, in particular that it should be an inclusive forum that would increase the participation in decision-making processes of developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States. Additionally all States should participate on an equal basis and the high-level political forum should: (i) truly reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development; (ii) build on the lessons learned from the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD); (iii) avoid duplicating the functions of other forums; and (iv) formulate outcomes that were strategic, focused and direction-setting. In addition, the outcomes should not be negotiated; they should provide clear added value in comparison with outcomes of the Economic and Social Council and the CSD. The option of a hybrid model, in which the forum would be incorporated into both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, was highlighted. Recommendations from the major delegations included the following points: the establishment of accountability mechanisms; special rapporteur functions; assigning the high-level political forum with a key role in tracking progress in key sustainable development challenges, such as food security; using multi-stakeholder approaches at every level of governance, including in the high-level political forum; and applying the principle of subsidiarity.⁴ They stressed that

³ See General Assembly resolution 66/288.

⁴ The principle of devolving decisions to the lowest practical level. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines subsidiarity as “the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level”.

the high-level political forum must enable the participation of all States on an equal basis, in particular in decision-making.

(b) The role of the Economic and Social Council: It was proposed that the Economic and Social Council play a leading role as a primary institutional mechanism for sustainable development.

(c) The role of ESCAP: Government representatives identified ESCAP as the appropriate platform for regional efforts pertaining to sustainable development. In that regard, ESCAP should take the lead in ensuring coordination within the United Nations system in order to accelerate regional sustainable development processes. Some of the recommended functions to be undertaken by ESCAP were leading regional preparatory processes for high-level political forum sessions in close collaboration with the UNEP regional office and others; communicating broad policy directions from Rio+20; steering, enabling, connecting, informing, monitoring and evaluation; and scaling up good practices. It was also suggested that ESCAP focus on nexus issues rather than specific sectors and establish mechanisms for sharing information on best practices and lessons learned. The actions of ESCAP should take into consideration the capacity of the secretariat, as well as the capacity of its member States, use existing resources and avoid creating new bureaucratic structures, and engage all stakeholders. It was also emphasized that systematic engagement of regional commissions would support enhanced reporting and accountability mechanisms for implementation. ESCAP and other multilateral organizations should

facilitate the management of shared resources, such as the management of oceans. Delegations of Major Groups requested ESCAP to strengthen its stakeholder engagement. The delegation of UNDP highlighted the important role of the United Nations Resident Coordinators in ensuring United Nations system coordination at the country level, and the role of the United Nations Development Group and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination and other bodies in ensuring United Nations system coordination at the global level, noting the importance of close links between the regional coordinating role of ESCAP and mechanisms for United Nations system coordination at the country and global levels.

Sub-item (b) (ii)

Sustainable development goals and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015

3. Under this agenda sub-item, the most important theme that emerged from the discussion was the need for poverty reduction based on a sustainable and equitable development agenda. The urgency of that agenda was emphasized in the Asia-Pacific region, which despite having experienced rapid economic growth, still accounted for two thirds of the world's poor. The major challenges were related to rising inequality, unemployment and the increasing vulnerability to climate change impacts, including sea level rise and climate-related extreme weather events and natural disasters.

4. Many delegations stressed the need for strengthened global and regional partnerships and recognition of the right to development

and the principle of sovereignty. The application of the Rio Principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, was reiterated. The role of the General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals was generally supported.

