

UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue

Converging crises, shared solutions: Applying lessons from Asia and the Pacific to global challenges

Friday, 23 May 2025

2:45-4:30 p.m. ICT (Bangkok) /

09:45-11:30 a.m. CEST (Geneva) / 3:45-5:30 a.m. EDT (New York)

Theatre, Faculty of Arts, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building,
Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok, Thailand, and online

Introduction

As the world navigates an era marked by intensifying socioeconomic pressures, geopolitical tensions, and accelerating climate shocks, the need for a shared and actionable global vision has never been more urgent. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under such conditions requires not only renewed commitment but also deeper alignment between global and regional responses.

While shocks—economic, environmental, or political—often emerge locally or regionally, their ripple effects transcend borders due to the interconnectedness of our global systems. Whether it is a supply chain breakdown, a climate-induced disaster, or a regional conflict, the consequences now demand a coordinated global response informed by grounded, context-specific knowledge.

In May 2025, the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB)—comprising thought leaders and practitioners from across regions and disciplines—will convene in Bangkok, Thailand, to explore emerging global socioeconomic trends, risks, and opportunities. This convergence of globally engaged experts in a dynamic regional setting presents a unique opportunity to foster a two-way exchange: how Asia-Pacific’s experiences and innovations can inform global strategies, and how the broader international agenda can be grounded in regional context.

To bring this high-level conversation to a wider, global public, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) will host a Global Policy Dialogue on “Converging crises, shared solutions: Applying socioeconomic lessons from Asia-Pacific to global challenges” on the margins of the HLAB meeting. Through a moderated, interactive format—including online polls and live Q&A—the public will hear from HLAB members on the socioeconomic opportunities and policy innovations from Asia-Pacific

that can contribute to addressing shared global challenges. By breaking down boundaries between local realities and global ambitions, this event aims to help shape smart strategies to navigate an era of converging crises and transition toward a more resilient, just, and inclusive future.

This dialogue is being held in partnership with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and is made possible by the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund. It is free to join, and all are welcome.

Format

The 105-minute event will include two panel discussions. The discussions will be interactive and led by a professional moderator. Time will be reserved during the event for audience questions and polls. The audience will also be invited to submit questions in advance when completing the Zoom registration.

Location

The event will be recorded in person at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok with an in-person and virtual global audience.

Platform

The event will be organized with the support of ESCAP and will involve the hiring of a professional video production team. The audience can watch the event in person and through Zoom, UN WebTV, or on [UN DESA's Facebook page](#). The audience also can access the Slido platform to participate in the polls, submit their own questions or vote up questions posed by others.

Language

The event will be held in English with multilingual captioning available in the six UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) on Zoom.

Host/moderator

DESA will hire a professional journalist, Sandy Hanutsaha of NBT World TV and Radio Thailand, to facilitate this event.

Programme

Introduction

(4 minutes)

- Moderator welcomes the audience and provides logistical information
- Moderator launches interactive poll 1

Welcome remarks

- **Mr. Li Junhua**, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs **(3 minutes)**

Keynote remarks

(4 minutes)

- **Mr. Nopphol Witvorapong**, Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University

Discussion 1: Leveraging socioeconomic opportunities and perspectives of Asia and the Pacific to prepare for global challenges

(45 minutes)

Speakers:

- **Ms. Rola Dashti**, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
 - **Mr. Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue**, Professor of Global Development and Brooks School of Policy, Cornell University
 - **Ms. Anastasia Gage**, Professor at the Department of Global Community Health and Behavioral Sciences, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Tulane University
 - **Mr. Martin Kimani**, CEO of The Africa Center, New York
 - **Mr. Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah**, Chief Executive of New Economics Foundation, former Chief Executive of Oxfam, former Secretary General and CEO of CIVICUS
 - **Ms. Kori Udovički**, Head of Center for Advanced Economic Studies (CEVES)
- Moderator launches interactive poll 2
 - Moderator to ask each participant 2-3 guiding questions – first looking at how the world can learn from Asia and the Pacific, and then looking at what Asia and the Pacific can learn from the experiences in other regions
 - *In a time of converging crises—economic, environmental, and geopolitical—what can we learn from Asian experiences and perspectives to enable a more integrated global response that supports progress toward the SDGs? (Anyone)*
 - *Recent DESA reports underscore the need for stronger links between global and regional responses. How can Asian countries shape or influence global discourse to ensure that regional realities and innovations inform global action? (Ms. Dashti)*
 - *With the increasing complexity of global crises, how can the Asia-Pacific region contribute to reshaping global economic systems to better respond to inequalities, poverty, and economic instability? (Mr. Sriskandarajah)*
 - *What lessons can be drawn from Asia-Pacific's growing role in international diplomacy, trade, and geopolitics, and how can we use these lessons to strengthen the influence of developing countries in global decision-making on key socioeconomic issues? (Mr. Kimani)*
 - *Asia-Pacific is home to diverse economies with rapid growth, but also significant inequalities. How can the region leverage its economic dynamism to promote more equitable social development? (Ms. Dashti)*
 - *In many parts of Asia-Pacific, there is significant demographic and cultural diversity. What can we learn from these unique perspectives and realities that could inform development strategies to ensure sustainable and inclusive progress globally? (Mr.*

