Green Growth and Sustainable Development: Regional Perspectives

UN Regional Commissions
ECA ECE ECLAC ESCAP ESCWA
Green Growth and Sustainable Development: Regional Perspectives

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Contents

Introduction ..................................................................................................................................................... 1

A. Environmental democracy and institutional development as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development at a regional scale – Examples from the UNECE region.................................................................................................................. 6

B. Youth Employment: Opportunities and challenges posed by a transition to a green economy in the Arab Region........................................................................................................................................ 11

C. Achieving food security through sustainable agricultural transformation in Africa........................................................................................................................................ 16

D. Natural resources governance to support innovation and social protection for sustainable development: Examples from Latin America and the Caribbean........... 21

E. Promoting regional initiatives for Green Growth and Green Economy in the Asia-Pacific region........................................................................................................................................ 26
Introduction

Development in today’s context is at a critical juncture, with multiple crises (financial, food and energy) forcing us to re-assess the economic paradigm of our time and evaluate how to better address the unfulfilled promises that we are currently leaving to future generations in areas of employment, social progress, quality of life and respect for nature.

While the integration of the pillars of sustainable development is of utmost importance, the implementation of the concept has proved challenging in practice. In its simplest form, integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development implies the implementation of coordinated and complimentary actions in the different sectors which results in economic growth that also achieves social objectives, without compromising the limited resources of the planet. The effective integration of the pillars requires the implementation of a set of focused and specific actions within the three pillars, which are complimentary and fit within an overarching sustainable development framework.

As part of this side event, Member States and the Regional Commissions are focusing on key areas for sustainable development in their respective regions. Specific examples and approaches, ranging from norms and standards to economic instruments and overarching sustainable development frameworks, are being highlighted as contributing to the integration of the pillars of sustainable development. These areas serve to highlight the pivotal role that has been played by the Regional Commissions in promoting and implementing an integrated approach to sustainable development at the regional level.
Over the last three decades, regional integration processes have gained momentum, and have been complemented by many forms of intra-regional cooperation. These processes have provided the platform at the regional and subregional levels for many important and effective policy actions and dialogues to address key development issues, including climate change and sustainable development. Regional organizations and groupings have evolved as important players in determining the development agenda at all levels. There is an increasing acknowledgement of the regional dimension of development as a critical link between the global and national levels, and for formulating an effective and coordinated response to address economic, social and environmental transboundary issues, including climate change.

In view of their strategic positioning, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) called upon the Regional Commissions to play a leading role in coordinating regional and subregional activities by sectoral and other United Nations bodies, and to assist countries in achieving sustainable development. The regional dimension of promoting sustainable development was strongly recognized in Agenda 21 and has been constantly reaffirmed thereafter. UNCED also called upon the Regional Commissions and regional programmes within the United Nations system, as well as other regional organizations, to review the need for modification of ongoing activities, as appropriate, in light of Agenda 21. It stressed the need for active cooperation and collaboration among the Regional Commissions and other relevant organizations, regional development banks, non-governmental organizations and other institutions at the regional level. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) reiterated and further strengthened this mandate and tasked the Regional Commissions to facilitate and promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and
environmental dimensions of sustainable development into their work, and into the work of regional, sub-regional and other bodies. It was indicated that this could be done by facilitating and strengthening the exchange of experiences, including national experiences, best practices, case studies and partnership experiences related to the implementation of Agenda 21.

The Regional Commissions promote sustainable development by, among others, (i) providing an integrated approach to sustainable development; (ii) providing the link between the global and the national levels; (iii) Setting norms and standards at the regional level; and (iv) Promoting coherence and coordination among UN organizations and entities at the regional level.

This paper provides good examples from the different regions where coordinated actions have been taken within the different pillars, leading to a set of outcomes for the promotion of sustainable development.

Sustainable development is closely related to human rights, in that they reinforce each other mutually and pursue a common objective: human well-being and dignity of individuals. These common objectives are linked to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and the assurance of environmental democracy and transparency as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, a concept which is actively promoted by UNECE.

Active social policies in relation to education, health, social security, as well as inclusive economic growth which generate decent employment and opportunities for self realization are critical elements
emphasized in all the social world summits, including the Millennium Summit. In order to secure a more promising future for our youth, which is a substantial portion of the population in Arab countries, decent employment opportunities for youth should be embraced for the transition to a green economy, as pointed out by UNESCWA’s contribution to this paper.

