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High level of informal jobs reported in Asia-Pacific region, UN report finds



24 March 2010 – Unemployment rates are artificially low in Asia and the Pacific because many people hold jobs in the informal sector, according to a United Nations report released today that provides a comparison of economic, social and environmental trends in the region.

“There are still millions of people in Asia who work in the informal sector, and stand outside of formal statistics,” said Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (**ESCAP**).

“We must work to improve our ability to gather this information. Without accurate data to develop good policies, these people remain uncounted and unprotected,” Ms. Heyzer added, highlighting the usefulness of the Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2009.

The report also noted that Asia and the Pacific, particularly China, spend more on research and development than many other world regions.

The negative cost of high economic growth in Asia and the Pacific is reflected in deforestation, forest degradation and loss of biodiversity.

According to the report, the Asia-Pacific region was last year home to about one third of all threatened animal and plant species – the highest rate in the world.

Humans are also under threat, from smoking and related non-communicable diseases.

While only about 6 per cent of women in the region light up, in East and North and South-East Asia more than half of all men smoke. The numbers are even higher in the Pacific islands.

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