

Chapter IV

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION

55/1. Sustainable development of inland water transport in the Asian and Pacific region¹

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 51/8 of 1 May 1995, the annex to which contained the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, in which inland water transport was accorded high priority,

Bearing in mind the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, as adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, which provided general policy guidance and set out requirements for improvement of the global environment,

Noting the Vienna Declaration adopted at the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment convened by the Economic Commission for Europe and held at Vienna in 1997, in which countries were urged to promote a shift in passenger and freight traffic from roads to inland waterways and other more ecologically efficient modes of transport,

Recognizing the need for national coordination in the use of water resources,

Recognizing also that inland water transport is an integral component of the overall transport system of the region and is one of the most advantageous transport modes, having the least impact on the environment, the lowest cost for domestic and international transport, enormous capacity reserves and the least energy consumption,

Recognizing further the potential of inland water transport for encouraging and supporting increased economic and social development in rural areas and alongside waterways,

Noting with satisfaction the recommendations of the Regional Policy-level Meeting on Sustainable Development of Inland Water Transport, held at Nanjing, China, in September 1998,

1.Urges concerned regional members and associate members:

(a) To integrate inland water transport within intermodal transport systems to provide door-to-door services for the movement of domestic and international traffic, thereby responding to market demand for convenient and competitive service while optimizing the economic, financial, environmental and social benefits that can be derived from each mode in the entire transport chain;

(b) To undertake detailed examination of the technical and administrative issues related to bringing national waterways into operation with the objective of facilitating international traffic;

(c) To accord appropriate priority to inland water transport in policy, planning and investment based on detailed analysis of the economic, financial, social and environmental benefits, and to promote public awareness of such benefits, thereby encouraging a modal shift to inland water transport where appropriate;

(d) To enhance cooperation between national agencies responsible for inland water transport and water resources management for navigation purposes through coordinated national planning and the development and implementation of policies;

(e) To increase the public sector resources allocated to inland water transport to reflect the relative priority of such transport and to encourage partnerships between the public and private sectors to improve the development, management and operation of inland water transport;

(f) To encourage the following:

(i) The adoption of appropriate legislation and the creation of a regulatory environment for the protection and effective utilization of inland waterways;

(ii) Safety in navigation, taking adequate care of the year 2000 problem;

(iii) Facilitation of cargo trans-shipment between seagoing ships and inland vessels for onward distribution;

(iv) The recognition and strengthening of the role in socio-economic development of country boats and small vessels operated by the informal sector, with particular reference to poverty alleviation in rural areas;

(v) The utilization of dredged materials, wherever economically advantageous and socially and environmentally acceptable, to raise and revitalize farmland, strengthen bank protection and reclaim land;

¹ See paragraph 226 above

(vi) Development of statistical information systems to support policy, management and operational decision-making, taking adequate care of the year 2000 problem;

(vii) Development of tourism along inland waterways;

(g) To establish or strengthen appropriate centres and institutional capacity to undertake studies and research to identify physical and institutional bottlenecks that are hindering the efficient development and operation of inland water transport, and to promote human resources development to address those deficiencies;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary:

(a) To assist riverine members and associate members, on request, in formulating policies and strategies to foster the development of inland water transport and its integration with other transport modes, and to encourage a modal shift of cargoes to inland water transport where appropriate;

(b) To promote technological advancement of the inland water transport sector through the provision of technical assistance;

(c) To assist in increasing the awareness of policy makers and the public of the economic, social and environmental advantages of inland water transport, through the preparation and publication of informative and authentic materials for wide dissemination in the region;

(d) To promote human resources development in the inland water transport sector and experience-sharing through networking among riverine members and associate members within the ESCAP region and also with countries outside the region;

(e) To organize, in close collaboration with the public and the private sectors, an international conference-cum-exhibition on inland water transport in conjunction with the third session of the Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development, to be held in 2000;

(f) To report to the Commission in 2001 on the implementation of the present resolution;

3. Requests donor governments and agencies to support projects that promote the integration of inland water transport within intermodal transport systems and its integration into comprehensive planning for water resources management.

*11th meeting
28 April 1999*

55/2. Economic and financial monitoring and surveillance in the ESCAP region ²

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing that the ongoing financial and economic crisis in Asia is continuing to affect adversely the economic and social development prospects of the countries of the region, causing tremendous human suffering, with the poor being affected most severely,

Recognizing also the impact of the Asian financial crisis on the global economy and, in particular, on developing countries with a limited number of primary export products,

Reaffirming the need to respond decisively to the crisis and welcoming the reforms being undertaken by the countries concerned to promote financial and economic stability,

Emphasizing the need for collective support measures to be taken at the global and regional levels, including active cooperation within the United Nations system, particularly its regional bodies and the Bretton Woods institutions,

Noting that, while globalization has offered opportunities for the economic development of many countries, it can also generate new risks of instability, requiring all countries to pursue sound economic policies, and also requiring adjustments to the international financial system to meet the challenges brought by globalization,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 52/180 of 18 December 1997 on global financial flows and their impact on the developing countries, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*, stressed the need for greater international cooperation, including through strengthened regional and multilateral cooperation to prevent future currency crises, which affected negatively not only developing countries but also the international financial and monetary system, and Assembly resolution 53/172 of 15 December 1998 on the financial crisis and its impact on growth and development, especially in the developing countries, as well as Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, particularly annex III on the regional commissions,

Recalling also the deliberations of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, as reflected in paragraphs 53-63 and 118-125 of its annual report, on its work in response to the crisis and in which the Commission recognized the usefulness of setting up, at

² See paragraph 61 above.

the regional level, mechanisms for the exchange of information and an early warning system so as to reduce the possibility of future economic and monetary turmoil and to ensure national and regional economic security and a stable financial environment for sustained development,

Noting with appreciation the steps initiated by the Executive Secretary, in close cooperation with other international agencies, to study the origins and effects of the current economic and monetary crisis in the region and to provide recommendations on those issues, including those mentioned in the report on the current economic situation in the region and policy issues presented to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session and in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 1999*, which includes a study on the theme topic, "Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: information technology, globalization, economic security and development",

1. *Reaffirms* the position of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific as the main economic and social development centre within the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to undertake detailed analyses of the financial and economic crisis, paying particular attention to the role of financial markets, and to present options to members and associate members which they may use, as appropriate, as inputs in the formulation of their relevant national policies, with a view to ensuring the attraction of a steady inflow of private capital;

(b) To continue to study the social and economic consequences of the crisis, paying particular attention to alleviation of the suffering of disadvantaged groups;

(c) To enhance the exchange of information with regard to the policies adopted and measures undertaken by members and associate members to address the impact of the crisis;

(d) To undertake a study on possible regional mechanisms for the exchange of information and early warning systems in relation to the financial and economic situation in the countries of the region, with a focus on crisis prevention and reduction of the vulnerability of countries to economic and financial turmoil, including:

- (i) Examination of related mechanisms currently in place or under consideration in various international and regional institutions;
- (ii) Analysis of the content, data quality and frequency of information to be provided by member States;

(iii) Recommendations for future activities, including ways and means of making regional contributions to global monitoring and surveillance programmes of the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral entities while complementing, but not duplicating, efforts already taken by multilateral financial institutions;

(e) To pay special attention to the implications of the financial crisis for the developing countries, particularly the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, as well as the economies in transition, by providing them with appropriate advisory services and technical assistance;

(f) To cooperate with the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant international and regional institutions in undertaking the analyses and studies mentioned in the present resolution;

3. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*11th meeting
28 April 1999*

55/3 Strengthening the cooperation and support of nations in the Asian and Pacific region in addressing the year 2000 problem ³

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling the deliberations of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, at which it expressed deep concern about the predicted disruptions that the year 2000 (Y2K) problem in computers and embedded chips was likely to cause, urged all governments to make resolution of the problem a high priority, encouraged all members to share their experience in resolving the problem and asked the secretariat to facilitate such regional cooperation,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 52/233 of 26 June 1998 and 53/86 of 7 December 1998 on global implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers and Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/45 of 31 July 1998 on suggested guidelines for addressing the year 2000 problem of computers,

Recognizing that the effective operation of governments, businesses and organizations is threatened by the Y2K problem which, if not addressed effectively, may adversely affect the delivery of essential services in critical sectors of society, including power, telecommunications, finance, transport and health,

³ See paragraph 257 above

Noting that the awareness creation efforts of the secretariat, other United Nations bodies and member governments, while not resolving the problem, have helped to generate strong national Y2K remediation and response efforts,

Noting with appreciation the availability of abundant technical material on the Y2K problem, including the papers and proceedings of the workshop held jointly by the Commission and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in June 1998, and the existence of funding mechanisms such as the year 2000 grants of the World Bank,

Acknowledging that the year 2000 coordinators and their representatives from 17 economies in the Asian and Pacific region convened in Manila from 1 to 3 March 1999, at the Second Global Year 2000 Summit, to discuss national Y2K readiness and to plan cooperation on information-sharing, transborder Y2K issues, and continuity planning and response,

Underlining the need for further effective action to address the problem, given the inflexible nature of the deadline and the current state of preparedness within the region,

Emphasizing that, while coordinated efforts by governments and private, public and international organizations are required to address the Y2K problem, primary responsibility for Y2K compliance and remediation action lies with the top management of each affected organization,

