FROM THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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FOREWORD

From the Istanbul Programme of Action to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a contribution by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to the deliberations of the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), to be held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016.

The Istanbul Programme of Action has provided impetus to building productive capacities in LDCs and achieving graduation from that status through structural transformation. The Programme also stresses reducing the vulnerabilities of these countries to various shocks, such as the food, fuel and financial crises, which affected all countries in late 2000, as well as to climate change-related risks.

With the recent launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the timing of the Midterm Review could not be more opportune. As the priorities of the Programme are specific to the needs of LDCs and are ultimately expected to support the sustainable development of these countries, they should be seen as instrumental for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

However, with 251 actions included in the Istanbul Programme of Action and with 17 Goals and 169 associated targets with the 2030 Agenda, it is clear that governments should have a clear understanding of the complementarities between these two agendas, and set effective strategies to meet their objectives.

This report explores opportunities to address the challenge of simultaneous implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda in LDCs. It presents an analytical framework, based on a set of

Despite recent technological advances and the commitments of international community to provide help, the Asia-Pacific least developed countries (LDCs) continue to face structural challenges in their development processes. Such challenges are highly idiosyncratic and, in most cases, associated with disadvantages in their initial endowments and geographic features, including remoteness, costly access to international markets, insufficient human, natural and financial resources, and vulnerability to disasters. Currently there are 12 LDCs in the Asia-Pacific region – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – seven of which have met the criteria for graduation in the 2015 triennial review of the Committee for Development Policy.

The Istanbul Programme of Action aims at overcoming the structural challenges of the LDCs through building their human and productive capacities and enabling their graduation from the LDC category. The overarching objective of the Programme, which received a strong endorsement from the international community through the adoption in September 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is to support the sustainable development of LDCs.

The last five years of the Istanbul Programme of Action will be implemented simultaneously with the first five EECUTIVE

FIGURES

TABLES

ACRONYMS

DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ESCAP	United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
GNI	gross national income
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICSU	International Council for Science
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISSC	International Social Science Council
LDC	least developed country
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WHO	World Health Organization

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Analyses in the From the Istanbul Programme of Action to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are based on data and information available up to the end of March 2016.

Asia-Pacific least developed countries refer to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

1.

the graduation criteria based on the latest available data, for 2014 (table 1.2).[3] The updated information shows that, apart from the seven countries that have already fulfilled the graduation requirements at the March 2015 review, three countries have cleared one of the three criteria and missed a second threshold by a margin of 5% or less. Details of their progress are discussed below for three groups of LDCs: those are neither landlocked developing countries nor small island developing States, those that are also landlocked developing countries, and those that are also small island developing States.

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          a   *a*   *S a* –

The three countries in this group have all met one of the three graduation criteria and two of them were very close to meeting a second criterion, as of 2014: Bangladesh met the economic vulnerability criterion but missed the25(t)-7.1(e)-9.19.2(op08)48l219.3(s)-18.8(e)-21/T1_0a16.3(h)-9.4(e25(t)-7.4
t   f t5(v)6.3(h)0.6(e10.1(0(wer)-b-9.2(:ywer)-4.18%)4.9(.wer)-Am)-11(l-7.18-0.6(l2(o)-9.7ou.5(i)i)-15(hwer)-C(t)-ambod)5

| Table 1.2 | Gaps between the graduation thresholds and the latest indicators, 2014 |

Country	Gross national income per capita	Human assets index	Economic vulnerability index	Income only	Have the criteria been met?
LDCs that are neither landlocked developing countries nor small island developing States					
Bangladesh	20%	2%	✓	–	–
Cambodia	24%	✓	17%	–	–
Myanmar	4%	✓	4%	–	–
LDCs that are also landlocked developing countries					
Afghanistan	43%	35%	9%	–	–
Bhutan	✓	✓	17%	5%	✓
Lao People's Democratic Republic	✓	5%	13%	42%	–
Nepal	45%	✓	✓	–	✓
LDCs that are also small island developing States					
Kiribati	✓	✓	122%	✓	✓
Solomon Islands	✓	✓	62%	34%	✓
Timor-Leste	✓	11%	75%	✓	✓
Tuvalu	✓	✓	69%	✓	✓
Vanuatu	✓	✓	49%	✓	✓

Source: ESCAP calculations based on data from various sources.

