

# UNESCAP REPRESENTATIVE PROGRESS REPORT 2020

By

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The 76<sup>nd</sup> Commission session (CS76) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was held on 21 May 2020. The Theme of the session was “Promoting economic social and environmental cooperation in the ocean for sustainable development”

Due to the pandemic and the technical limitations of conducting the commission session, only a limited number of people can attend physically at ESCAP in Bangkok. Others, including myself, Miss Chularat Israngkool Na Ayutthaya and Dr. Chonchanok Viravan attended via real life webcast.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres gave words of encouragement at the beginning of the session: “I am strongly convinced we have opportunities to build back better on the foundation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That means forging common solutions through the climate crisis, economic and social inequality, new forms of violence and rapid change in technology demography. We can rescue our planet and build the world better for all. Let’s work together to do just that”.

## **Two key resolutions were discussed:**

- Resolution 76/1. Strengthening cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/RES/76/1)
- Resolution 76/2. Regional cooperation to address the socio-economic effects of pandemics and crises in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/RES/76/2)

## **The impact of and policy responses with regard to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Asia and the Pacific**

The tremendous impact of COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific is due to demographics, urbanization, the concentration of economic activities and difficulties in progressing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. With the region accounting for more than two thirds of the global population, the world’s most populous cities and the bulk of the world’s industrial activities, energy supply and consumptions, as well as 46 million of the world’s migrants, the crisis has shown how tightly Asia and the Pacific is woven into the economic and social fabric of the world. However, it also shows how quick action, steadfast policies, and innovation, which have been displayed by several Asian countries, can effectively deal with this unprecedented outbreak.

The recommendations are approached through the prism of sustainable development, addressing the economic, social and environmental dimensions thereof.

UNESCAP called for Regional cooperation to address the socio-economic effects of pandemics and crises in Asia and the Pacific by the following:

- *Encourages* countries, in the spirit of multilateralism, to highlight the inequality gaps, poverty and escalating health risks for millions of people due to the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- *Emphasizes* that recovery from the COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to build back better in Asia and the Pacific, including by building more equal, inclusive and sustainable institutions, economies and societies that respect human rights and are more resilient in the

face of any future pandemic and other related crises faced by the region, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in close coordination and consultation with Member States and other relevant United Nations bodies and organizations, identifying the experience and best practices of the initial response, to enable countries to build back better in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to submit a report to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session for its consideration.

### **Result of the assessment of the Virtual 76<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission**

UNESCAP used two platforms to allow people to attend / observe the 76<sup>th</sup> session virtually: KUDO and YouTube. The survey of 25 out of 51 member states shows the following:

#### ***High rating for:***

- KUDO participants were satisfied with the outcome and interpretation more than YouTube participants
- High satisfaction on access to documents and the secretariat's support

#### ***Lower rating for***

- The lack of interactions & level of participation
- Inability to see and hear clearly
- Issues with Internet connectivity and duration of the session:
  - KUDO participants had technical issues in connecting to the session
  - YouTube participants complained that video frequently tuning out, needs to improve delivery of live stream, make live streaming more seamless and no interpretation service

For delegates, if they sign out of a session, they cannot return to attend, due to a technical problem.

For observers, like Chularat and Dr. Chonchanok and me, we agreed with the survey response via YouTube that it was difficult to follow the discussions for several hours online. We could not hear some speech well and the sessions went overtime. Therefore, we could not attend the whole live event.

#### **For more information:**

- The documents related to the 76<sup>th</sup> Session along with the session's agenda are available for download at [www.unescap.org/commission/76/documents](http://www.unescap.org/commission/76/documents)
- To view the video of various sessions <https://www.unescap.org/commission/76/>

### **The 77<sup>th</sup> Session of UNESCAP**

The next session will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and via video-conferencing from 27 to 29 April 2021 under the theme, "Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific."