Key Points of Regional Dialogue on Technology Facilitation for Sustainable Development

Summary by the Secretariat

Background

1. ESCAP, in partnership with Green Technology Centre Korea, organized "Regional Dialogue on Technology Facilitation" on 18 May 2014, as an associated event of the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

2. The Rio+20 outcome document underscores that technology and finance are among the most critical means of implementation to translate sustainable development commitments into tangible outcomes. It requested relevant United Nations agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, and requested the Secretary-General to make recommendations regarding such a facilitation mechanism. Consequent report by the Secretary General provided a set of recommendations for accelerating technology facilitation efforts. Some are to examine needs and gaps, and strengthen information flow and coordination on the existing structures; some are more ambitious, suggesting an UN-led mechanism for technology transfer at global level.

3. In view of ongoing discussion and initiatives on technology facilitation, the Regional Dialogue aimed to map out some of the initiatives taken place in the region and highlight regional perspectives based on the experiences in the region as well as to discuss the way forward.

4. The participants of the Dialogue consisted of experts, academia and representatives of national institutes working in the area of technology facilitation, ESCAP member states, Civil Society, UN agencies, ESCAP regional institutions..

On-going initiatives and framework for technology facilitation in the region

5. There are wide ranges of initiatives in capacity building of technology facilitation by international organizations, including ESCAP's regional institutions dedicated to technology facilitation;

   A. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT), which was established with the specific objective of facilitating regional technology transfer;

B. The Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA), which links research and policy-making on sustainable agriculture, with the overall goal to reduce poverty and enhance food security; and

C. The Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), built on the achievements of the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery (RNAM), to promote technical cooperation for sustainable agricultural mechanization and technology transfer.

6. Furthermore, there are also various institutions and frameworks initiated by member countries of Asia-Pacific aiming to promote development, transfer and disseminate of technologies within and across countries. The Dialogue provided with the opportunities to share some of these experiences in respective areas of technology facilitation, and work of national institutions established to promote technology facilitation across countries. The Green Technology Center-Korea (GTC-K) is a government-funded think-tank established in 2013. It aims to promote green technology cooperation connecting funding opportunities, R&D institutes and private sector in the Republic of Korea with developing countries to promote growth and diffusion of green technology and strategies. China-ASEAN Technology Transfer Center (CATTC) was established in 2013 under China-ASEAN Science and Technology Partnership Program to strengthen China-ASEAN cooperation and enhance transfer of advanced and applicable technologies. It offers a platform for matchmaking business to business technology transfer. Japan Intellectual Property Association and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) launched a project, "WIPO GREEN" in 2013, to build global technology matching scheme. It aims to offer developing countries with a package of green technologies which includes patent, as well as other supports such as know-how, training, engineering support.

7. The meeting also shared experiences of national institutions in other subregions, which highlighted some specific elements of technology facilitation. National Innovation Foundation – India provides an institutional support to local innovators. It provides access to facilities and resources (e.g. local labs, workshops, local language multimedia tools, databases of traditional knowledge or grassroots innovation, micro venture capital) to add value to the local innovation, share knowledge and provide support for new product development. Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) in Nepal is national executing agency for renewable energy technology under Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. Major renewable technologies being implemented include micro and

mini-hydro including improved water mills; sola PV, biogas. Renewable energy technologies benefited about 1.5 million household and micro scale renewable energy technologies provides 14% of electricity in Nepal. Indonesian Center for Agricultural Technology Assessment and Development (IAARD) is an institute under Ministry of Agriculture that links research activities and agricultural development targets such as improving farmers' welfare and competitiveness of agricultural commodities.

Needs assessment and local perspective

8. One of the key messages came out from the Dialogue was re-emphasis on sustainable development aspect in the discussion of facilitation of clean and environmentally sound technologies. Technologies in the context of sustainable development should also take account of contributions to all three dimensions; environment, economic and social. Key question is how science and technologies serve the poor and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development, and address pressing development challenges such as poverty alleviation, health and sanitation, and food security. Other important aspect discussed in the Dialogue was the importance of local context. Technology needs vary with socio-economic, cultural and geographic context. It has been emphasized that transfer of technologies has to match the needs in the local context.

9. Many needs assessment have taken place in technologies associated with climate change, yet there is a significant gap in needs assessment in areas that matters large population in the region, such as needs of farmers. Nonetheless, capacity of the developing countries to assess the technology needs remains a key challenge.

10. Needs of the technology recipients may be identified at project level or matching exercise between businesses to some extent.

Enabling environment

11. In that context, it has been pointed out that the role of civil society and stakeholder participation in assessing the needs and facilitating technologies. There are many examples in the region where government, local community and NGOs work together in facilitating agricultural technology.

12. Technology transfer and local adaptation involve whole life cycle of technology, from development, transfer and to dissemination. Activities and requirements for capacities and resources vary for each stage of the technology cycle. For instance, technical capabilities

required and risks involved may be larger at the beginning stage (i.e., technology development stage) while investment required and importance of local context is much larger in dissemination and scaling up.

13. Market readiness, financial resources, intellectual property rights are some of the areas which are key to ensure enabling environment for technology facilitation.

Regional perspective and way forward

14. The Dialogue noted that global technology facilitation mechanism and regional cooperation complement each other as technology cooperation at regional level can provide concrete examples of practices while global process sets norms and goals.

15. It was also discussed that there is a need for strengthening coordination at regional level by bringing relevant institutions together and capitalizing existing information, institutions, and resources. Regional cooperation could be explored in R&D, pooling financial and technical resources.

16. Some participants suggested that, given the cross-cutting nature of sustainable development and wide array of on-going initiatives in technology facilitation, ESCAP, including ESCAP Regional Institutions, is the most appropriate platform for coordinating those initiatives.