Background Paper: Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: Papua New Guinea
Policy Priority 2:
“Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Growth”
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Background Paper

1. Introduction

The pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development has gained global momentum across global institutions. In parallel to these global efforts, APEC continued in its pursuit to promote the notion of Quality Growth which has been emphasized under various key strategic documents, with the most recent and notable being the APEC Strategy for Strengthening Quality Growth, endorsed in 2015. This builds on from the 2010 APEC Leaders’ Growth Strategy and APEC’s achievements over the past 25 years.

APEC Leaders have continued to reaffirm their commitment towards achieving robust economic growth by focusing on its five (5) pillars of Inclusive, Balance, Sustainable, Secure, and Innovative growth, and have remained cognizant of work being carried out under other international forums on the subject, including the United Nations on the Sustainable Development Goals. In working towards realizing the five pillars of the growth strategy collectively, APEC seeks to ensure that growth is dynamic and responsive to challenges associated with economic growth, and benefits and opportunities are experienced widely. With a growing global population, and demand for resources to support this growth, the need to ensure that the resources in the region are used sustainably and in an inclusive manner becomes crucial.

The focus on Sustainability is not intended to downplay the importance of other pillars of the APEC Growth Strategy, but to remind APEC of the importance of sustainability in any economic growth endeavours. As we work towards formulating holistic approaches towards achieving quality growth, we should be reminded of our common global resolve to achieving sustainable growth as encapsulated under the UNSDGs, and therefore collectively pursue and/or identify areas of work that are central to the overarching objectives of APEC, which at the same time contribute to this broader body of work, either directly or indirectly.

APEC is part of the larger global community comprising of both developed and developing economies. Whilst larger strides are recommended for least developed economies that need urgent actions to reduce poverty, hunger, and improve health, major investments in digital infrastructure to boost growth, develop economies should also focus efforts towards decoupling their economic growth from environmental degradation, thus making both their productive capability and consumption habits more sustainable. The conversation on sustainable development is therefore, central to the needs of all to ensure that APEC secures a future for economic and business growth leading to prosperity.

Although labelled the ‘Sustainable’ Development Goals, they contain broader elements of the APEC growth pillars particularly on inclusivity. Hence, APEC is in a position to advance various elements of the SDGs as they relate to APEC’s notion of growth and broader policy objectives. With respect to inclusive growth, this has been a focus of APEC’s work throughout the years and past host economies have rightly given this discussion prominence. PNG in 2018 proposes to build off this great work, and to consider this more closely with the discussions on sustainability.

1 2016 APEC Leaders
As APEC looks at post-Bogor and considers new and emerging issues like the digital economy, the conversation on growth (sustainability and inclusivity particularly) may bring about new considerations that APEC must be mindful of. In 2018, these in addition to others are the conversations that PNG believes must be held.

In pursuing the above objectives on building Sustainable and Inclusive communities, the following areas will be looked at in more detail:

(a) Inclusive and Sustainable Resource Development, including the role of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR);

(b) Gender Inclusion and Women’s Economic Empowerment; and

(c) Food Security through Agriculture and Fisheries

2. Key Issues

APEC in 2018 should advance some of these issues through discussions on promoting sustainable and inclusive growth, and look to better harnessing opportunities to drive Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, including through digital opportunities and technologies that will give “Growth” a new outlook.

(a) Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Development

APEC should kick-start the conversation on how, as a region, it could cooperate and share best practices on Sustainable, Measureable, and Transparent ways to ensure that resources are being exploited for maximum economic benefit, and that adverse impacts (natural and man-made) on the environment and persons are optimized, the ability for future generations to enjoy resources are not hampered, and that the discussions be made in the context of responsible resource management and equitable development in fisheries, forestry, agriculture, energy, mining and other extractive industries, tourism, amongst others. This will demonstrate APEC’s commitment to ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth and its upholding of relevant global commitments to sustainable development.

We look to better engage the business sector in this conversation as directed by APEC leaders in 2013 where they called for better Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements and CSR to promote Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.

While the focus and expectation is on corporate bodies to engage in CSR as part of their community engagement, Government’s roles have been identified to support CSR initiatives be it through regulation, fostering or partnering with businesses to promote good practices and good governance in ensuring sustainable use of resources and equal participation and benefits of economic development from these resources, particularly disadvantaged groups such as women, youth, disabled, indigenous people and so forth.
Activities

In 2018, PNG will advance discussions on the following activities:

- Inclusive and sustainable resource development focusing on resource sectors, including forestry, agriculture, fisheries, mining and other extractive industries and tourism;
- Promote MSME’s in the value chain;
- Initiate policy recommendations to the SOM, ministers and Leaders on issues pertaining to Sustainable and Inclusive Resources development.

(b) Gender Inclusion

Improving the quality of life requires greater impetus for more concerted efforts among APEC economies. However, economies need to ensure that whilst there has been progress made in achieving growth in all its attributes, there is need to ensure that gains already achieved are further expanded, the returns are equitable and sustained, and that new opportunities to promote growth are harnessed.

Notable progress has been made towards achieving growth, thus helping millions of people out of extreme poverty. Notwithstanding this, growth has been somewhat uneven with disparities amongst men and women and other vulnerable groups, urban, and rural communities. Cognizant of this, Leaders in 2016, called for effective economic, financial and social inclusion of women, in addition to the elderly, youths, persons with disabilities, rural communities, and other vulnerable groups.

In 2018, APEC will further promote discussions on Inclusivity so that “no one is left behind” in the wave of globalization. The role of women in contributing to regional economic development is one that has been recognized by APEC thus echoed in a number of statements by Leaders and Ministers. In fact, the call for mainstreaming gender into the work of APEC is a clear indication of the growing importance APEC places on gender, with a view to empower women to realize their potential in contributing to regional economic development and reaping benefits.

Activities

In 2018, PNG will advance discussions on the following activities, in addition to ongoing initiatives in this work area:

- Sector-specific approaches to gender inclusion and women’s economic empowerment;
- Building champions to drive gender inclusion and women’s economic empowerment – including a focus on the role of male champions;
- Advancing work under the Healthy Women, Healthy Economy initiative, particularly on workplace health and safety;
- Advancing discussions on Women and the Digital Age.
(c) Promoting Food Security

Food security has become increasingly important over the years, not only in APEC, but globally, as clearly reflected under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 on “Ending hunger through Food Security.” Leaders in 2016 recognized that APEC could contribute to addressing challenges to Food Security while preserving natural resources by taking steps to further promote sustainable agriculture, food forest management, fisheries, and aquaculture. They also acknowledge innovation such as ICT and relevant technologies to promote Food Security.

APEC has progressed work in this space by developing a Food Security Roadmap, and cascading thereof, a Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP) that requires further action, commencing 2018, and beyond. In 2018, APEC should therefore, continue to build momentum on key legacy initiatives, such as the Multi-Year Action Plan on Food Security, which calls for member economies to draw up their own Action Plans on addressing Food Security. Furthermore, in taking heed of the directives by Leaders on Innovation and Technology, APEC should further explore the role of technology and digital opportunities to drive our efforts to achieving Food Security.

➢ Activities

In 2018, PNG will advance discussions on the following activities:

- Sustainable Fisheries Management and Smart Agriculture to promote Food Security;
- Advance discussions on Women in Agriculture to promote Food Security;
- Phase 1 of the MYAP on Food Security; and,
- Policy recommendations to SOM, Ministers, and Leaders on issues relating to Smart Agriculture and Fisheries to promote Food Security.