Persistent poverty and inequality continue to thwart efforts for sustainable development. Closely tied to poorer populations’ daily struggles are hunger and food insecurity, which can be overcome through the promotion of sustainable agriculture, as stated in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program detailed in this paper by the UNECA.

The wealth of natural resources, ecosystems diversity and rich biodiversity serve as the base for our present and future development. In order to sustainably increase the wealth of the countries (in natural, human and built capital), a governance covenant is required for the sustainable management of natural resources, as discussed in the ECLAC example for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Green growth provides a positive agenda for pursuing the three pillars of sustainable development – economic growth, social inclusiveness and environmental protection – by seeking to develop synergies instead of focusing on the trade-offs and trying to balance them, and can be seen as a leapfrogging strategy allowing developing countries to pursue economic development without repeating the conventional “grow first, clean up later” path. Strategies such as Green Growth seek to improve the eco-efficiency of production and consumption so that economic prosperity materializes in tandem with ecological sustainability, as illustrated by UNESCAP’s Green Growth Roadmap work, Actively pursued in the Asia Pacific region.
Further reading:


A. Environmental democracy and institutional development as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development at a regional scale – Examples from the UNECE region

The rights of access to information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental matters are essential for achieving sustainable development, in particular for such important aspects as effective governance and greening the economy. Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration highlights the centrality of such rights, and some regions have made more progress in this regard than others. The Rio+20 Conference provides an opportunity for countries to reiterate their commitment taken 20 years ago and to further a universal application of Principle 10 through concrete instruments and actions. The UNECE region, which embraces both the world’s richest economies and countries with economies in transition, has made progress in this regard through a number of legal and policy instruments. These are the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on
Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) with its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR). These instruments serve as effective models for holding governments accountable and for ensuring public input into the process of defining and implementing green economy programmes, and in choosing the most appropriate road maps to sustainability.

**The Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs**

The Aarhus Convention was adopted in June 1998 at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the ‘Environment for Europe’ process. The Convention entered into force on 30 October 2001. The Aarhus Convention links environmental rights and human rights and acknowledges that we owe an obligation to future generations. It establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders, and links government accountability and environmental protection. It also focuses on interactions between public and public authorities in a democratic context. It is the world’s only international legally binding instrument enshrining Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

With forty-four States and the European Union now Parties to the Convention, the Convention is having a substantial impact in promoting environmental democracy in countries across the Eurasian continent. The ten years since the entry into force of the Convention have seen a number of important
achievements. National laws and legal practices have been revised to bring them in line with the Convention. Citizens are learning to use the Convention to make their governments more transparent and accountable. There is a growing body of jurisprudence based on the Convention and the legislation that implements it. The entry into force of the Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) in 2009 established a new legally binding international benchmark for reporting on emissions of pollutants from a wide range of potentially harmful activities, which can be used as a key indicator for measuring progress in the transition to a green economy.

**The Espoo Convention and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**
The Espoo Convention was adopted in 1991. It entered into force in 1997 and now has 45 Parties in the UNECE region. It has been applied to date to over 1,000 major economic development activities, and the application has increased over the past decade from approximately 10 to over 100 cases per year.

The Espoo Convention obliges parties to notify and consult each other on certain major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries. It also obliges parties to take the necessary measures to establish an assessment procedure that permits public participation. Through the Convention’s compliance mechanism, private citizens and non-governmental organizations can also make the Convention’s Implementation Committee aware of possible non-compliance by parties, so further encouraging parties to fulfil their obligations.
In 2003, the Convention was supplemented by a Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Protocol entered into force in 2010 and now has 23 Parties. The Protocol is open upon approval to all Member States of the United Nations. The parties to the Protocol have recommitted themselves to promoting sustainable development, basing themselves in particular on Rio Principles 4 and 10. The objective of the Protocol is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment, including health, by integrating environmental and health concerns into measures and instruments designed to further sustainable development. The Protocol on SEA requires countries to assess the environmental and health effects of national plans and programmes and, to the extent appropriate, of policies and legislation, The Protocol applies to development plans and programmes irrespective of whether they are likely to have an impact on the territory of another State.

