



Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

Closing Remarks

Commemoration of the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms

"From Source to Impact: Protecting Land and Life from Sand and Dust Storms"

Organizers: Permanent Missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, Mongolia and the Republic of Senegal to the United Nations, in cooperation with the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms

Friday, 10 July 2026 (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; NY Time)
(21:00 p.m.- 23:00 p.m.; Bangkok Time)

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to join you at the conclusion of this important event commemorating the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms under the theme, *"From Source to Impact: Protecting Land and Life from Sand and Dust Storms."* as the Co-Chair of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, alongside my esteemed colleague, Ms. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Executive Secretary of ESCWA.

This International Day is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to addressing one of the world's most complex transboundary environmental and development challenges. With the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms now underway, our responsibility is no longer simply to raise awareness, but to accelerate implementation through stronger cooperation, better science and sustained partnerships.

Excellencies,

As we have heard today, the General Assembly has provided a clear mandate. Through successive resolutions and the proclamation of the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034), Member States have called for stronger international cooperation, enhanced scientific collaboration, greater capacity-building and coordinated action to reduce the growing impacts of sand and dust storms.

The United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms is playing an increasingly important role in advancing this agenda. By bringing together Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations and scientific institutions, it has strengthened collaboration across sectors and regions while helping translate global commitments into coordinated action.

For ESCAP, this work has been advanced through the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM). APDIM has supported regional risk assessment, promoted impact-based monitoring, strengthened evidence-informed policymaking and facilitated technical

cooperation across Asia and the Pacific. Working closely with ESCWA and other Coalition members, these efforts continue to strengthen the science-policy interface and support Member States in developing more coordinated and risk-informed approaches.

Excellencies,

A recent example demonstrates what this collective effort can achieve. Earlier this month, following more than a year of dialogue jointly facilitated by ESCAP and ESCWA, the Interregional Initiative to Combat Sand and Dust Storms in Western Asia was launched in Istanbul. This is significant not only because it established a jointly agreed three-year programme of work, but because it shows how sustained regional dialogue can build trust, forge consensus and transform national priorities into a shared commitment to collective action.

At a time when multilateralism faces considerable challenges, this Initiative sends an important message: regional cooperation remains an effective tool for addressing shared challenges. It also demonstrates how the objectives of the United Nations Decade can be translated into practical regional action by strengthening partnerships, promoting knowledge sharing and supporting coordinated implementation.

ESCAP is also advancing cooperation in Northeast Asia. Through APDIM and the ESCAP Regional Office for East and Northeast Asia, we are working with the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, representing China, Japan and the

Republic of Korea, and with Mongolia aiming to support source mitigation, impact reduction and early warning systems.

Excellencies,

This year's theme, *"From Source to Impact,"* captures the challenge before us. Our success will be measured not by our understanding of the problem alone, but by our ability to reduce its impacts on people, livelihoods, ecosystems and sustainable development. Achieving this will require continued investment in science and innovation, stronger early warning systems, better risk information, enhanced institutional capacity and sustained cooperation across borders and sectors.

As we look ahead to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, we have an important opportunity to build on the momentum of the past year, further elevate sand and dust storms on the global policy agenda and strengthen cooperation in support of the United Nations Decade.

In closing, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Permanent Missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Mongolia and Senegal for convening today's event, and to all members of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms for their continued leadership and commitment.

ESCAP remains fully committed—together with ESCWA and all members of the Coalition—to supporting Member States in implementing the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms.

Thank you.