Note: See annex I of ESCAP (2016).

Table
2.1

Priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action

Istanbul Programme of Action - 8 priorities and 251 actions

Priority 1:

Figure
2.1

Mapping the actions of the Istanbul Programme of Action onto the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets
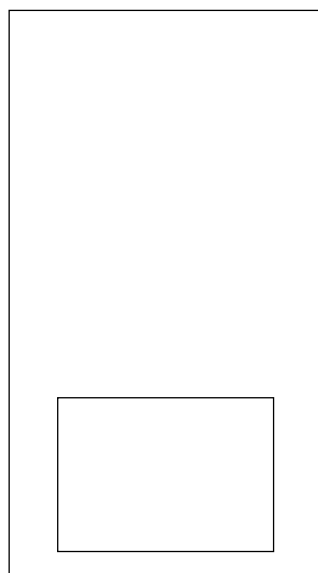
Source: ESCAP.

Table
2.3

Distribution of actions by pillar of sustainable development

	Social pillar (Sustainable Development Goals 1-6)	Economic pillar (Sustainable Development Goals 7-10)	Environmental pillar (Sustainable Development Goals 11-15)	Governance and means of implementation (Sustainable Development Goals 16-17)	Total
Number of actions	75	57	32	87	251
Percentage	30%	23%	13%	34%	100%

Source: ESCAP.

Notes: The first row shows the numbers of actions; the second line shows the percentages of the total number of actions. See Isgut and others (forthcoming) for details.

Figure 2.2 Distribution of actions of the Istanbul Programme of Action across the Sustainable Development Goals
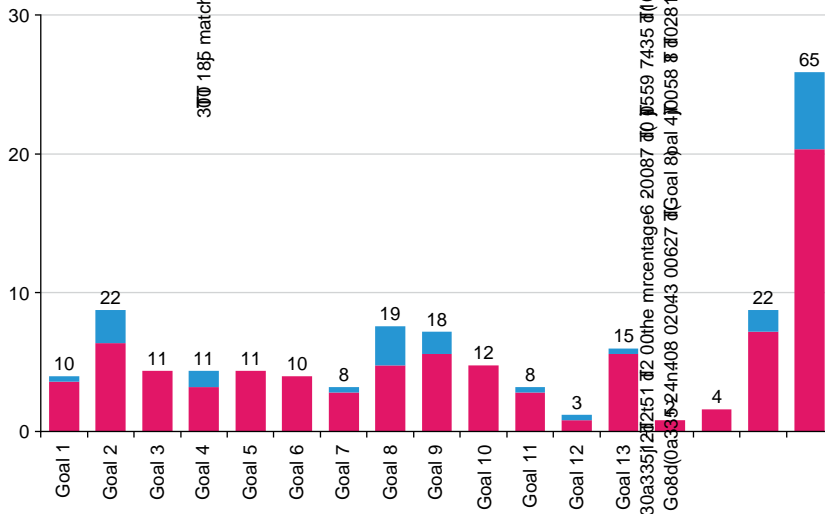
Figure 2.3 Percentage of targets of each Sustainable Development Goal covered by actions of the Istanbul Programme of Action

Figure
2.4

Initial Sustainable Development Goal priorities of the Asia-Pacific least developed countries

Source: ESCAP.

Notes: For each country, the Goals selected to answer question 3 in the survey (see annex II of ESCAP, 2016) were ranked according to how many respondents selected them. Each row of the figure shows the top-five choices in each country as coloured cells, with the red cells indicating the top positon in the ranking. In some countries there were ties in the rankings. When a tie occurred for the top positon, the country has more than one red cell. Ties at the bottom of the ranking may result in countries having more than five coloured cells. In cases in which a country had only one respondent, blue cells were used for the five selected Goals.

