

ISSUE BOOK

The ESCAP logo consists of the word "ESCAP" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, centered within a black rectangular box with a green border. The box is tilted slightly to the right.

ESCAP

A stylized graphic featuring a grey globe with a black grid of latitude and longitude lines. In the foreground, there are green waves with white outlines. A white wave crest is visible on the left side of the globe.

IV
Regional
Conference

**TAMING THE WAVES
OF ASIA PACIFIC:**

**Curbing Disasters,
Catching the Opportunities**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Welcoming letter | 3 |
| Introduction to the Committee | 4 |
| Meeting the challenges on the way to inclusive and sustainable development of urban areas in Asia and the Pacific | 9 |
| Elaboration of common strategy for cooperation between Youth-led NGOs in the region..... | 14 |

Welcoming letter

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.
Mahatma Gandhi*

Honorable delegates of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific!

The long history of Asia and the Pacific region's development always makes us turning to its successes and failures, due to its importance and uniqueness. Almost the half of the world's population lives there and their destinies cannot be ignored by the international community. Moreover, we are peoples of this region and it is our right to change our world, our environment and our fate. As one of the wise Asian said, the long road starts with a small step. And the IV MUNRFE Regional conference will be your first step to a new mountain or a new carrier!

In these four days full of new emotions, knowledge, passion and hot debates you will learn many interesting things and make a rapid way up in your English skills development and other important MUNRFE core-values. This event will gather a lot of talented and bright people from the whole Russian Far East, so use every opportunity to feel this ambience of courage, innovations, creativity and ambitious! We want you striving to create great amendments to the nowadays imperfect situation in the international community, so challenge each other, come up with strong arguments, make consensus or divide into coalitions, do what you have to do for the sake of finding the best solution for the problems!

On behalf of the Secretariat team we promise you to make everything possible for you to enjoy this unique event. But remember that everything in this world depends on you.

It is our pleasure to welcome you in this marvelous committee and to serve us your Chair and Vice-Chair!

Respectfully,

Andrey Kozinets,

Chairperson of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Liliya Yakubova,

Vice-Chairperson of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Introduction to the Committee

*Asia is rich in people, rich in culture
and rich in resources. It is also rich in trouble.
Hubert H. Humphrey*

In the year of 1947 the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East was established by the United Nations (UN) in the city of Shanghai, the Republic of China. However, by the year of 1949 the Communist Party took control of the country from the Kuomintang Party, created new Government and proclaimed the People's Republic of China. The Kuomintang remained control of the island named Taiwan, thus the territory of the Republic of China did not include the major part of Chinese lands.

However, the political reality of that time was so, that the People's Republic of China had no membership in the UN, although the Republic of China had and was considered as the only legitimate Chinese authority. In such circumstances the Headquarters of the Commission was moved from Shanghai to Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand in the year of 1949, where it remains currently.

In 1974 the name of the Commission was changed to "Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific" (ESCAP) reflecting both the economic and social aspects of development and the geographic location of its member countries. It is the biggest of the UN's five regional commissions, both in terms of population served and area covered.

The UN ESCAP is one out of five Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC Regional Commissions). These commissions are the regional outposts of the United Nations in their respective regions. They are also an integral part of their regional institutional landscape. Stationed in five regions of the world, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UN ESCAP, Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) share key objectives aiming to foster economic integration at the subregional and regional levels, to promote the regional implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to support regional sustainable development by contributing to bridging economic, social and environmental gaps among their member countries and subregions. To achieve these objectives, the five Regional Commissions promote multilateral dialogue, knowledge sharing and networking at the regional level, and work together to promote intra- regional and inter-regional cooperation, both among themselves and through collaboration with other regional organizations.

The work of Commissions is being monitored and assisted by the Regional Commissions New York Office.¹ As part of its outreach role on behalf of the Commissions, it maintains regular contact with the permanent missions of Member States to the United Nations, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, liaison offices of organizations of the UN system and the civil society in New York.

