



Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: *From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015*

26-28 August 2013

United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

Background

As of the beginning of 2013, less than 1,000 days remained for countries to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which range from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger to promoting gender equality and empowering women to combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

The MDGs have raised awareness and continue to generate real and important development gains in the Asia-Pacific region. They have played a vital role in shaping a broad development vision and constituted the overarching framework for the development activities of the United Nations.

In looking beyond the target of achieving the MDGs by 2015, Member States agreed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals that should address and incorporate, in a balanced way, the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and their inter-linkages.

Subsequently on 22 January 2013, the General Assembly established the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals with the task of preparing a report containing proposals for sustainable development goals. As stated in the Rio+20 outcome document, the sustainable development goals should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.

The United Nations Secretary-General established a High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda to formulate this new development agenda. After an extensive consultation process, the Panel's report was released on 30 May 2013, and concluded that "developing a single agenda that connects social, economic and environmental issues is critical." The Panel went on to define ambitious transformative shifts in five key areas: leaving no one behind (ensuring basic access to all); putting sustainable development at the core; transforming economies for jobs and inclusive growth; building peace and open and effective institutions for all; and forging a new global partnership.

Thailand, as an Open Working Group member from Asia and the Pacific, recognizes that the region has much to contribute to the global discussion. As home to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Thailand also recognizes the significant role of ESCAP in promoting among Member States a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, thereby making ESCAP the most appropriate forum for ensuring that Asian and Pacific assets and priorities are recognized in the post-Rio+20 processes.

The “Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015” will be the first regional Ministerial-level event to discuss the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 following the release of the High-level Panel’s report. With the General Assembly preparing to consider this report at its sixty-eighth session and move towards finalizing a United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015, such a regional dialogue could not be timelier.

The Dialogue will also benefit from the leadership role that regionally-based civil society organizations have played in articulating civil society perspectives on this global effort, as well as the increasing experience of the private sector in seeking triple bottom-line business outcomes.

The Dialogue will be a unique opportunity for the region to articulate its concerns and aspirations: Home to more than half of the world’s population, more than a third of its economic output and more than 40 per cent of its energy demands, the Asia-Pacific region is critical for the well-being of the globe.

The region’s economic growth has anchored the world economy during the current financial crisis, and lifted tens of millions of people out of poverty over the past few decades. But it remains home to roughly two-thirds of the world’s poor. The region is also experiencing unsustainable urbanization, rapid demographic shifts, rising inequality within and among the countries, as well as endemic gender and other forms of disparities. Although resilient, the region has been affected by the global financial crises and the high prices of fuel, food and other commodities, further compounded by devastating natural disasters and climate change. Water, energy and food insecurity still remain quite high in the region.

Objectives and Outcomes

- To collectively explore and identify the challenges in the region that should be addressed in the elaboration of the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015 based on the lessons learned from the MDGs framework and in the overall of context of the three pillars of sustainable development, plus resilience.
- The Dialogue is expected to adopt a Ministerial Declaration, and the outcome of the Dialogue will be shared with the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals as an input from the Asia-Pacific region.

Participants (by invitation only)

- Ministers and Senior Officials of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP member and associate member States)
- Accredited civil society and private sector representatives
- Representatives of regional and subregional organizations
- Representatives of United Nations organizations

For more information

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