5. Issues raised during the discussion included the following:

(a) Relationships between development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals: Government representatives pointed out that the sustainable development goals should serve as an integral part of the agenda beyond 2015, and that there should be one universal framework. Another view indicated was that the sustainable development goals should be constrained to the three pillars of sustainable development without including a fourth dimension related to peace and human security. Civil society participation in sustainable development mechanisms at both the deliberation and implementation stages was also emphasized by some delegations;

(b) Guiding principles and basis for the sustainable development goals: Government representatives made the following recommendations: (i) a truly global set of goals should be developed that would also be flexible and adaptable to country-specific circumstances; (ii) the sustainable development goals should be based on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and (iii) the sustainable development goals should be uncomplicated, practicable, measurable and coherently integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and

environmental – in order to address the gaps between the Millennium Development Goals agenda and sustainable development. Other important guiding principles identified included those provided under Agenda 21,⁵ the Rio Principles (in particular, common but differentiated responsibilities) and other commitments already made in relation to sustainable development. It was emphasized that new conditionalities should not be created. Representatives of the Major Groups shared the views of government delegations and also highlighted principle 10 of the Rio Principles on access to information and participation;

(c) Broad strategies: Government delegations highlighted the need for integrating and balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development; a holistic path; maintaining inclusive development at the core of the framework, including attention to gender and other equality issues, as well as and social and environmental justice; the agenda to remain growth-focused and prioritizing the right to development for developing countries; accountable governance; human security, in recognition of General Assembly resolution 66/290; and engaging with youth as development partners. Delegations also cautioned against creating “a laundry list” of the world’s problems and putting an unbalanced focus on human rights, as that might result in a series of prescriptions for developing countries;

⁵ See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.1.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

(d) Approaches to developing sustainable development goals: Government delegations expressed support for the work of the Open Working Group and recommended that the process be open and participatory, transparent and intergovernmental, as well as based on consensus. The Major Groups highlighted a proposal for engagement through a multi-stakeholder advisory group;

(e) Priorities pertaining to sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015: Several priorities were identified for the development agenda beyond 2015:

(i) Economy-related issues: Government representatives highlighted promotion of economic growth as critical for job creation; quality of growth and jobs; greener growth; sustainable consumption and production; elimination of discriminatory trade measures; attention to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as low carbon and resilient development pathways; energy efficiency and renewable energy; and sustainable use of natural resources. Challenges caused by increasing impacts of climate change were noted as one of the most critical challenges for achieving sustainable development in the region. The opportunities presented by the “blue economy” were noted by delegations representing small island developing States. Actions to help eradicate poverty and address inequality would require creating an enabling environment for engagement with non-State actors and implementing mutually reinforcing approaches to cover the

three dimensions of sustainable development. The delegations representing Major Groups pointed out the need to recognize critical ecological thresholds and “planetary boundaries”; the need to incorporate the cost of externalities into the marketplace; and the need for a democratic and fair financial system. Representatives of international organizations noted that eradicating hunger would require a change in the way food was grown and changes in consumer demand, fair markets and investment in public resources;

(ii) Social development issues: Government representatives recommended that multidimensional approaches should be taken in addressing extreme poverty and inequality; hunger and malnutrition; health (infant and child mortality, maternal health); women’s empowerment; education; water and sanitation; food security and food price volatility; sustainable agriculture; sustainable cities; energy security and access. Representatives of Major Groups highlighted the need to address the following social development issues: green and decent work; productive work, including domestic work; environmental and social justice; human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples and collective rights to self-determination; eliminating all forms of violence against women (a dedicated gender equality goal); sexual, health and reproductive rights; social protection, including payment of a living wage and other aspects; clean, low-carbon energy sources; food sovereignty; attention to sustainable livelihoods

(including for youth), finance; and access to affordable and appropriate technologies. With regard to input from representatives of international organizations, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) stressed the linkages between health and sustainable development and the persistent challenge of halting the spread of HIV/AIDS as an unfinished Millennium Development Goal owing to structural, legal and social barriers and inequality which restricted progress. They requested that essential life-saving medicines be made available and affordable through extension of the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) for another 10 years, as well as calling for innovation and protection of intellectual property rights. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) pointed out that attainment of food security would require action on many fronts, including the right to food and land tenure reform. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stressed the need to understand and take action to address the poverty-environment nexus;

(iii) Environmental sustainability issues: Government representatives highlighted the need to promote sound ecosystem management, including that of mountain ecosystems, oceans and forests. The issues of transboundary water systems and integrated water resource management were also highlighted. Representatives of Major Groups recommended that agricultural production be doubled without

expanding changes in land use. In that regard, they highlighted the need for ensuring sustainable production methods, halting forest harvesting and taking action on climate change mitigation and called for a number of measures, including, among other things, measures that were aimed at addressing land, resource and ocean-grabbing and exploitation;

(iv) Cross-cutting issues: Representatives of Major Groups recommended that attention be paid to vulnerable groups in trade regimes; farmer-centric agrarian reform, which cut across several issues, including basic access to and control of resources; respect for human rights and the rights of indigenous people; and other dimensions. They also emphasized the importance of peace and security issues as an integral element of sustainable development;

(v) Towards a transformative agenda: Government delegations highlighted the need for a new development paradigm, such as that described in General Assembly resolution 65/309 on happiness: towards a holistic approach to development, an approach that had been adopted by the Government of Bhutan, and included a move from a vicious cycle to a virtuous cycle. Representatives of Major Groups pointed to the need to address a failed development model, reform economic governance, radically rethink the concept of growth and tackle the root structural causes of inequality – control over resources, social injustice and shortcomings in relation to

human rights, in particular women's rights to autonomy and over their own bodies;

(f) Implementation approaches: Government representatives highlighted capacity-building and support for reporting and building on data management, as well as the participation of stakeholders in the collection of data at local and national levels; and a voluntary registry of commitments. Country representatives also highlighted the need for a recipient-driven approach, taking into account national priorities and ownership. Representatives of Major Groups urged that partnerships with civil society and accountability mechanisms for all actors be established. State financing was recommended as a means to recognize the central responsibility for sustainable development. Other recommendations included: setting a phased approach with shorter implementation periods, in case a 30-year time frame is adopted for the sustainable development goals; extending incentives for achievement (as had not been done with the Millennium Development Goals); providing training and education; offering particular support to industries and the private sector; fostering regional cooperation, in particular in relation to clean energy technology; and capitalizing on considerable engineering and science and technology capacity for practical solutions. Representatives of international organization highlighted the need to focus on “delivering as one” at the country level and the role of UNDP in assisting countries to access environmental finance with regard to sustainable human development;

(g) The role of ESCAP: Suggestions made by representatives of Governments were that ESCAP should propose principles to guide the development of sustainable development goals; facilitate the establishment of national/subregional/regional platforms on sustainable development goals; support the implementation of the sustainable development goals; and review progress made in achieving those Goals. It was mentioned that the mandate of ESCAP to provide inputs to the Open Working Group might require further clarification. Recommendations from the representatives of Major Groups included the following: that ESCAP develop strong horizontal and vertical linkages within the United Nations system for the purpose of enabling effective monitoring and assessment and facilitating coordination for creating enabling conditions and empowering stakeholders.

Sub-item (b) (iii)

Means of implementation: sustainable development financing and technology for development and transfer

6. The representative of UNEP outlined developments in the implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), which was the only implementation mechanism that had been formally adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Initially, the 10YFP secretariat, hosted by UNEP, would report to the Economic and Social Council on an *ad interim* basis, but it was expected later to report to the high-level political forum. The

representative of ADB explained the Bank's approach for promoting green growth through four programmatic strategies.

7. Themes that emerged from the panel discussion and the interventions included the following: the need for technology transfer and regional and international cooperation; the need for appropriate and accessible means of implementation, whether relating to technology, finance, or trade opportunities; and the need to consider a wide range of financing options while honouring international commitments made with respect to official development assistance (ODA).