In sum, rather than viewing the Istanbul Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as two separate challenging agendas, they should be viewed as complementary and synergic with each other. The Istanbul Programme of Action proposes detailed actions that can help LDCs attain many of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

In the present chapter, the Sustainable Development
Goal system — or SDG system — is conceptualized as
a network consisting of (a) the indicators relevant to
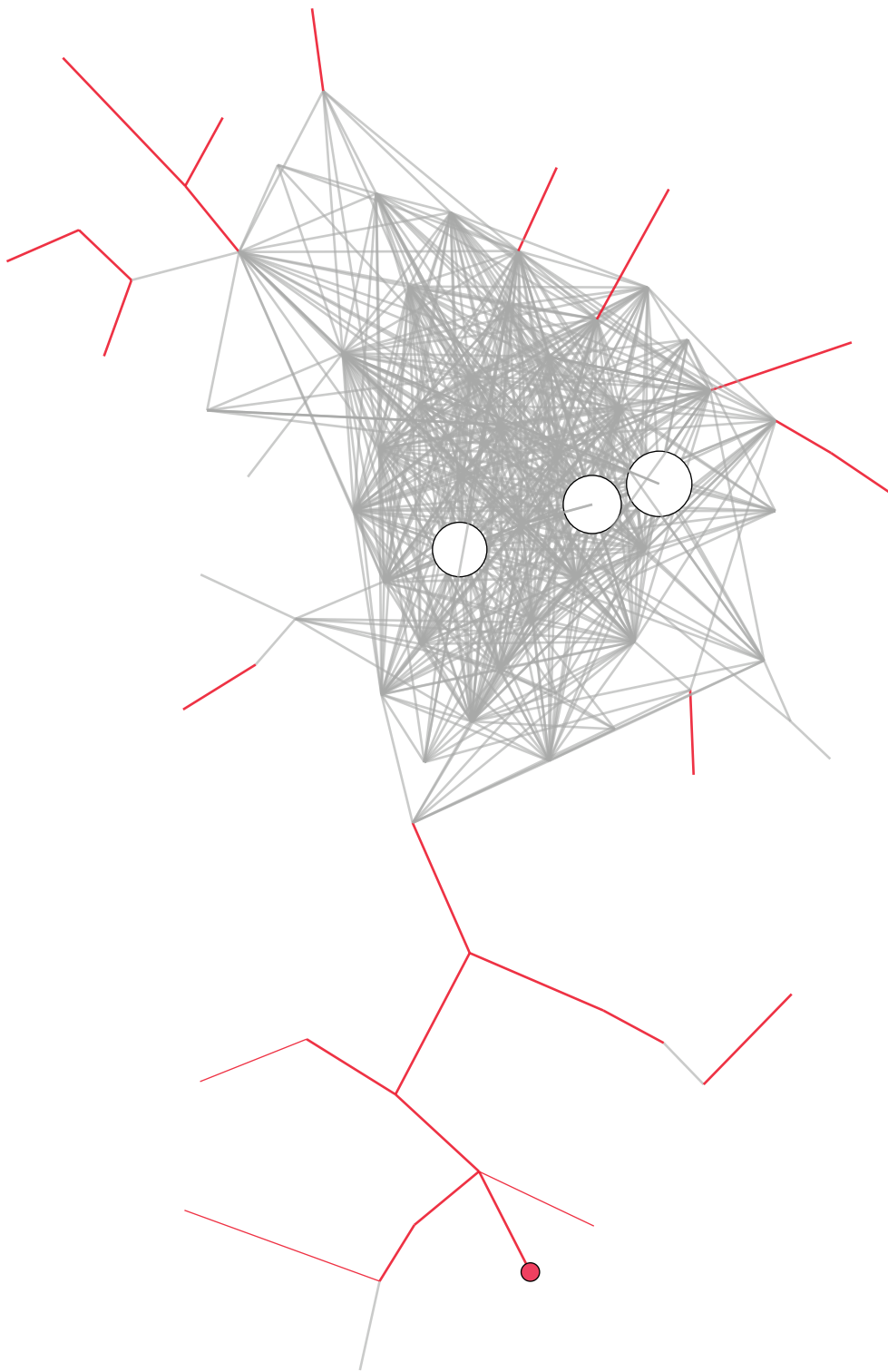
The red links in figure 3.2 represent indicators that are relatively less connected to each other. They show that many of the indicators related to the environment, such as CO_2 emissions per capita, consumption and production of renewable energy and fertilizer consumption, are in the lower portion of the network and are not directly connected to the core. This could ie7(n.5(94g.0.ea)3pol.3 3-8.(a1059((a1064(or)6(86(tt))3.o9(35216.t))3.o)3(e7(mp.5(84)-9.9t)-s 12v.7(e64(n-(. 0.22 4(n)0.73.4