Noting also that high-quality public information is a powerful tool for combating the Y2K problem,

Recognizing that the increasing interdependence of economies and the interconnected nature of computer systems call for concerted and coordinated action at the regional and global levels,

1. *Expresses appreciation* of the initiative of the Philippines in promoting international cooperation in information technology by sponsoring the Second Global Year 2000 Summit at Manila in March 1999;

2. *Urges* all members and associate members to take early and effective action to bring their countries to the highest possible level of year 2000 (Y2K) readiness, not only for their own benefit but also to minimize adverse Y2K effects on vital sectors of other countries;

3. *Calls upon* members and associate members to practise open disclosure policies and enhance the sharing of information across borders with regard to Y2K readiness, best practices, lessons learned, embedded systems, and Y2K failures and successes;

4. *Appeals* to all members and associate members to forge regional and global cooperation to ensure a timely and effective response to the Y2K challenge and to work together to address the threats that the problem poses globally;

5. *Urges* all member States to expedite the remediation of their systems to guarantee the continued availability of basic infrastructure services, to use public information channels to urge the private sector to become Y2K-compliant and to disclose its readiness status, and to develop contingency plans to address the possibility of large-scale failures in the public and private sectors;

6. *Calls upon* all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society to enhance and combine their efforts to support regional and national Y2K initiatives;

7. *Calls upon* the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and other multilateral organizations to review and increase their level of combined support for national and regional Y2K efforts;

8. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission annually until the fifty-seventh session on the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered by members and associate members in addressing the Y2K problem;

9. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to seek extrabudgetary resources:

(a) To monitor closely actual and potential sources of funding to support the efforts of the developing countries, in particular the least developed and landlocked countries, and the economies in transition, to address the Y2K problem and to facilitate the dissemination of relevant information on those funding possibilities to members and associate members;

(b) To continue to facilitate the exchange of national experience on the Y2K problem, and the sharing of information and expertise available with various members and associate members, including through the use of the Internet, before, on and beyond 1 January 2000;

(c) To collaborate fully with all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in facilitating the provision of support and technical assistance for members and associate members that find difficulty in addressing the Y2K problem;

(d) To ascertain from United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, by 30 September 1999, the state of Y2K readiness in the region in their respective areas of competence.

*11th meeting
28 April 1999*

55/4. Towards a society for all ages: Macau Declaration and Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific⁴

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/5 of 16 October 1992, the annex to which contained the Proclamation on Ageing, in which the Assembly decided to observe the year 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 50/141 of 21 December 1995 on the International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages, in which the Assembly invited the regional commissions, within the existing mandates, to bear in mind the goals of the Year when convening regional meetings in 1998 and 1999 at which to mark the Year and formulate action plans on ageing for the twenty-first century,

Mindful of General Assembly resolution 53/109 of 9 December 1998, in which the Assembly urged that the issue of older persons be mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations and national socio-economic programmes and plans, as appropriate,

Recalling Commission resolution 54/5 of 22 April 1998, in which the Executive Secretary of ESCAP was requested to convene a regional meeting to formulate a plan of action on ageing for Asia and the Pacific, to report to the Commission in 2000 on progress in the implementation of the plan of action and to recommend further action and initiatives to achieve the goals and targets contained therein,

Bearing in mind the relevant provisions of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region,

Mindful of the necessity to integrate older women into development, to include a gender dimension in the preparations for the Year, and to strengthen the role of the family as the traditional provider of support to older persons,

1.*Endorses* the Macau Declaration and Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific, adopted on 1 October 1998 by the Regional Meeting on a Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific;

2.*Urges* all members and associate members to take early and effective action to implement the Plan of Action and to continue to give full support to the implementation of relevant regional mandates and resolutions of the General Assembly concerning older persons;

3.*Calls upon* members and associate members that have not yet done so to set up and strengthen national mechanisms on ageing, *inter alia*, to enable them to coordinate the observance of the International Year of Older Persons and to set specific time-bound targets on ageing and related issues, in the light of the needs and aspirations of older persons, in keeping with indigenous traditions and their milieux;

4.*Urges* members and associate members to pay attention to older persons in severe poverty and enable them to have access to basic health services in accordance with national priorities;

5.*Calls upon* all sectors of civil society, non-governmental organizations and private organizations to assist in the effective implementation of the Macau Declaration and Plan of Action and their respective national plans of action on older persons;

6.*Notes with appreciation* the valuable role of the media in the preparations for the Year and in raising awareness of it, and encourages the media, consistent with freedom of expression, to present non-stereotyped images of older persons;

7.*Welcomes* the initiatives and activities relating to older persons undertaken by members and associate members, the United Nations, *ad hoc* and specialized

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