8. Points raised during the meeting were as follows:

(a) Sustainable development financing: Government representatives recognized the need for collective efforts to address sustainable development. They highlighted the need to fulfil commitments with respect to ODA. They stated that sustainable development would be dependent on long-term development finance, including, but not limited to, ODA, which would require countries to look at a range of financing instruments and sources for the funding of development outcomes. They pointed out the need for increased mobilization of domestic resources for sustainable development, noting that principles of good governance, efficiency and effectiveness were important for implementation, and that mobilization of resources was only half the challenge, as access to financing needed to be improved and aligned with sustainable development outcomes. The difficulty that would be posed by relying

on domestic mobilization of resources for sustainable development was highlighted in the case of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Growing national debt in small island developing States and least developed countries was highlighted as an impediment to the mobilization of financial resources for sustainable development, while debt relief arrangements and simpler procedures for financial access for least developed countries and small island developing States were stressed. Representatives of the Major Groups expressed concern about the current intellectual property rights regime and stated that there was a need to integrate externalities into market prices (polluter pays principle/taxes for polluters) and to address the issues related to transfer pricing and tax havens. They proposed that a financial transaction tax be imposed. Independent technology assessment and the application of the precautionary principle was seen as crucial given that new technologies might have unintended negative impacts;

(b) Technology transfer: Government representatives pointed out the strong need for capacity-building in relation to technology transfer, noting that “early movers” on environmentally sound technologies could support other developing countries and that South-South cooperation should be strengthened to complement rather than replace North-South cooperation. Countries also noted the issue of intellectual property rights as one of the obstacles in the region to the use of environmentally sound technologies. They noted that reform was needed to address the issue of perverse incentives for polluters. They also stressed that partnerships with and learning from the private

sector to increase resource use efficiency would be needed in order to support transitions to a green economy. Representative of Major Groups recommended that partnerships be established with the scientific and technological community. Government representatives suggested that ESCAP facilitate cooperation among members to develop technical cooperation for transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

Sub-item (b) (iv)

The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States

A side event, entitled “Sustainable Development of Asia-Pacific Small Island Developing States: Oceans of Opportunity”, was held on 22 April 2013, on the first day of the meeting. In alignment with the strong coverage of oceans and the ideas contained in the Rio+20 outcome document and to further enhance awareness of the Secretary-General’s Oceans Compact, it was highlighted at the side event that sustainable and equitable management of ocean resources could support poverty reduction in small island developing States. Statements made at the event provided input for the formulation of a draft resolution for the consideration of the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, and for prioritizing issues for discussion at the Pacific subregion’s Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which is to be held in Suva from 10 to 12 July 2013. (An summary of the discussions in the side event is contained in annex II.)

B. Agenda item 5

Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: national priorities, implementation of regional arrangements, areas for regional collaboration and the role of ESCAP

9. Government delegations shared information on their initiatives, the challenges they faced and their expectations regarding the post-Rio+20 process. Some delegations, particularly those representing small island States and Major Groups, stressed the urgency of action and the unacceptability of “business as usual”.

10. Initiatives and relevant strategies of Governments that were cited included the National Sustainable Development Strategy and green growth strategies (2013-2018) of Thailand, as well as the national policy on green growth and national strategic plan on green growth 2013-2030; the National Green Growth Strategy of Viet Nam (2011-2020); Cambodia’s national policy on green growth and national strategic plan on green growth 2013-2030; national development strategies of Afghanistan, Kiribati and Samoa in line with sustainable development; and the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint. The representative of Kazakhstan reported on consultations on the development agenda beyond 2015, on the establishment of a green economy coalition and on the establishment of KazAid. The representative of Maldives reported that the country had set targets to phase out hydrochloroflourcarbons and reach carbon neutrality by 2020, and that it had plans to make the whole country a biosphere

reserve by 2017. Other initiatives included establishment of a national council for sustainable development and the National Action Plan for Haritha (green) Lanka Programme in Sri Lanka. The representative of Afghanistan highlighted the country's new enabling policy frameworks for climate change adaptation and green jobs, while the representative of Australia indicated that the Government had established the largest representative network of marine protected areas, provided support for regional fisheries and set a national urban policy.