The UN ESCAP's priorities are determined by its member States through the work in the Commission, as well as by the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The **UN Millennium Declaration**² adopted during the Millennium Summit (6 – 8, September, 2000) where strategic objectives of development for the International Community were elaborated in form of Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)³, is one of the main documents for the ESCAP. The Commission concentrates in addressing 5 MDG's, particularly: Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; Gender equality and women's empowerment; HIV/AIDS; Environmental sustainability and Developing of Global Partnership.

In addition to the Millennium Declaration, ESCAP's priorities also include the regional implementation of other major global-scaled documents, such as the **"2005 World Summit Outcome"**⁴ the document adopted during the UN World Summit, which was the follow-up of the UN Millennium Summit and reaffirmed not only the Millennium Declaration, but also the **Doha Development Agenda**⁵ (the latest round of multilateral negotiations in frames of World Trade Organization (WTO) aimed to further liberalization of international trade, elimination of customs tariffs and stimulating international investments) and the **Monterrey Consensus**⁶ (The **Monterrey Consensus** was the outcome of the 2002 Monterrey Conference, the United Nations **International Conference on Financing for Development** in Monterrey, Mexico). The Monterrey Consensus was adopted by Heads of State and Government on 22 March 2002. Over fifty Heads of State and two hundred Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Development and Trade participated in this Conference. Governments were joined by the Heads of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the WTO, prominent business and civil society leaders and other stakeholders. New development aid commitments from the United States and the European Union and other countries were made at the conference. Countries also reached agreements on other issues, including debt relief, fighting corruption, and

¹ For more information about the Regional Commissions New York office, please visit <http://www.regionalcommissions.org/>

² <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

³ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

⁴ <http://www.un.org/summit2005/documents.html>

⁵ For information, please visit http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/dda_e.htm

⁶ The full text of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development you may find here: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/monterrey/MonterreyConsensus.pdf>

policy coherence. Another document which plays a significant importance for ESCAP is **Johannesburg Plan of implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development**⁷ (the final document of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, unofficially called “Rio+10”).

Due to the huge geographical scope of work, ESCAP has 4 sub regional offices, which carry out the policy of ESCAP in general. These offices operate particularly in East and Northeast Asia (SRO-ENEA with its headquarters in Incheon, Republic of Korea)⁸, North and Central Asia (SONCA with its headquarters in Almaty, Kazakhstan)⁹, The Pacific (UN-EPOC with its headquarters in Suva, Fiji; dealing with Small Island States)¹⁰ and South and Southwest Asia (SRO-SSWA with its headquarters in New Delhi)¹¹.

The format of work of the Commission is the following. The highest level of meetings in frames of UN ESCAP is its Annual Sessions. Usually, the Session is being conducted in April or May and lasts approximately a week. These sessions have 2 segments: Senior officials’ part and Ministerial meetings after it. During the Session in frames of the Senior officials meeting different topics, analyses and reports are frequently being discussed, while in frames of the Ministerial meetings issues of economic cooperation and different strategies of regional development are being scrutinized. As a result, ESCAP adopts resolutions on most important issues and different type of documents like reports, analytics, and strategic programs for ESCAP’s internal development (it can include new priorities or even the necessity to create additional entities). During the Annual Session representatives of other UN-related bodies are also taking part and contribute to the work of the Session presenting their substantive reports and perspectives. These entities include, but not limited to the UNDP, the UNEP, the UN Habitat, the UN Population Fund and many others.

After each Annual Session ESCAP makes its Annual Report to ECOSOC, where brief explanation of topics discussed and scrutinized during the previous period and all the documents accepted by the Commission can be found,. All Annual reports of the UN ESCAP can be found on its official web site¹².

In the time between Annual Sessions, ESCAP is dealing with its 8 priority lines:

- 1) Macroeconomic Policy and Development;
- 2) Trade and Investment;
- 3) Transport;

⁷ <http://www.un-documents.net/jburgpln.htm>

⁸ <http://northeast-sro.unescap.org/>

⁹ <http://northcentral-sro.unescap.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.unescap.org/EPOC/>

¹¹ <http://sswa.unescap.org/>

¹² <http://www.unescap.org/EDC/sessions.asp>

- 4) Environment and Development;
- 5) Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction;
- 6) Social Development (including Youth);
- 7) Subregional activities for development;
- 8) Statistics.

