

Economic And Social Commission For ASIA And PACIFIC (ESCAP)

International organisations and groupings are an important part of the International Relations section of the General Studies paper-2 in the UPSC Syllabus.

This article will give details about the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific for the IAS Exam

What is the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP)?

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. Made up of 62 member States, with a geographical scope that stretches from Turkey in the west to the Pacific island nation of Kiribati in the east, and from the Russian Federation in the north to New Zealand in the south, the region is home to 4.1 billion people, or two thirds of the world's population.

This makes ESCAP the most comprehensive of the United Nations five regional commissions, and the largest United Nations body serving the Asia-Pacific region with over 600 staff. Established in 1947 with its headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, ESCAP works to overcome some of the region's greatest challenges by providing results oriented projects, technical assistance and capacity building to member States.

What is the function of ESCAP?

ESCAP promotes rigorous analysis and peer learning in our 7 core areas of work; translates these findings into policy dialogues and recommendations; and provides good development practices, knowledge sharing and technical assistance to member States in the implementation of these recommendations. ESCAP uses its convening power to bring countries together to address issues through regional cooperation, including:

- Issues that all or a group of countries in the region face, for which it is necessary to learn from each other;
- Issues that benefit from regional or multi-country involvement;
- Issues that are transboundary in nature, or that would benefit from collaborative inter-country approaches;
- Issues that are of a sensitive or emerging nature and require further advocacy and negotiation.

ESCAP provides a forum for its member States that promotes regional cooperation and collective action, assisting countries in building and sustaining shared economic growth and social equity. In addition, ESCAP gives stronger participation to the smaller and often left out voices of the region, the least developed countries, the small island States and landlocked States. ESCAP's norm setting and policy work ultimately impacts people's lives in a positive way by helping countries shape and implement a more balanced and inclusive development agenda for the region.

How is ESCAP structured?

The ESCAP secretariat comprises the Office of the Executive Secretary, seven substantive Divisions (MPDD, TID, TD, ED, IDD, SDD, and SD), the Division of Administration, and the Programme Planning and Partnerships Division. The delivery of ESCAP's programmes is supported by the subregional offices and the regional institutions.