

ECOSOC AMR Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific

“Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work in Asia and the Pacific: a regional approach to sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and achieving the MDGs”

Opening Statement by Mr.Kazuhiko Koshikawa, Director-General,
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Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this important meeting.

It is my great honour to address at the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review Regional Preparatory Meeting, which is jointly organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), under the theme of “Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the MDGs”.

I understand that the result of the meeting will be an important contribution to the 2012 Annual Ministerial Review to be held in New York in July 2012, during the high-level segment of ECOSOC. During this Ministerial meeting, the summary of the outcome arising from today’s meeting will be presented.

Japan recognized the importance of the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), as a key function of the Economic and Social Council, which was established at the 2006 World Summit to enable effective monitoring of the progress made towards achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), in particular, the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 target date.

Today’s meeting is an important opportunity for providing regional inputs to the 2012 AMR process through sharing national and regional experience in our region and make policy recommendations to advance the agenda forward.

Today’s meeting is organized in conjunction with the 15th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting of the ILO, which has just completed an hour ago. In this way, we can benefit from and build on the results of the ILO meeting. Similarly, the timing of the International Labour Conference, which will be held

just before the ECOSOC AMR in June 2012, allows a significant synergy between the two events, ensuring their linkages and mutual reinforcement.

The theme of the 2012 AMR: *Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the MDGs* is very timely. As we witness the current global economic and financial situation unfolding, we are convinced that sustained, inclusive, equitable and job-intensive growth is necessary not only to achieve MDGs, but also to enable sustainable economic, social, environmental and human development for all people. In this regard, I would also like to stress the need for a clear vision and strategy to achieve green growth.

While Asia and the Pacific region has made a tremendous progress in reducing poverty and other MDG targets in the past decades, led by strong economic growth, within a country, inequality and regional disparity remain persistent leaving the poorest and the most vulnerable behind.

One of the important lessons learned was that decent work opportunities are essential for reducing poverty, improving the quality of life, and maintaining dignity of people. But it is equally important to increase purchasing powers and aggregated demands, and enhance productivities, thus further strengthen economic growth.

There is a need for more integrated and coherent policies and strategies for increasing productive capacities. It is important to invest in physical and social infrastructures, institutional capacities, as well as in human resources in order to enhance human security. Healthy, educated, skilled, productive and flexible workforces are foundation for achieving sustained growth and socio-economic development.

Today's meeting will focus on promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work in Asia and the Pacific, through sharing good practices and lessons learned to enable sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and achieve MDGs.

With many successful experiences in our region, we can learn from each other, and further, sharing our experiences with other regions through the AMR process.

I am confident that the meeting will produce tangible results. I wish you a very productive meeting.

Thank you.