In order to deal with such wide range of issues the Commission established 8 committees with the same orientation through its resolution 64/1 adopted in April 2008.

The committees, having its meeting biannually, make review and analyses of regional trends, identify new priorities in the field, communicates with Member States to find and share best practices and to promote Subregional and Regional cooperation among countries. These committees also monitor the implementation of ESCAP's resolutions and strategic frameworks, make publications and propose issues to consideration by the Commission as possible solutions in the questions entrusted.

The Commission maintains close cooperation and consultation between the Members and the Secretariat through the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR). The ACPR is composed of ESCAP members and associate members (in the situation with the UN ESCAP in particular, it is the dependent territories such as Guam or Hong Kong) and meets regularly to advise and exchange views with the Executive Secretary on the Commission's work. Currently, the Executive Secretary of the UN ESCAP is Ms. Noeleen Heyzer from Singapore, who is the first ever woman to rule the UN ESCAP. Since taking the highest office in the Commission, Dr. Heyzer has positioned ESCAP, the regional arm of the United Nations, as a powerful comprehensive platform for promoting regional co-operation among Member States to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. She has focused ESCAP to achieve stronger regional co-operation for transport and international and communication technologies (ICT) connectivity, green growth, fair trade and ethical investment, financial stability, food and energy security, and social development. In recognition of her contribution to women, peace and justice, Dr. Heyzer was among the nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

The ACPR's major functions include: assisting the Secretariat in the formulation of the annotated provisional agenda for each session of the Commission before it is finalized; maintaining close cooperation and consultations between the Members and the Secretariat of the Commission, to advise Executive Secretary on different issues and to deal with any question entrusted to it by the Commission.

Thus, to conclude, the UN ESCAP works to promote cooperation among countries of the region with the aim to make the life in the Asia Pacific better in all possible aspects. For that

ESCAP conducts constant analyses and presents publications¹³ (today the Commission published than 1000 books, guidelines, research papers etc. on 17 important issues including International Trade, Health Care, Poverty Reduction and many others) makes consultation with officials from different governments, makes recommendations in forms of resolutions and, as a result, contributes to make the Social and Economic Situation in the huge Asia Pacific Region better.

¹³ All publications made the UN ESCAP are available here: <http://www.unescap.org/publications/subjects.asp>

Meeting the challenges on the way to inclusive and sustainable development of urban areas in Asia and the Pacific

The City – is a spirit; the Big City – is a Great Spirit.

Oswald Spengler

A total population of 4.1 billion lives in Asia and the Pacific which is a vast and diverse region including population giants and small island States.

The diversity of the region makes it difficult to make generalized statements. Regional and sub-regional averages can hide wide disparities in terms of demographic, economic, social and environmental conditions. Nevertheless, many countries of the region have a number of common challenges which require urgent attention. One of these common challenges is urbanization and urban development. Urbanization, economic development, environmental degradation and poverty are closely interlinked. Cities and towns have large, dense and diverse populations, which result in economies of scale and agglomeration and lead to specialization of labour, increases in productivity, innovation and economic growth. Infrastructure and services are cheaper to provide, making urban areas attractive to people in search of higher income and better access to services. Also, goods produced in urban areas have much greater demand elasticity compared to goods produced in rural areas, making it difficult for rural areas to sustain population growth. Thus, rural-urban migration is caused by both “pull” and “push” factors and may result in a transfer of poverty from rural areas as urban population increase is not necessarily accompanied by employment generation or the development of infrastructure.

Economic development has also resulted in deteriorating environmental conditions in Asian cities because, to a great extent, environmental costs of economic development and urban growth have been externalized.

A majority of the world’s population has been living in urban areas since 2009. This transition is expected to happen in Asia and the Pacific in 2025. At present, about 43 per cent of the region’s population lives in urban areas. The region’s annual urban population growth rate is 2.3 per cent. What is unique about urbanization in Asia and the Pacific is its scale and pace. By 2025, it is expected that the region’s population will be 2.3 billion, an increase of about 700 million people in 15 years.

