



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

### Seventh session

Bangkok, 5-8 September 2017

## Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific, 2017

*As adopted by the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok on 8 September 2017.*

1. *We, the Ministers for the environment and Heads of delegations of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,*
2. *Having met* in Bangkok on 7 and 8 September 2017 at the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific,
3. *Emphasizing our commitment* to promote the environment and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific,
4. *Reaffirming*, within the overall context of our national circumstances and priorities, the endeavour to work towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>1</sup> the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,<sup>2</sup> the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,<sup>3</sup> the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,<sup>4</sup> the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,<sup>5</sup> the SIDS Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway<sup>6</sup> and the New Urban Agenda,<sup>7</sup> all of which are relevant for the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources,
5. *Recalling* the annex to General Assembly resolution 71/312 of 6 July 2017 entitled “Our ocean, our future: call for action” on the need to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1.

<sup>2</sup> See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

<sup>5</sup> General Assembly resolution 65/280.

<sup>6</sup> General Assembly resolution 69/15, annex.

<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

6. *Noting* the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific,<sup>8</sup> in which the management of natural resources is described as one of the priority areas for cooperation,
7. *Noting* the Tehran Ministerial Declaration adopted by the participating countries at the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, held in July 2017,
8. *Appreciating* the positive steps taken following the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in 2010, by members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nation bodies, multilateral financing institutions and other intergovernmental organizations, in the pursuit of environmental sustainability as part of sustainable development, including through regional initiatives such as the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative: Europe-Asia-Pacific Partnership for the Implementation of “Green Growth” and the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth,
9. *Recognizing* the importance of the platform provided for more than 30 years by the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific and the need for periodic meetings at the ministerial level,
10. *Recognizing* the Committee on Environment and Development as the main body of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for promoting environmental policies and strategies, including the sustainable management and development of the environment and natural resources,
11. *Noting* the convening of the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, co-organized and coordinated with the Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific of the United Nations Environment Programme,
12. *Recognizing* that, since the previous Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in Astana in 2010, the environmental performance of the region has improved on several fronts but that many environmental challenges persist,
13. *Noting with concern* that environmental degradation, including that exacerbated by climate change, also threatens human livelihoods, health and well-being and undermines efforts to achieve food security as well as to end extreme poverty and hunger and ensure healthy lives, especially for populations dependent on natural resources,
14. *Recognizing* that, while economic growth has improved the living standard of millions of people in Asia and the Pacific, it has not been sufficient to pursue sustainable development and that the pressures of unsustainable production and consumption have placed considerable strains on the natural resource base and on ecosystems, which underpin economies and societies,
15. *Noting* that environmental issues should be addressed together with economic and social issues in an integrated and balanced manner by promoting and addressing interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals, as outlined in the outcome document entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015,

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<sup>8</sup> E/ESCAP/73/31, annex II.

16. *Taking into account* different national socioeconomic circumstances, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities, while remaining consistent with international rules and obligations regarding the environment and development,

17. *Recalling* all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,<sup>9</sup> including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities,

18. *Resolve* to:

(a) Contribute, as appropriate, to addressing the harmful effects of climate change through enhanced climate actions;

(b) Ensure conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, in particular by strengthening resource efficiency measures;

(c) Improve the efficiency of natural resources management and the overall performance of the economies in the region;

(d) Promote sustainable urban planning and spatial development to take advantage of the opportunities of urbanization and additional investment in infrastructure, so as to create environmentally sustainable cities;

(e) Foster sustainable agriculture practices that enhance food security while protecting natural resources and ecosystems and increasing resource productivity;

(f) Enhance sustainable livelihood, including through access to resources and ecosystem services for all, in particular women and vulnerable groups of people, recognizing their critical role in the sustainable management of natural resources and their lack of access to resources and ecosystem services;

(g) Promote, as appropriate, the green economy and the sustainable use of the oceans and seas, which would provide opportunities to enhance economic growth and social prosperity while reducing waste and pollution;

19. *Decide* to work together, as appropriate, towards:

(a) Promoting the transfer and use of environmentally sound technologies on mutually agreed terms and the elaboration of resource-efficient policies and practices, including through technical assistance, in particular in countries with special needs;

(b) Promoting regional efforts and cooperation to improve the environment, livelihood, health and well-being of people who live in areas affected by sand and dust storms, taking into account resolution 72/7 of 19 May 2016 of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific;

(c) Promoting effective development cooperation at all levels so that all development resources are mobilized effectively, including by contributing to conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, thus guiding humanity to live in harmony with nature;

(d) Enhancing capacities of government authorities and developing professional skills for natural resources management, as appropriate;

<sup>9</sup> *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.

(e) Facilitating voluntary technical support by member States that are advanced in the fields of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy on mutually agreed terms;

(f) Promoting regional dialogue to discuss environmental issues, including those that have transboundary impacts;

20. *Invite* financing institutions and development partners to consider the priorities identified and thematic issues addressed in the present Declaration, in line with country strategies and priorities, when they are developing their funding plans and to support countries in the implementation of the present Declaration, as appropriate;

21. *Request* the Executive Secretary to support members and associate members, in line with current mandates and taking advantage of the in-house expertise of the secretariat, in the implementation of the present Declaration by:

(a) According priority to promoting regional and subregional cooperation for the conservation, sustainable use and management of natural resources in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme;

(b) Further facilitating regional networks for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, lessons learned and good practices among member States, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in line with their respective mandates;

(c) Facilitating the collection and dissemination of information and the development of analytical products, including on sustainable production and consumption as well as waste and pollution, to support science- and evidence-based policies in collaboration with United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in line with their respective mandates;

(d) Continuing, upon the request of member States, to provide technical support and capacity-building, with a particular focus on countries vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation, in collaboration with United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in line with their respective mandates;

(e) Promoting the review of progress at the regional level on the areas identified in the present Declaration through the Committee on Environment and Development, as appropriate;

(f) Ensuring coordination with the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies in the implementation of the present Declaration, as appropriate;

22. *Decide* to hold the Committee on Environment and Development at the ministerial level in 2022.