

ESCAP

Fifty-Sixth Commission Session

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), with the theme of development through globalisation and partnership in the twenty-first century, concluded its annual Commission session on 7 June 2000.

The 61-member and associate member Commission noted that given the irreversible nature of globalisation and interdependence, the overarching challenge facing the region was to manage the risks and to seize the opportunities of globalisation, so that the benefits could be shared equally.

The Final Report of the session, which contains five resolutions and a blueprint for ESCAP's programme of work, was unanimously adopted. Commission Chairman Kamal Kharrazi (Iran) said the Commission also agreed

subject to endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

ESCAP has been asked to mobilise the necessary measures to provide assistance to the Greater Mekong Sub-region, particularly in such key sectors as human resources development, trade and investment, transportation and communication, poverty alleviation and social development.

The Commission underlined its support for Phase II of the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, which was the result of the Second Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in 1999 in New Delhi, India.

Space technology and its applications, the Commission noted, were important for vital areas ranging from food security and agricultural systems to natural disaster reduction, health care and hygiene.

The Commission gave high priority to the future energy needs of the Pacific region. It resolved to facilitate the exchange of experience and information among members and associate members on the efficient use of energy and the enhanced application of renewable energy technologies for small island States.

Human resources development was considered a key issue for alleviating poverty, especially for the enhancement of educational, health and employment status in marginalised population groups. The Commission resolved to focus on investments in all areas of human resources development, including education and training, health and nutrition, and promoting sustainable livelihoods to empower people to become self-reliant and self-supporting.

During the meeting, the Commission closely examined ESCAP's work programme. In view of the impacts on the region of increasing globalisation, the active involvement of the United Nations in macroeconomic policy-making and coordination was considered imperative. High priority was accorded to all of ESCAP's programmes, such as regional economic cooperation, environment and natural resources development, socioeconomic measures to alleviate poverty in rural and urban areas, transport communications, tourism and infrastructure development, and statistics. The Commission called on the secretariat to continue to reform itself, while acknowledging the efforts made so far to reduce costs and streamline its programmes.

During this first session of the millennium, ESCAP welcomed Georgia as its newest member and said goodbye to its outgoing Executive Secretary Adrianus Mooy of Indonesia. The Commission expressed its deep gratitude for his five-year service towards the social and economic development of the region. On 1 July, Hak-Su Kim, from the Republic of Korea, took over as ESCAP's new Executive Secretary. (MJ)



SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS FROM FOSSIL FUEL BURNING IN ASIA, EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES, 1980-2010					
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2010
	(million tons of sulphur dioxide)				
Europe	59	42	31	26	18
United States	24	20	16	15	14
Asia	15	34	40	53	79

SOURCE: *Vital Signs*, 1998. Worldwatch-Institute

Courtesy: World Ecology Report

that ESCAP should continue to enhance its institutional capacity to undertake its mission as a leading institution in economic and social development in the region.

The Commission reaffirmed its strong commitment to a rule-based multilateral trading system that operated in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner and that ensured predictable and secure market access. It noted that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was of paramount importance to the expansion of trade, continued economic prosperity and all-round balanced development. However, since many developing countries in the ESCAP region were not yet members of WTO, the secretariat was asked to give high priority to its technical assistance and advisory services to enable these countries to integrate into the world economy.

With the goal of strengthening its subregional programmes, the Commission proclaimed the Decade of Greater Mekong Subregion Development Cooperation 2000-2009, to draw attention and encourage the support of the international community towards an intensification of economic and social development in the region. This is