A unique feature of urban growth in Asia and the Pacific is the growth of mega-cities, cities with population of more than 10 million. Eleven of the 21 mega-cities in the world are in Asia and the Pacific, including 6 of the world’s 10 largest cities. These mega-cities are often

surrounded by extended urban regions that transcend metropolitan administrative boundaries. Such mega-urban agglomerations encompass several urban and rural local governments and sometimes extend over provincial boundaries. The Bangkok metropolitan region, for example has an area of 7,761 square kilometres, with a population of over 10 million, spread over the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and five surrounding provinces while the Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasi region (Jabotabek) has a total population of over 21 million and a land area of 6,418 square kilometres. Yet it should be noted that 60 percent of the urban population of the region lives in cities of a million or less. Problems and challenges facing these cities and towns often get less attention than those of mega cities because megacities have much greater political capital than secondary cities and small towns.

In general, countries with advanced economies tend to be highly urbanized while least developed countries tend to have low levels of urbanization. While many countries in the region have a long history of urban settlements, the pace of urbanization increased with increased global trade and opening up of Asian economies, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. At around that time many developed countries started opening their markets to global trade and demand for cheap products from Asia and the Pacific increased. As most production facilities were based in larger cities, these cities started to benefit from the opportunities provided by economic globalization.

Coastal cities with ports particularly flourished. Asia started to turn into the workshop of the world. In the beginning, emphasis was on low value added, low technology, high labor intensive industries, such as textiles and garments, to benefit from low production costs, in particular low labor costs. Factories provided employment for semi-skilled workers who often migrated from rural areas. Urban areas started to grow rapidly.

Therefore, cities in more economically advanced countries moved to attract manufacturers of higher value added products, requiring higher labor skills, such as computers and other consumer durables, including automobiles.

Many of the jobs in the service sector are informal-sector jobs. Proliferation of informal enterprises is often a result of the need to be competitive in the global economy. It forces firms to adopt new and flexible forms of employment relations, especially in the service sector, such as those found in call centers and the hiring of retail sector staff. In most of the Asia-Pacific region, the informal economy is an integral part of the urban economy. Rather than competing with each other, the formal and informal sectors are, by and large, integrated through direct and indirect linkages. This coexistence of the formal sector and the informal sector has become a distinctive feature of the economy and the labor market in many Asia-Pacific cities.

The size of the informal sector, its contribution to the economy and its influence on urban growth is difficult to measure due to a lack of systematic data collection and analysis. What is clear is that the informal economy is vast and heterogeneous. The sector helps to provide employment for the millions of urban poor who are unable (or unwilling) to have secure jobs in the formal sector.

There are several causes for the existence of the informal sector, chief among them are rules and regulations that unnecessarily make it difficult for small and microenterprises to function in the formal economy. It is wrong to assume that informal sector markets are not regulated.

Some parts of the informal sector are characterized by low wages, dangerous and insecure working conditions and long working hours. Operating in the informal sector means that employers and workers are easily harassed by law enforcement agents that come to visit not so much to enforce the law, but to extract informal payments. Income earned in the informal sector may not be sufficient for the urban poor to pull themselves out of poverty, but it enables them to survive in the city.

On the other end of the spectrum are the highly skilled, footloose workers of the financial and knowledge sectors of the service economy. They can work from any other country, and therefore “quality of life” is a premium attraction for them. Companies must be able to rely on a stable political and economic environment, a solid banking system, an adequate regulatory system and strict law enforcement, quality medical facilities, schools, universities, research institutes, hotels, shopping centers, recreational and cultural facilities, etc. Thus, quality of life and urban livability become important parts of the competitiveness of cities.

Many cities feel the need to modernize in order to compete with world cities. Cities like Singapore and Bangkok risk losing their unique traditions, and look more and more like any other city in the world. With constantly rising land prices, preserving cultural heritage is difficult. Many cities regret too late the losses incurred.

The structural shift in the urban economy from manufacturing to service industry also has consequences for physical development of urban areas. Large formal sector manufacturing enterprises are forced to locate in the urban periphery, often along transport infrastructure, creating new urban strips or corridors, as housing and commercial enterprises often develop around them.

Globalization has definitely benefited large sections of the urban population in Asia and the Pacific by providing employment and income. However, there was a price to be paid. In order to keep production costs low, there was a prevalence of lax labour and environmental laws, poor law enforcement relating to the discharge of emissions and the treatment of waste. The

impact was not shared equally by the urban population; the poor have borne and continue to bear the brunt of the impact through their low incomes, unhealthy working conditions and poor living conditions.

At the same time experts notice another side of Asian urbanization changes. Asian cities are facing three broad types of environmental risks. The first category of risks is associated with poverty. The second with industrial development and the third with prosperity and mass consumption.

The driving forces behind the poverty related stage are high levels of rural-urban migration, low per-capita income, the inability of local government to manage its urban resources, and insufficient investment in urban infrastructure. As a result, large sections of the urban population live in low-quality housing, in slums and squatter settlements without access to adequate water supply and sanitation. Motorized and non-motorized modes of transport compete with each other on congested urban roads, often in the presence of a dysfunctional public transport system.

Because of the poor environmental conditions, residents are vulnerable to infectious diseases. The impact of this type of problems is usually local, and often limited to the city.

Environmental problems associated with the early stages of industrialization and economic growth include air pollution by industries and transport, particularly of sulphurous oxides and particulate matter and water pollution by heavy metals and industrial solid waste pollution.

Driving forces behind these problems are rapid industrialization, a prioritization of economic growth over environmental management, the application of outmoded or obsolete technologies, a lack of environmental emission control and poor enforcement. The spatial range of impacts of this category of risks are local as well as regional, as pollution spreads to soil, water and air beyond cities.

Urban environmental issues associated with prosperous lifestyles, based on mass production, mass consumption and mass disposal relate to rapid and unsustainable consumption of natural resources, particularly energy, water and food, as well as large-scale pollution and waste generation. Due to a lack of an extensive mass transit system, individual ownership of automobiles increases, increasing energy consumption, which is also compounded with an extensive use of air-conditioning or heating in commercial and residential buildings. Carbon footprints increase dramatically. The impact of this category of risks is not just local, but is regional and global.

Cities in Asia and the Pacific need to simultaneously sustain economic development, ensure environmental sustainability, reduce poverty and disparities and prepare themselves

against climate change and other natural and manmade disasters and crises. This would require action on three inter-connected fronts: increasing eco-efficiency and greening of urban development; increasing inclusiveness and equity; and increasing resilience to climate change and other shocks and crises. These issues are inter-sectoral and addressing them effectively would require a “systems” approach, recognizing the inter-connections and their influences and synergies various urban sub-systems have on each other.

Moreover, several development gaps would need to be bridged. These include development gaps related to the legal and fiscal framework; financing of urban development; urban planning and design approaches and methodologies; technologies and innovations; and institutional and human resources capacities. As stated earlier the urban economy comprises a spectrum from the informal to the formal. Strategies and approaches would need to be developed to address the whole spectrum, not just the formal sector of the economy. However, such strategies would need to take into consideration the fact that in many instances formalizing the informal sector could prove counterproductive.

As the issue is related to the social, economic and environmental spheres, it comes under the responsibility of the UN ESCAP Organization.

Useful links

<http://www.unescap.org/>

<http://uncsd.iisd.org/category/actors/un-regional-economic-social-commission/unescap/page/4/>

http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/docs/regional/pacific/Pacific_Regional_Synthesis-MSI5-Final.pdf

<http://www.iadb.org/intal/intalcdi/PE/2012/10914.pdf>

http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/463APRPM_Report%20final_0911.pdf

<http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu11ee/uu11ee15.htm>

United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: 2009 Revision, United Nations, New York, 2010
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2009 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.F.1).

Elaboration of common strategy for cooperation between Youth-led NGOs in the region

*Failing to invest in our Youth is a false economy.
Conversely, investing in young people will pay great
dividends for all.*

Ban-Ki Moon, the UN Secretary-General

The importance of the Youth is probably the higher today, that in any part of humankind's history. Even a short look to such issues as Arab Spring, civil uprising in Europe and actions of political protest in former USSR republics show us, what can happen if governments do not consider young people as partners do not to listen to them, do not to give them chances for development and self-realization. When young people have no hope for their dreams come true the marginalization comes very fast, which leads to more criminal people than decent citizens, more rebel, pirates and terrorist groups, etc. That is why, for any national government it is vital to work hard in the sphere of Youth politics.

This topic is even more important for the Asia and Pacific, because according to statistics of the UN ESCAP, 61% of the world's young people are living here. And, if to believe to those economists, who consider the Asia Pacific to be the Economic Heart of the world for the XXI Century, partnership with Youth becomes crucial.

It is important to understand that internationally young people are not homogenous group. Even in one country young people have great amount of differences, including differences in most important problems and differences in aspirations.

With the majority of young people in the region may be able to participate productively in the society, many others experience poverty, gender inequality, limited access to education, poor health including disability, insecure housing, violence, and risks from sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

The majority of the young people are living very different lives to that of previous generations: they generally has better education, Internet access makes them feeling "Global spirit", - consequently, in a present world, for many young people there is an increasing gap between their expectations and the reality available for them.

When we look through the UN approach to the Youth-related issues, it is essential to take into consideration the set of the UN GA Resolutions¹⁴.

The first one and the most important is the Resolution A/RES/50/81 adopted on 13 of March 1996, called “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond”¹⁵. This document recognized and acknowledged that young people in all parts of the world should have access to full participation in the life of society, being the key agents of social change, economic development and social innovation.

The World Programme itself had 10 priority areas: Education, Employment, Hunger and poverty, Health, Environment, Drug abuse, Juvenile delinquency, Leisure-time activities, Girls and young women, Full and effective participation of Youth in the life of society and in decision-making. It also specified 3 levels/means of implementation – National, Regional and International.

Today it is possible to say, that, for example, in the area of employment changes have been extremely slight: in the East Asia situation remained unchanged (and it is even possible that the unemployment rate will increase), in the South Asia unemployment rate decreased on 0,3% for the last 10 years and in the South East Asia it has been actually even increased on 0,8%.¹⁶ This is just one example, which shows that the progress in the sphere of Youth affairs still has much to be desired.

Another important document of the International level is the UN GA Resolution 58/133 of the 1997 “Policies and programmes involving Youth” (however, it is not the first document with this name. The UN GA accepted several more resolutions on this topic) which requested the UN Secretary General to include a global analyses of national action plans of youth employment.

There were many other international documents adopted on the issue of Youth policy such as the Lisbon declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes adopted at the World Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth in the year of 1998; World Youth Reports and others. However, in general, all new UN GA Resolutions on this agenda item or Final Documents of ad hoc Summits on Youth, usually do not stress any particular actions, but only repeat and reaffirm provisions from the “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond”. Thus, on the International level of implementation of the “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond” we see the absence of concrete and detailed Roadmap of actions aiming to make the life of Youth all over the world better.

¹⁴ The UN GA Youth Resolutions’ List.

<http://social.un.org/index/Youth/ResourcesandPublications/Youthresolutions.aspx>

¹⁵ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/50/81

¹⁶ Global employment trends for Youth. Report by International Labor Organization.

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_180976.pdf

Talking about the Regional level of implementation, we may consider the experience of one of the ESCAP Subregional entities, namely, the ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (SRO-ENEAA).

SRO-ENEAA implements a 3-year project (2011-2013) to promote youth participation in policy-making. The first activity of the project was a subregional Youth forum held in the Republic of Korea in August 2011 with 68 participants from China, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. Young people aged between 18 and 26 discussed three topics: Sustainable development, youth unemployment, and the concept of Gross National Happiness¹⁷ (GNH). The Youth Forum was attended by the former Prime Minister of Bhutan, who gave a keynote speech on GNH and interacted with the youth participants for Q&A. As the main result of the Youth Forum participants' outcome document related to sustainable development was subsequently submitted as a youth input to Rio+20 (The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development).

For the project's second year of activities, SRO-ENEAA joined Seoul Policy Centre of the UN Development Programme in co-organizing the North-East Asian Youth Conference: World We Want Post-2015 held on 7-9 January 2013 in Seoul. Fifty-one youths gathered from China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea, and discussed the issues they would like to see tackled globally after the MDGs target date of 2015. As the result of the 3-day discussion, youth participants adopted a Youth Declaration which was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea Kim Sung-Hwan, who is also a member of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda. The Minister promised to take into account the youths' views in the upcoming High Level Panel's report, to be submitted to the Secretary-General in mid-2013.

For the project's final year, SRO-ENEAA plans to implement another sub regional Youth Forum in collaboration with the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia (SRO-NCA). Youth participants representing youth organizations/associations from the UN ESCAP Member States of both sub regions will get together and share their activities to support the three pillars of sustainable development (Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.)¹⁸ as identified in Rio+20: The economic, social and environmental. It may be recalled that the Rio+20 outcome document "The Future We Want" reads as below:

¹⁷ Detailed description about the GNH, surveys related to this issue and other information you may find here: <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/>

¹⁸ Expression from Bruntland Report. <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm>

“We stress the importance of the active participation of young people in decision-making processes, as the issues we are addressing have a deep impact on present and future generations, and as the contribution of children and youth is vital to the achievement of sustainable development. We also recognize the need to promote intergenerational dialogue and solidarity by recognizing their views.” (Para 50)

The proposed Youth Forum will take stock of youths’ views and activities related to the three pillars of sustainable development and explore how to advance sustainable development in the two subregions. The outcome document of the Youth Forum will be the concluding outcome of the 3-year project.

However the vast majority of documents, meetings and activities mentioned above, do not touch the issue of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) and Youth-led NGO’s in particular as one of the most crucial ways of Youth self realization and ability to participate in the life of the Civil Society in one hand, and, as the rescuer from HIV/AIDS, malnutrition and unemployment on the other hand.

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is generally considered to be any non-state, nonprofit, voluntary organization. As a non-state entity, an NGO is generally independent from government influence—it is not a part of or controlled by government or an intergovernmental agency. As such, an NGO is either not established by a government, or intergovernmental agreement, or, if established in such a manner, is now independent of such influence. As a nonprofit organization, an NGO is not operated for the primary purpose of carrying on a trade or business, although profits may be generated for the mission of the organization. A more accurate term may be non-profit distributing, in that any surplus that is generated is to be used solely to help the organization fulfill its mission and objectives, with no part of the net earnings of the NGO to be distributed to the benefit of the directors, officers, members, or employees of the NGO, or any private persons, other than reasonable compensation for services rendered. As a voluntary organization, an NGO is not required to exist by law, but is formed by private initiative, resulting from voluntary actions of individuals.

In effect, NGOs are organizations that are neither part of the government sector nor part of the business sector. For such reasons, they are sometimes referred to being part of the "third sector" in society.

The UN ESCAP can take a leading role in facilitating the Youth policy activities on the regional level through intensified cooperation with NGO’s and Youth-led NGO’s especially. In this regard, the Commission can elaborate the comprehensive and detailed Roadmap for Youth-

led NGO's cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region, underlining specific steps required from national governments.

Today there are several Youth-led NGO's in the region which can influence the international life by themselves (Such as World Youth Alliance Asia Pacific¹⁹ and AIESEC²⁰) while working in the directions which were mentioned by the UN "World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond". However, there are a great amount of Youth-led NGO's of national and even local level working on the same directions, being extremely important to their local communities, but usually having lack of financial and human resources, practical knowledge (how to work with grants, how to establish sustainable partnerships with local and regional governments, how to collaborate with business circles) and long-term vision.

For sure, in different countries of the Region dozens of Youth-led NGO's have the same goals and missions, thus through the facilitation of the UN ESCAP, the system of best practices sharing can be introduced. However, the great diversity of the countries in the region also should be taken into consideration, since the different culture, religion and political systems (from Communism and Socialism to Liberal democracies) makes the life of NGO's and Youth-led NGO's especially, very different in various countries.

In this regard, the deep understanding of the Youth politics inside the countries members to UN ESCAP is needed by delegates in order to compare problems which might be common, share positive practices and elaborate a long-term RoadMap on cooperation in the field, touching the priority areas of the UN "World Programme of Action for Youth" and other required issues of the present day and finally making comprehensive and exact strategy of improving the situation in Youth affairs in the Region.

¹⁹ World Youth Alliance Asia Pacific - <http://www.wya.net/regions/asiapacific/wyaasiapacific.html>

²⁰ <http://www.aiesec.org/>