11. The representative of the Russian Federation drew attention to the forthcoming Asia-Pacific Energy Forum, which would be held in Vladivostok, Russian Federation, from 27 to 30 May 2013. The representative of Viet Nam noted plans to establish an ASEAN green growth centre. The representative of Kazakhstan highlighted the Green Bridge Partnership Programme that initially would focus on countries with special needs (and under which a stakeholder meeting would be held in the second half of 2013).

12. Representatives of Major Groups drew attention to local awareness-raising activities, as well as capacity-building and partnerships.

13. Key challenges noted by Government delegations were transboundary pollution; chemicals and waste; sustainable cities; the impact of resource-based industries on both environmental integrity and social harmony; social security and stability; environmental, social and economic vulnerability; climate change impacts and

adaptation requirements; access to clean energy; financial vulnerability, including reliance on GDP as a measure of progress; high debt levels; vulnerabilities of mountain ecosystems; financing for implementation and for green technologies; unfavourable intellectual property rights frameworks; gender discrimination and low levels of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to gender equality; conflict situations; natural disasters; and food insecurity related to the water-food-energy nexus. Least developed countries were facing particular problems related to graduation from least developed country status and required supportive strategies for the transition, while small island developing States were dealing with threats related to the need for relocation and high youth unemployment. Representatives of Major Groups highlighted issues, among others, related to ecosystem destruction that increased poverty; economic instability; insecure livelihoods; and growth strategies in least developed countries that were based on polluting industries.

14. Solutions identified by Government delegations were the inclusion of civil society in decision-making processes and relying on better indicators of progress; establishing public-private partnerships and exploring tri-partite collaboration; mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production policies; enhancing education, skills and technical knowledge; sharing lessons on green economy/growth strategies, including as a basis for diversification; applying community-based, integrated approaches to management; furnishing capacity-building to support integration of environmental issues into

development; setting concrete plans to formulate a unique regional strategy; examining priority sectors for the region. The representatives of Major Groups highlighted the need to recognize indigenous, traditional and local knowledge; conduct farmer-centred agricultural research; pay attention to the role of women farmers and recognize the cultural value of agricultural lands; gain access to renewable energy; build resilience to climate change; apply ecosystems approaches that take into account the interconnections of human beings and nature; foster city-to-city cooperation and knowledge management; set legal norms and standards and make commitments to human rights non-negotiable; improve livelihoods of workers and families and give workers the right to seek collective action; set a just transition for workers; promote social dialogue and good governance; ensure that engagement with the private sector is complemented by efforts to address accountability; and formalize the participation of civil society.

15. Recommendations made by Government delegations regarding the role of ESCAP were that the secretariat should continue to convene regional forums on the Rio+20 follow-up; support coordination of the global processes on the development agenda beyond 2015 at the regional level; promote the coherent and balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; support consultation mechanisms on reviewing priority areas; take a strengthened role in facilitating discussions with all regional actors, including Major Groups; review progress and identify gaps and challenges; renew political commitment; and develop

recommendations on thematic and emerging issues. It was also recommended that ESCAP provide assistance to national development and support country-specific initiatives and, together with ADB and UNEP, strengthen the work of the "beyond GDP agenda". A recommendation from the major group delegations was that collaborative action should be taken to help fund the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Annex II

Summary of side event: “Sustainable Development of Asia-Pacific Small Island Developing States: Oceans of Opportunity”

1. A side event to the meeting, entitled “Sustainable Development of Asia-Pacific Small Island Developing States: Oceans of Opportunity”, was held on 22 April 2013 to ensure that regional implementation of the Rio+20 outcome would be focused on making tangible and practical contributions to sustainable development with regard to two main issues of concern to Asia-Pacific small island developing States:

(a) Oceans and Seas: Opportunities for Sustainable Development;

(b) The Third Global Conference on Small Island Developing States.

2. During the side event, it was noted that the Pacific Ocean provided a regional and global public good both in terms of resources and environmental services, and that its effective management must be a priority for Pacific small island developing States, as well as for the broader Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world.