Figure
3.3

The network of countries, based on proximities
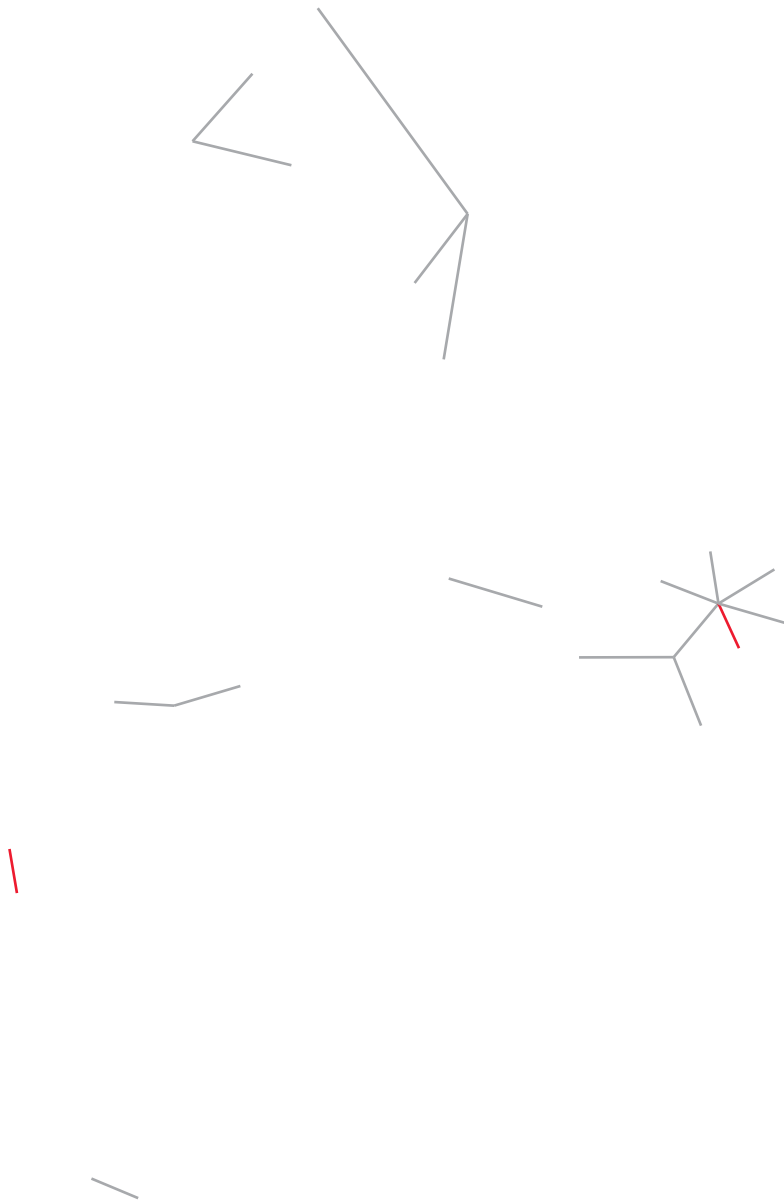
It is assumed that the degree of complexity of an indicator is inversely related to the number of countries that have high attainment in it. That is, if many countries are doing well in a particular indicator, its complexity is assumed to be lower. Thus, a more accurate measure of the SDG capacities of a country is a weighted average of the levels of attainment in the indicators, using each indicator's complexity as weights. As shown in annex III of ESCAP (2016), the measure of SDG capacities can be further refined by using the method of reflections. The more refined measures of SDG capacities are higher if a country is doing well in indicators that other countries are struggling with, since this suggests that the country possesses unique capacities that others do not have.

Figure 3.4 shows the SDG capacities of the selected Asia-Pacific countries. It indicates that the nine LDCs are among the bottom of the region in SDG capacities.

