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UN meeting hears call for greater Asia-Pacific cooperation on development goals



ECOSOC in session

7 December 2011 –

Asia-Pacific countries need to boost their cooperation with each other if the region is to achieve the series of social and economic targets known as the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) by their 2015 deadline, a United Nations meeting heard today.

Ambassador Abulkalam Abdul Momen of Bangladesh, the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, told a regional ECOSOC meeting, held in Kyoto, Japan, that the “very diversity” of countries in Asia and the Pacific should be turned into an asset.

The countries “can create an effective regional network on which knowledge and skill can be built on and shared,” he said. “This will enable countries at different stages of development to learn from each other, sharing information, good practices and lessons learned, and transferring knowledge and technology for the upliftment of humanity.”

Mr. Momen said tangible progress towards the MDGs – which include slashing poverty, reducing maternal mortality and halting environmental degradation – will only be possible across the region when there are targeted approaches that tackle the particular needs of individual countries.

Some East Asian countries, for example, have been economic “tigers,” attracting large amounts of investment and enjoying rising productivity, he noted. Pacific island nations, however, face particular difficulties because of climate change.

“For small island developing and climatically vulnerable States, the prospect of a continuing warming climate, together with narrowing economic, trade and employment options, mean that their very survival is at stake.”

Today’s meeting, which has attracted more than 100 participants from governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and the UN, was held to share best practices and lessons learned in promoting jobs and productive capacity in the region.

It was organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)) and the Japanese Government.

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