3. Small island developing States were facing inequality and disparity in economic terms and through their vulnerability to

environmental degradation and climate change, most of which effects were well beyond their control. Much discussion had taken place since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit)⁶ in 1992 and other processes, such as the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados Programme of Action)⁷ and the World Bank's Millennium Science Initiative, but how many tangible outcomes had been achieved? How much was really being done? Further discussion, for example on the high-level political forum, may sound interesting, but would that lead to real and tangible outcomes for small island developing States?

4. There was a need to take the discussion beyond that of vulnerability to opportunities for small island developing States in forging the development agenda beyond 2015, that is, to harness opportunities that take advantage of the fact that small island developing States really are "large ocean developing States". In that context, it was important that small island developing States effectively manage their oceanic resources and regulate them in accordance with the United States Conference on the Law of the Sea⁸

⁶ See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annexes I and II.

⁷ See *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁸ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, No. 31363.

so that distant fishing nations would be held accountable for the use of that global public good.

5. It could be argued that issues pertaining to small island developing States were well covered in the Rio+20 outcome, but again the question on how much had been achieved must be asked. Pacific small island developing States were not homogenous. The needs and context of each country must be the starting point for sustainable development initiatives. Needs and opportunities must not be standardized.

6. Practical solutions must be the priority. Climate change was already increasing the vulnerability of coastal communities, not just in atoll countries but in larger countries as well.

7. New and effective modalities for cooperation must be adopted that would go beyond traditional relationships with development partners. Practical partnerships were evolving, such as the Pacific Oceanscape initiative, and there was growing recognition that sacrifices must be made in balancing the objectives of development with the principles of sustainable development. The Pacific Oceanscape initiative demonstrated a commitment to the world that Pacific small island developing States were doing their part in the sustainable management of oceans and seas. Some economies, such as Australia and the Cook Islands, had also made bold initiatives to preserve large parts of their oceanic environment.

8. In that light, it had been noted that sustainable development must start at home, at the national level. With regard to such issues as fishing licences, there was a need to continue to focus on strength in unity. Priority issues must be identified that were for the benefit of everyone in the Pacific subregion.

9. During the side event it was noted that Kiribati and Solomon Islands would submit a draft resolution to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session; that draft resolution dealt with the “ocean economy” and how that economy could contribute to sustainable development.

10. The secretariat listed four objectives for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which was to be held in Samoa in 2014. The objectives were:

(a) To assess performance regarding the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation and related processes, and identify lessons and remaining gaps;

(b) To seek new political commitment to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States and identify practical action for further effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation;

(c) To identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for sustainable development and ways of addressing them;

(d) To identify priorities for sustainable development of small island developing States for consideration/elaboration in the development agenda beyond 2015.

11. National preparations were well under way in the Pacific subregion, with Fiji having been designated to host the Pacific preparatory meeting from 10 to 12 July 2013. ESCAP and the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific working group on sustainable development were taking the lead in consolidating regional preparations for the 2014 meeting, building on national country reports, the preparation of which was supported by UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

12. The importance of partnership with civil society was highlighted at the side event. Other partnerships, such as expanding South-South cooperation in the Pacific, also offered great opportunity for the Pacific subregion. However, partnerships must go beyond those of a financing nature and the traditional relationship with donors.

13. In looking at opportunities supported through the Rio+20 process, such as valuing natural capital in the context of the green economy, there was a need not to commoditize nature. The integrity of the models used to value natural assets was also highlighted as important.

14. With regard to the management of the Pacific Ocean, the importance of effective ocean governance, including continuation of

the efforts to strengthen the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, was noted, along with an approach on such issues as ocean fertilization, sea bed mining and geo-engineering.

15. Much had been done in the Asia-Pacific region that must be built upon in the future, including the Five-year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI+5) and the Rio+20 preparations, as well as more recent initiatives, such as the Dili Consensus of the Group of Seven and the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.