Figure 3.4   Sustainable Development Goal capacities, selected Asia-Pacific countries

Source: ESCAP.

Notes: (a) The SDG capacities for each country are normalized so as to be between 0 and 100, with 100 being the highest and 0 being the lowest level of the SDG capacities given the total set of countries included in the analysis; (b) developing Asia-Pacific countries in the analysis are the regional ESCAP member States, with the exception of Australia, Japan and New Zealand; and (c) red bars represent LDCs.

Figure
3.5

Sustainable Development Goal capacities versus gross national income per capita and the human development index

This calculation is country-specific, as it depends on the specific levels of attainment of a country in each of the indicators and on the position of the country in the SDG system. The latter provides critical information about the interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs between indicators and the degree of complexity of each indicator. This information facilitates

Table 3.1

Top priority indicators for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Bangladesh

First phase (2016-2020)		
Sustainable Development Goal	Indicator	Priority level (%)
4. Quality education	Education index (years of schooling)	12.1
4. Quality education	Secondary education	11.5
10. Reduced inequalities	Human inequality (health, education and income)	10.6
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Internet users	10.1
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Trade and transport-related infrastructure	8.3
5. Gender equality	Gender inequality (health, empowerment and labour)	8.0
8. Decent work and economic growth	GDP per capita	7.8
2. Zero hunger	Food supply	7.5
8. Decent work and economic growth	Commercial banking	6.3
Other		17.8
Second phase (2021-2025)		
Sustainable Development Goal	Indicator	Priority level (%)
8. Decent work and economic growth	Ease of doing business index (regulations)	17.2
3. Good health and well-being	Infant mortality	12.1
6. Clean water and sanitation	Water productivity	10.0
2. Zero hunger	Food supply	5.5
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	Overall life satisfaction index	5.5
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Trade and transport-related infrastructure	5.2
8. Decent work and economic growth	GDP per capita	4.8
4. Quality education	Education index (years of schooling)	4.5
4. Quality education	Secondary education	4.5

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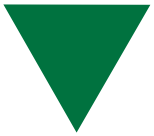
Figure 3.7 Progress across indicators in Bangladesh

Source: ESCAP.

Notes: (a) The red links represent proximity values that are less than 0.75; (b) the size of indicators is based on the average of weighted degree and betweenness centrality; (c) indicators are coloured based on the level of attainment of Bangladesh compared with its peers, identified as those countries with similar levels of SDG capacity. Red indicators are those in which Bangladesh exhibits higher attainment levels compared with its peers presently, while green indicators are those in which Bangladesh is predicted to exhibit higher attainment levels relative to its peers in 2030 if it follows the optimal pathway. White nodes represent those in which Bangladesh may not exhibit higher attainment levels relative to its peers by 2030. See annex III of ESCAP (2016) for further details.

the optimal pathway of Bangladesh also shows a number of bottlenecks, represented by large white nodes. These include poverty headcount, poverty gap ratio, the prevalence of tuberculosis and urban sanitation.

Scenario analysis

The present section compares predicted time series of SDG capacities for the optimal paths and two alternative scenarios.[23]

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Annex

List of indicators used for analysis of section 3

Goal	Indicator	Source
1	Population below $1.25 per day (purchasing power parity, percentage)	World Bank
	Poverty gap ratio at $1.25 a day (purchasing power parity, percentage)	World Bank
2	Population undernourished (percentage)	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
	Arable land (hectares per person)	FAO
	Crop production index (2004-2006 = 100)	FAO
	Food production index (2004-2006 = 100)	FAO
	Livestock production index (2004-2006 = 100)	FAO
	Food supply (kcal/capita/day)	FAO
	Agriculture value added per worker (constant 2005 US$)	FAO/World Bank
3	Health index	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
	Tuberculosis detection rate under DOTS (percentage)	World Health Organization (WHO)
	Tuberculosis incidence rate	WHO
	Tuberculosis prevalence rate	WHO
	Tuberculosis death rate	WHO
	Children immunized against measles (percentage)	

Goal	Indicator	Source
14	Renewable internal freshwater resources per capita	