Eloundou-Enyegue)

- *The region faces public health challenges such as non-communicable diseases, aging populations, and health disparities. What are some innovative approaches that could be learned from this region to improve health outcomes and address health inequities, including for women and girls, while also preparing for future global health challenges? (Ms. Gage)*
- *In many parts of Asia-Pacific, there are deep structural issues around access to resources, education, and financial services. What policies or strategies learned from other regions can be implemented to ensure that vulnerable populations are able to seize economic opportunities and prepare for future global challenges? (Ms. Udovički)*
- *What role do partnerships and regional cooperation play in preparing the Asia and the Pacific for emerging global challenges such as migration, climate impacts, or technological disruptions, and how can these partnerships be strengthened for more effective global solutions? (Anyone)*
- *Given that local shocks now carry global consequences, what strategies can Asia and the Pacific adopt to build resilience at the national and regional levels while contributing to collective international solutions? (Anyone)*

- Moderator to take a few questions from the in person/online audience via the Slido platform

Video from UN DESA

(3 minutes)

Discussion 2: Best practices to prepare for a just transition in Asia and the Pacific

(40 minutes)

Speakers:

- **Ms. Xiaolan Fu**, Professor of Technology and International Development, University of Oxford
- **Mr. Fadhel Kaboub**, President, Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity; Associate Professor of Economics at Denison University
- **Ms. Raya Muttarak**, Professor of Demography, University of Bologna
- **Ms. Åsa Persson**, Research Director and Deputy Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute
- **Mr. David Christopher Smith**, Director, Centre for Environmental Management, The University of the West Indies

- Moderator launches interactive poll 3
- Moderator to ask each participant 2-3 guiding questions

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- *How can the concept of a 'just transition' be effectively integrated into the economic and social policies of countries in Asia-Pacific, particularly in the context of their varying levels of development? (Anyone)*
- *In your opinion, what role does technology play in enabling a just transition in the region, and how can it be harnessed to ensure no one is left behind, especially marginalized communities? (Ms. Fu)*
- *What economic policies do you believe are essential for fostering sustainable prosperity and reducing inequality during the transition to a green economy, and how can these be adapted in Asia-Pacific? (Mr. Kaboub)*
- *The demographic profile of Asia-Pacific is diverse, with rapid urbanization in some areas and rural populations facing different challenges. How can we ensure that the transition to sustainability is inclusive and benefits all demographic groups, especially those in vulnerable situations? (Ms. Muttarak)*
- *From an environmental perspective, what are the most pressing global risks and challenges that could hinder a just transition, and how can the international community address them while promoting equity and justice? (Ms. Persson)*
- *Given your knowledge and experience in working for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), how can intra-regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing efforts among SIDS could help different regions prepare for a just transition? (Mr. Smith)*
- *Can you share successful case studies or global initiatives that demonstrate how environmental, social, and economic goals can be effectively integrated to prepare for a just transition? (Anyone)*
- *Looking forward, what do you see as the critical steps that policymakers, researchers, and communities should prioritize globally in the short and long term to ensure a just and sustainable transition for all regions? (Anyone)*

- Moderator to take a few questions from the in person/online audience via the Slido platform

Closing remarks

(5 minutes)

- **Mr. Navid Hanif**, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist

Wrap-up and closing

(2 minute)

- Moderator's final remarks
- Exit survey will launch upon end of Zoom