

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development Bangkok and online, 27–30 March 2023

Summary of SDG 9 round table discussion

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

The outcomes of the round table on Sustainable Development Goal 9 were informed by the relevant goal profile and focused attention on the following action areas for Asia and the Pacific.

Promote decent jobs and green industry in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional resource mobilization is needed to drive systemic changes and innovation with a strategic and document-based approach. It is important for countries to place women and young people with disabilities at the core of industrial development, accelerate technology upgrading, boost productivity across sectors, put adequate investments in working conditions and skills upgrading and strengthen labour unions and workers' rights to ensure fundamental rights. While countries are shifting from resource-based to knowledge-based development, promoting women's participation in digitalization and addressing new risks such as cyber violence become more critical.

Countries need to address the interlinked aspects of innovation and industry to meet Goal 9 targets. It requires greater investment in research and development in industrial technologies to enhance production, drive innovation, increase productivity, support small and medium sized enterprises, and reduce waste and pollution. Fair access to resources, skills promotion and targeted policy support for vulnerable populations is crucial. Accelerated global decoupling and strengthened interlinkages within Goal 9 are needed for sustainability.

Foster innovation and digitalization for sustainable development. The need for better access to digital technology, gender-responsive infrastructure and scientific research and development for marginalized groups is emphasized as means to support inclusive community development. Better working environments for women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics jobs, enhanced benefits from artificial intelligence and a safe, rights-based cybersecurity system are critical. Public-private partnerships, protection of intellectual property rights and regulatory measurements for intellectual property protection can drive innovation and digitalization. Addressing systemic challenges, promoting policy coherence, regional cooperation and enabling practices such as digital inclusion and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education can further advance progress on Goal 9.

The issue of bridging the access divide requires more attention, particularly on digital literacy, inclusivity and affordability. However, it is also crucial to prioritize data privacy and protection. Additionally, measures are needed to prevent cyber violence with the advancement of technology.

Develop resilient infrastructure. Infrastructure projects should prioritize building sustainable and resilient infrastructure through research during the preparatory phase, considering the interdependence and interconnectedness of infrastructure. Labour rights, human rights, gender equality and environmental aspects should be protected, along with inclusivity of indigenous and local people. Funding gaps and financing for just transitions needs to be addressed. The mechanisms and policies for stakeholder ownership and early warning systems are vital. Appropriate plans need to be centred on sustainable development in the aftermath of crises, and communication between people and governments, countries, and stakeholder groups can be improved with advancements in communication technology. Targeted support and quality infrastructure can increase growth and innovation potential of small and medium sized enterprises. Sustainable and inclusive approaches need to be embedded into infrastructure development prioritizing access to key services.