**The Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development**
The UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is the regional implementation pillar of the United Nations Decade of ESD (2005 – 2014). It underscores that education for sustainable development is crucial for good governance, informed public decision-making and the promotion of democracy. It plays a fundamental role in overcoming social, economic and environmental challenges. 55 UNECE member States adopted the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development in 2005, thereby placing ESD high on the political agenda. The Strategy was prepared through a participatory process involving all relevant actors with the aim of encouraging member States to develop and integrate ESD into their formal education systems as well as into non-formal and informal education. The Strategy also suggests establishing a partnership mechanism between different ministries and agencies to coordinate the implementation.
Further reading:


B. Youth Employment: Opportunities and challenges posed by a transition to a green economy in the Arab Region

The Arab youth population is increasingly educated, mobile and informed. Their levels of literacy far exceed that of older generations, and the share of female students enrolled in university exceeds that of males in several Arab countries. Nevertheless, improvements in educational levels have not translated into increased employment opportunities. Unemployment in Arab countries has thus emerged as a youth-centred phenomenon, with youth unemployment reaching 30 percent and the share of youth in total unemployed exceeding 50 percent for most Arab countries in 2006. Indeed, 45 to 50 percent of the female labour force aged 15 to 24 years is unemployed in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic and Saudi Arabia. Unemployment rates in some countries are highest among highly educated individuals; unemployment rates among university graduates reached 56 percent.
in Jordan, 50 percent in Yemen, and 27 percent in Morocco; which has resulted in a twin challenge stemming from a surplus of university graduates alongside a shortage of relevant technical skills required by the local labour market. Youth unemployment can thus be considered a structural problem caused by labour market rigidities and a mismatch between the skills obtained by young graduates and the needs of businesses and industries in the region.

Employment Opportunities and Challenges presented by a Green Economy

A transition towards a green economy for poverty alleviation can thus hold promise for creating new employment opportunities for youth in the Arab region by replacing traditional economic growth targets with sustainable development goals that seek to increase access to basic services, e.g. electricity, clean drinking water, sanitation services, sustainable transport and healthcare, thus creating new employment opportunities in these specific sectors. Arrangements that facilitate the transfer and application of appropriate green technologies pursued alongside regional initiatives would foster a scientific community engaged in innovation in the region, and employ young graduates in the creation of new green technologies and processes that are appropriate to the needs of the region. Fostering entrepreneurship and green enterprise development, especially SMEs should be a cornerstone in Arab youth employment strategies as SMEs employ the largest share of people in the region and normally draw upon the local labour force and SMEs are also more likely to be committed to the sustainability of the communities in which they operate. Adopting and enforcing environmental regulatory frameworks can be the impetus for change and create a range of jobs in primary and secondary service sectors and industries needed to monitor, report and assist companies to meet green procurement, production, processing or packaging guidelines. Therefore, targeting youth employment as part of a
transition to a green economy is also appropriate as Arab youth are educated, informed and willing to challenge the traditional ‘business-as-usual’ approach to growth.

On the other hand, Governments need to assess if they will be the net beneficiaries or losers of jobs due to transitioning to green economy. Technology transfer that increases labour productivity and restructures labour-intensive modes of production may reduce the size of the workforce and youth employment opportunities. In addition, the substitution of local labour with imported expertise familiar with green sectors may create dependencies on foreign expertise and reduce opportunities for local or regional manpower. Structural challenges impeding the entry of youth into the Arab labour market may be worsened in a green economy if the curricula in educational institutions are not reoriented to train students in the fields, sectors and disciplines needed to support a transition to a green economy. A transition to a green economy should also consider avenues that create green employment opportunities for all segments of society and not only those who constitute the skilled labour force.

ESCWA’s work with Governments in the region
In April 2012, the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) issued the Arab Ministerial Declaration on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) that articulates the joint Arab position on the green economy. Specifically, the Declaration states that Arab countries wish to define green economy approaches based on national needs and priorities rather than applying it as a standard model, and that attention should be dedicated to the social pillar, notably to employment creation. The ESCWA 27th Ministerial Session (Beirut, 9-10 May 2012) endorsed the CAMRE Declaration and adopted a resolution which calls on ESCWA to follow-up on the outcomes
of Rio+20 and support member countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development; which follows the Guiding Declaration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia adopted in 2010, on giving greater attention to youth policies. The declaration stresses that unemployment is one of the main concerns facing youth and underscores the importance of creating new and promising employment opportunities.

