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Green economy key to overcoming resource constraints in Asia-Pacific – UN

Green Growth, Resources and Resilience

**Environmental Sustainability
in Asia and the Pacific**



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Countries in the Asia-Pacific region could overcome the constraints of limited resources by making the transition from dependence on traditional means of production to a more sustainable green economy, according to a joint report unveiled today by the United Nations and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The region utilizes three times as much resources to produce \$1 of gross domestic product (GDP) compared to the rest of the world, and resource use in the region grew by 50 per cent between 1995 and 2005, says the report, entitled *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience: Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific*.

Produced by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)), the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) and ADB ahead of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development ([Rio+20](#)) to be held in Brazil in June, the report emphasizes that the challenges of resource constraints are more serious in the Asia-Pacific region than anywhere else.

It rejects the assumption that technology advances will be able to solve the problems of resource constraints and proposes specific strategies for changing economic incentives to promote a green economy which uses resources much more efficiently.

“Countries of Asia and the Pacific have been at the forefront of implementing initiatives to green their economic growth and will reap the benefits of such investments economically, socially and environmentally,” [said](#) Young Woo Park, UNEP’s regional director.

With the global market for green goods and services expanding rapidly and the right policies and investments, the Asia-Pacific region could lead the world towards a more sustainable future, according to Nessim Ahmad, director of ADB’s Environment and Social Safeguards Division.

The report stresses that economic incentives to promote investments in resource efficiency and natural resource protection are key, but action on other fronts is also needed, including an integrated policy framework and approaches.

Governance must be more adaptive and inclusive and become more adept at harnessing knowledge from different sources and incorporating information from various stakeholders, the report stresses.

For developing countries, the massive investments in infrastructure, as well as the unmet needs for energy, water, transportation and housing, offer a window of opportunity to change the way that energy and other resources are used, it states.

The report addresses the two main Rio+20 themes – green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and institutional framework for sustainable development.

“Business as usual is no longer a feasible option, but many governments and other stakeholders still do not recognize the urgency of the challenge of improving the resource efficiency of economic growth,” said Rae Kwon Chung, director of ESCAP’s environment and development division.

The Asia-Pacific region’s resource and pollution-intensive growth trends means the region is at risk of not being able to sustain the growth needed to reduce poverty in the long term, the report points out.

Optimistic growth projections for the region do not factor in resource constraints sufficiently, Mr. Chung added. Green growth, he underlined, is a strategy to achieve sustainable development, addressing both resource constraints and the climate crisis.

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