

# Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific: Potential for Concerted Action at Regional Level to Reduce Risk and Strengthen Resilience

## Side Event Concept Note and Draft Programme

ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, Seventh Session

Organizer: Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM)

Date and time: 26 August 2021, 12:30 PM - 13:45 PM Bangkok, 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM Tehran, 7:30 AM - 8:45 AM Geneva

Format and Platform: Online, MS Teams

Register: <https://forms.office.com/r/Ggu5Tji4Rp>

Connecting to the side-event: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

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## BACKGROUND

Sand and dust storms have a large-scale impact and affect a range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to human health, productivity, agriculture, and infrastructure (transport). The findings of the Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) indicate that a high number of people living in South, South-West and Central Asia are exposed from medium to high level of dust which can have short and long-term negative impact on human health. Sand and dust storms also have wide-ranging negative impact on various socio-economic sectors including agriculture, aviation, and energy.

The deposition of dust on glaciers induces a warming effect, increasing the melting rate of ice. Along with the effects of climate change, dust deposition is a vital component of change to these essential sources of water, with direct and indirect impact on society through numerous issues, including food security, energy production, agriculture, water stress and flood regimes.

Reducing the harmful impact of sand and dust storms as part of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building efforts are interrelated and can help advance the progress being made for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Given the frequent transboundary impact of sand and dust storms, there is a strong case for the design and implementation of well-coordinated actions at the national, regional, and interregional levels.

The urgency and importance to build regional cooperation to combat slow-onset disasters is clear in a number of the United Nations General Assembly and ESCAP resolutions adopted in recent years. Some of these resolutions requested the ESCAP Secretariat to support and facilitate disaster risk assessment to strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms as well as to combat the negative impact of sand and dust storms.

In this context and as a member of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, APDIM is organizing a side-event during the seventh session of the ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction to launch the Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific and discuss how coordinated regional action on sand and dust storms can contribute to combating the negative impact of this transboundary challenge.

## Objectives

APDIM side event at the seventh session of the ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction will launch the Report on the **Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific** and will focus on its outcomes and recommendations to strengthen partnership and promote cooperation and coordination in the region. The side event seeks for a deeper understanding of the socio-economic impact of sand and dust storms; coordinated monitoring and early warning systems, particularly impact-based forecasting; and coordinated actions in most at-risk and exposed geographical areas to mitigate the risks. The side event will bring together senior officials from Member States, international and intergovernmental organizations, and experts.

## Programme

<p>Bangkok 12:30 – 12:40 PM</p> <p>Tehran 10:00 – 10:10 AM</p> <p>Geneva 7:30 – 7:40 AM</p>	<p><b>Opening Keynotes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)</li> <li>Ms. Letizia Rossano, Director, Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM)</li> </ul>
<p>Bangkok 12:40 – 13:10 PM</p> <p>Tehran 10:10 – 10:40 AM</p> <p>Geneva 7:40 – 8:10 AM</p>	<p><b>Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Amin Shamseddini, Programme Officer, APDIM</li> <li>Mr. Yoshiya Touge, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Tohoku University</li> <li>Mr. Alexander Baklanov, Science Officer, Science and Innovation Department, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)</li> </ul>
<p>Bangkok 13:10 – 13:25 PM</p> <p>Tehran 10:40 – 10:55 AM</p> <p>Geneva 8:10 – 8:25 AM</p>	<p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. John Leys, Honorary Associate Professor, The Australian National University, Visiting Scientist CSIRO, Honorary Scientific Research Fellow, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment</li> <li>Mr. Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi Birgani, Chair of National Committee to Combat Sand and Dust Storms, Department of Environment, Islamic Republic of Iran</li> </ul>
<p>Bangkok 13:25 – 13:40 PM</p> <p>Tehran 10:55 – 11:10 AM</p> <p>Geneva 8:25 – 8:40 AM</p>	<p><b>Open Discussion/Question and Answer</b></p>
<p>Bangkok 13:40 – 13:45 PM</p> <p>Tehran 11:10 – 11:15 AM</p> <p>Geneva 8:40 – 8:45 AM</p>	<p><b>Wrap-up and closing of the event by APDIM Director</b></p>