Regional commitment to supporting youth employment objectives were also articulated at the First and Second Arab Economic and Social Development Summits (Kuwait, January 2009, and Sharm El Sheik, 2010), which ushered in the Arab Decade on Employment (2010-2020), and endorsed the establishment of an Arab Fund to support SMEs. While none of these declarations specifically identify green economy pathways for generating youth employment, several initiatives have been undertaken in the region to create employment opportunities within the context of a green economy, including those promoted through the ESCWA Technology Centre and an ESCWA implemented training program for the manufacturing of solar water heaters for Lebanese entrepreneurs and students. Accordingly, Arab Governments seeking to transition to a green economy for poverty alleviation need to consider the employment dimension – and particularly youth employment opportunities – when considering policy pathways for achieving sustainable development at the national and regional levels.
Further Reading:

1. Environmental Goods and Services in the ESCWA Region: Opportunities for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

2. Regional Review of Institutions for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region
C. Achieving food security through sustainable agricultural transformation in Africa

Food security and poverty alleviation are at the core of sustainable development in Africa. And long-term prospects for food security and poverty reduction are increasingly threatened by climate change, which poses important challenges for the sustainable development of agriculture, a key sector for broad-based economic growth and income-generating employment in the region. Achieving food security therefore calls for concerted efforts at effecting a sustainable development of Africa’s food and agricultural systems, which in turn entails increasing the productivity of these systems through pathways that ensure adaptation to climate change and sustainable management and use of the natural resource base.

Context
Africa is endowed with abundant land, water and other natural resources, which, with sound policies and governance, could be translated into increased food production and incomes and enhanced food security. Only 45% of total area suitable for agriculture is currently exploited in the region. Similarly, only
4% of available water resources are used, while only 6% of farmed land is irrigated. Africa, therefore, presents great potential for harnessing those resources to increase considerably food production and supply in a sustainable way, not only for the region, but also for the global food markets.

But Africa’s agriculture is yet to receive the priority it calls for. Because of decades of under-investment, the rural landscape in Africa is still marked by smallholder subsistence farms, low technology agricultural production systems, and poor infrastructure. In the face of climate variability and change, less than 10% of African agricultural land is under sustainable water management. Input and product markets are incomplete, endowed with inadequate infrastructure and support services such as information and communication, and poorly integrated at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. Private investment in agricultural production and markets is inhibited by the lack of appropriate and sustainable financial structures. Investment in the agro-industrial/agribusiness sectors to add value to and raise the competitiveness of agricultural commodities is constrained by the lack of enabling policy and institutional environments. The combined effects of these features include stagnating or declining agricultural productivity, weak backward and forward linkages between agriculture and other sectors, loss of competitiveness in world markets, increased food insecurity and natural resource and environmental degradation.

**Key issues and challenges:**

Prioritizing the implementation of the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)
Achieving food security through sustainable agricultural development calls for an integrated approach to the transformation of Africa’s agriculture, a shift from low-productive and subsistence-based agriculture to more productive, competitive and market-oriented food and agricultural systems grounded on sustainable farming systems and business models. In this regard, the CAADP offers a coherent African-led and African-owned framework, with the explicit target of achieving an average annual growth rate of 6 per cent in agriculture, developing dynamic domestic and regional agricultural markets, making Africa a net exporter of agricultural products and a strategic player in agricultural science and technology development, and ensuring sustainable management of the natural resource base.

The CAADP further offers a sound road map to achieving food security while greening the agriculture sector articulated around the four pillars of:

• Extending the agricultural area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems;
• Improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access through the expansion and maintenance of rural road networks, the development of agribusiness, supply chains and quality control, regional trade and international market-access facilitation;
• Increasing food supply and reducing hunger through improved policies, services and technology, emergency risk management systems and safety nets; and
• Improving agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption.

African countries are making progress towards aligning their national agricultural development
strategies with the CAADP framework. In this regard, 30 countries have signed CAADP compacts and 24 of them have prepared related investment plans. Yet, implementation of these compacts and investment plans remains a serious challenge as less than 10 countries have so far delivered on the 2003 African Union Maputo Summit’s commitment to allocate at least 10% of their national budgets to agriculture and rural development. Moreover, development partners have yet to deliver on their commitment to significantly increase their support to agricultural development in Africa.

Enhancing food security and promoting sustainable agricultural development through regional integration

Realizing the CAADP promise and the full potential of greening agriculture for enhanced food security in Africa also calls for bold actions to address two major impediments. First, actions should be taken to help link African farmers backward to agricultural input markets and forward to product markets which, with rapid urbanization in the region, are increasingly demanding for processed food and agricultural products. Hence the need for a comprehensive, value-chain approach to agricultural development, where the focus goes beyond the farm stage to embrace the agro-industry and agribusiness stages that connect farmers to markets.

Second, decisive political, policy and institutional actions are required to address the high degree of fragmentation and weak integration of the African agricultural market space along too many national and sub-regional lines. This landscape does not provide the necessary incentives for private-sector investment to allow the full realization of intra-regional production and trade potential on a comparative-advantage basis.
Against this background, ECA is supporting the African Union Commission in promoting an approach to fostering agricultural transformation in Africa through the development of regionally coordinated value chains of strategic food and agricultural commodities. Through this approach, (i) Regional integration would offer the economic space and incentives for profitable private sector investment in agriculture; (ii) Effective public-private partnerships would help deliver the necessary infrastructure; (iii) Regional cooperation in research and development would help pool resources around regional centres of excellence to tackle the technological challenges; and (iv) Appropriate policies and institutional frameworks would serve to promote cross-border investment in national as well as trans-national agribusiness ventures.

Further reading:
D. **Natural resources governance to support innovation and social protection for sustainable development: Examples from Latin America and the Caribbean**

Rio+20 offers the opportunity to redefine the development agenda in line with equality at the centre and the Latin America and Caribbean region is better poised than ever to do so with its abundance of natural resources in a global context of increasing scarcity.

**The Region’s Context**
The Latin America and Caribbean region is characterized by a wealth of natural resources, ecological diversity and rich biodiversity. The abundant natural resource assets of the region include: 6 of the world’s 17 mega-diverse countries (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru), and the Amazon (most mega-diverse area on the planet); a third of global water reserves; 12 per cent cultivable land in the region; 13% of world oil production; 49% of world silver reserves; 48% of world soybean production.
and so forth. In addition to having abundant natural resources, the region is stable in macro-economic terms (with stable and robust economic growth, accumulation of reserves, low public debt and inflation) and has had significant improvements in social and economic indicators over the last twenty years.

However, the region does not rely on competitive advantages, but on its static comparative advantages (natural resources); there is low investment in infrastructure, exploration and value added, which makes the region lag behind in innovation, science, technology and production capacity. In addition, it is weak in developing mechanisms for equitable distribution across households, economic sectors and territories and via the labour market.

While the region is a successful exporter of its raw materials, it struggles to exploit them sustainably and ensure the higher gains received translate into more equitable and sustainable development. These challenges are difficult for the region and raise multiple questions for governance and regional coordination.

**Proposals**
The reform of the governance of natural resources refers to the appropriation and distribution of increasing returns from the exploitation of these resources to maximize their contribution to development and minimizing negative externalities. The mechanisms and strategies for such governance require public policies involving institutional, regulatory, tax reform, strategic planning, management and environmental conflicts management. In addition, this governance demands long-term institutional innovation that provides maximum social benefits to both present and future generations to ensure
sustainability. Some instruments that are of use to States include: public funds for saving, special purpose investment (education, innovation) or macro-stabilization funds that are counter-cyclical. In particular for the region, it is necessary to reverse the trend towards economies heavily reliant on primary exports (or “re-primaritization”) and ensure that policies are created that invest in other important capital—human, infrastructure and technological (see graph next page). State’s institutions and instruments should be strengthened and provide mechanisms to translate the contributions of natural resources into development with social and environmental criteria, both nationally and regionally. Resources can be channelled toward various areas including environmentally sustainable production infrastructure, education/capacity building and human resources training, and social, cultural and health protections.

In order to ensure that development with equality at its core and environmental sustainable, it is necessary that social gaps be closed, that growth is inclusive, that the exploitation of natural resources be conducted in a socially and environmentally responsible way and that the processes involve authorities and citizens in on-going active dialogue. Encouraging spaces for deliberation, the active participation of decision-makers and communities in transparent dialogue as called for under Principle 10 is also of utmost importance, especially with regard to socio-environmental conflicts. Additional elements to consider is the creation of denser production chains, the implementation of a fiscal reform that channel profits to society and create economic opportunities for future generations, and the internalization of the real costs of exploitation, both present and contingent.
(Percentages of the regional total)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on the United Nations database COMTRADE
In addition to targeted investments for society, the strengthening of regional integration, through trade, natural resource governance or the availability of information and increased citizen participation will no doubt contribute to a convergence of criteria for more equitable governance of natural resources and can help build political consensus and create fiscal mechanisms to ensure the development of the region remains sustainable and with equality at its core. The complexity of the topic of governance of natural resources lends itself to multi-disciplinary work at ECLAC, in addition to being a priority line of research, especially as we move forward from Rio+20.

Further Reading

1. Sustainable development 20 years on from the Earth Summit: progress, gaps and strategic guidelines for Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.3346/Rev.1), United Nations, March 2012 [online: www.cepal.org/rio20 ]
E. Promoting regional initiatives for Green Growth and Green Economy in the Asia-Pacific region

The Asia-Pacific region has experienced rapid economic growth in recent years, helping to lift millions out of poverty and achieve significant development progress of which the region is proud. However, recent crises have undone some of these development gains unfortunately, and the region’s growth is under pressure due to the new reality of resource constraints and climate crisis. ESCAP estimates that in 2011 alone 42 million of the region’s most vulnerable people were pushed back into poverty due to energy and food price increases. Its “Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012” has analysed that volatile and high commodity prices are likely to become the “new normal” of the global economy and its impact is worsening in many parts of the Asia-Pacific region, thus constituting key challenge for the Asia and the Pacific. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular poverty reduction, could be in jeopardy.

In order to effectively address resource constraints and gain
resilience, it is urgent for the Asia-Pacific region to move away from resource- and energy-intensive growth patterns, into more efficient ones. Shifting to a green economy, or green growth, is among those strategies to meet such challenge and to sustain economic growth required to reduce poverty.

As early as in 2005, the Asia-Pacific region adopted green growth as the region’s main strategy to address sustainable development, at the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED-5). Since then, the concept of this win-win approach has gained momentum in the region. In October 2011, the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for UNCSD adopted by consensus, the Seoul Outcome as regional input to UNCSD, which has outlined the comprehensive framework on a green economy, based on rich experiences in the region. It, among others, has recognised that a green economy has to be seen in the context of the overriding objectives of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and successfully identified a series of key features of a green economy in this context. The Seoul Outcome also put forward the expectations to the outcome of UNCSD, which should be inter alia action-oriented, forward-looking, inclusive and supportive of global partnerships for sustainable development.

The countries in the region continue to lead in pursuing green growth. There are a number of exemplar practices of effective policy leadership and initiatives in the region, including those emerging from the Republic of Korea, China, India, Cambodia, Kazakhstan and Indonesia, as well as from many other countries at national and sub-national levels. To name a few, the Republic of Korea first declared low carbon green growth as the new national vision for the country to follow in August 2008, even before the financial crisis broke out, and subsequently set up a comprehensive institutional and legal
framework to implement it. China has introduced a number of measures for green growth and resource and energy efficiency were featured prominently in both its Eleventh and Twelfth Five-Year National Social and Economic Development Plans. Cambodia developed a National Green Growth Roadmap in 2010. Kazakhstan adopted the Zhasyl Damu – Green Development Strategy 2030 and pioneered the Astana Green Bridge Initiative to link Asia and the Pacific with Europe through green growth, by hosting the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED-6).

There is a need to build on these “green shoots” and identify, analyze, replicate and scale up the practices that are making a difference. In order to promote this and to accelerate member States in their efforts to green their economies, ESCAP provides analytical, technical advisory and capacity building supports. Amongst others, an in-depth analysis on the region’s specific challenges in achieving sustainable development was provided by the joint ESCAP, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) publication “Green Growth, Resources and Resilience”. The report provided an analytical basis for the challenges and concerns faced by member States, and emphasized that some member States were already taking steps to shift economic growth to be more resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable. Building on this analysis, the “Low Carbon Green Growth Road Map for Asia and the Pacific” was launched in April 2012. The Road Map explores the opportunities that a low carbon green growth path offers to the region. It articulates five tracks on which to drive the economic system change necessary to pursue low carbon green growth as a new economic development path.
The five tracks are:

(i) Improving the quality of growth and maximizing net growth; (ii) Changing the invisible structure of the economy by closing the gap between economic and ecological efficiencies; (iii) Changing the visible structure of the economy by, inter alia, planning and designing eco-efficient infrastructure; (iv) Turning green into a business opportunity; and (v) Formulating and implementing low-carbon development strategies.

ESCAP also provides the Green Growth Capacity-building Programme, of which the scope and outreach continues to be widened, including through an online e-learning facility offering six-weeks online courses on the fundamentals of green growth.

Further Reading:
1. “Low Carbon Green Growth Road Map for Asia and the Pacific” (2012)

2. “Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012”
