



## SUB-REGION SYNTHESIS SESSION DESCRIPTION FORM

### 10<sup>TH</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM

**Session Title :** Towards the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025: Cooperation, Governance and Priority-setting for Climate Action and Resilience-building to Glacial Melt in Asia

Sub-Region South Asia Synthesis Session

The session will address the theme at the regional level - including other sub-regions of Asia - to maximize the benefit and outcomes of the session.

**Sub-region Coordinators (Name, Position, Organization, email, mobile number):**

- Mr. Anshuman Varma, Economic Affairs Officer, Environment and Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Email [varmaa@un.org](mailto:varmaa@un.org) (synthesis session coordinator)
- Ms. Hitomi Rankine, Chief, Environment and Development Policy Section, Environment and Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Email [rankine.unescap@un.org](mailto:rankine.unescap@un.org) (synthesis session coordinator)
- Ms. Yumiko Asayama, Asia Pacific Water Forum (APWF) Secretariat, Email: [asayama@waterforum.jp](mailto:asayama@waterforum.jp)
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**Session Description (300 words):**

The Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindu Kush mountain ranges and the Pamir Mountains, also known as the 'Third Pole', are among the world's highest. This mountainous region encompasses the largest mass of ice and snow outside of the North and South Poles and is home to almost 55,000 glaciers. Referred to as the 'Water Tower of Asia', these ranges are the source of 10 major rivers. However, climate change is shifting glacial and snow melt patterns. Glaciers in the Third Pole are melting at a faster rate than the global average ice mass and it has been projected, for instance, that by 2050 the glacier mass in the Everest region will shrink by 39-52 percent. The accelerated rates of melting and retreat of glaciers induced by global warming and altered precipitation regimes - and further reinforced by factors such as black carbon deposition - are driving water-related disasters and impacting multiple sectors, with women, smallholder farmers and indigenous and marginalized communities among those most vulnerable.

Effective management, adaptation and investment strategies will rely on appropriate governance architectures for transboundary collaboration. Better monitoring and understanding of ongoing and projected changes in water demand and supply, impacted communities and sectors and priorities for building resilience will support effective planning and investment in affected areas. Governments in Asia have taken significant steps forward, with approaches shaped by geography, culture and other factors. Among the examples are the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in Central Asia, and the Mekong River Commission in South-East Asia. South and South-West Asia's cooperation is being cemented by high-level political cooperation, among other developments. There are important opportunities for learning from the progress made to date across these and other vulnerable sub-regions.

In this context, the session will share stakeholder and sub-regional perspectives on key issues relating to glacial melt in Asia and help shape contributions to the international conference to be held in Tajikistan in 2025 to mark the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation.

**Key messages from your Sub-region (2 maximum)**

1. Melting of glaciers in the Third Pole poses a grave risk across countries, communities and economic sectors in Asia with left behind groups being most vulnerable.



**2. Scientific and regional/transboundary cooperation as well as an effective governance architecture are urgently needed to take action to address glacial melt, with areas such as integrated river-basin management and monitoring, science-policy interface, financing and investment, and cross-border institutional coordination requiring special attention.**

**Concrete outcomes (eg. Initiatives, practices, dialogue, commitment, etc.) (5 maximum)**

1. Increased awareness of the key vulnerabilities to, and challenges posed by, glacial melt in Asia.
2. Shared assessment of the state of scientific cooperation and critical gaps to address glacial melt.
3. Enhanced understanding of progress achieved and lessons learned in different sub-regions of Asia regarding key aspects of transboundary cooperation on glacial melt and water resources management.
4. Key recommendations are identified to contribute towards the international conference to be held in Tajikistan in 2025 to mark the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation.

**Detailed Session plan :**

Time allocation	Agenda item
16.40 - 16.55 (15 min)	<p><b>Opening:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening remarks: Ms. Hitomi Rankine, Chief, Environment and Development Policy Section, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP</li> <li>• Keynote address: H.E. Mr. Shoimzoda Jamshed Shodi, Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Tajikistan</li> </ul>
16.55 - 17.20 (25 minutes)	<p><b>Panel: State of knowledge and scientific cooperation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the science tell us about glacial melt and its implications?</li> <li>• What is the state of scientific cooperation (progress, gaps and opportunities)?</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Dr. Changhua Wu, Chair of the Governing Council, Asia-Pacific Water Forum</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Abou Amani, Director, Water Sciences Division and Secretary, Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</li> <li>• Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Director, Water, Food and Ecosystems, International Water Management Institute</li> </ul>
17.20 - 17.55 (35 minutes)	<p><b>Panel: Sub-regional perspectives on transboundary collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the three most important areas of progress on transboundary collaboration on water resources management in different sub-regions?</li> <li>• What are some lessons learned?</li> <li>• What are the top priorities for strengthening transboundary governance and collaboration in Asia?</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Ms. Hitomi Rankine, Chief, Environment and Development Policy Section, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Asia: Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Deputy Chairman, Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea</li> <li>• Hindu-Kush-Himalaya region: Dr. Senaka Basnayake, Director, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center</li> <li>• South-East Asia: Dr. Truong Hong Tien, Deputy Director General, Viet Nam National Mekong Committee Secretariat</li> </ul>
17.55 - 18.10 (15 min)	<p><b>Commentary and Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Closing</b></p>