

Summary Assessment

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment

Bangkok
5-8 September 2017

I. Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 5 to 8 September 2017.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. In total, 14 of the 42 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 33 per cent. The present assessment was prepared on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

The main purpose of this assessment is to support the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to improve its servicing of session.

II. Attendance

The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment was attended by 68 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (42 of 62). Some 36 of delegations (86 per cent) were headed by officials from the respective Capital, 22 of which at ministerial level (61 per cent); the remaining 6 countries (14 per cent) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok. In total there were 207 individual participants, of whom 81 were female (39 per cent).

A number of other entities participated, including United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. From these entities, there were 153 participants of whom 66 were female. Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities is 360 individually.

III. Relevance of the session

Respondents found that the session was highly relevant to the needs and priorities of their countries and there was a very positive agreement that the agenda items reflected the present development trends and issues in the environment sector in the Asian and Pacific region (See table 1).

There were some suggestions and comments on the relevance of the session to the needs and priorities:

- The session provided comprehensive information on the topic providing both problems and solutions.
- I would have liked to have witnessed the issue of water as a resource in need of increased efficiency as well as an issue, in the context of transboundary flow, for sustainable development of neighboring countries, promoting different ecosystems such as wetlands.
- The agenda items deliberated at this conference are related to the Cook Islands and the region as a whole in my view. These can only be achieved with a Political Will at the Highest Level and a commitment through the implementation of the issues "Toward a Pollution Free Planet".
- The sessions were relevant however comments made by the panels were superficial and require greater concrete statements.

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100) ¹
The agenda items reflected the present development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	86
The agenda items are relevant to the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	89

IV. Effectiveness of the session

Respondents found the session to be positively effective identification priority areas and emerging issues in the region. Good reviews were made regarding promotion of regional dialogue; the highlight of regional development trends and issues and the quality of documents. Respondents gave lower ratings for the effective coverage of gender related issues (See table 2).

There were some suggestions and comments on the effectiveness of the session.

- The session was conducted in an information telling meeting rather discussion meeting. It is recommended to provide more time on discussion so the session would have an opportunity to identify emerging issues related to the topic.
- In general, I would give a score of 80 out of 100 i.e. 4 of 5. Congratulation to the co-organizers of UNESCAP and UN Environment that really demonstrated a very resource efficient example by holding the conferences jointly.
- More video sessions on real situation happening on the planet today.

¹ Methodology, an index between 100 and 0 is given, whereby, at a value of 100, all respondents rate to a great extent to the statement, and, at a value of 0, all respondents rate to not at all.

Index = actual value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses / maximum value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses.

The formula we have used is based on the same principles as the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI). This allows the calculation of a unit-free index between 0 and 1 from all received responses for each statement. This enables indices to be added together as well as compared among each other. For more detail, see http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2013_en_technotes.pdf.

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	80
The session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	86
The session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to environment development.	82
The session effectively addressed gender-related issues.	63
The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear.	79

V. Efficiency of the session

Respondents rated session efficiency positively in terms of secretariat servicing and communication and organization of work prior to and between sessions. Lower ratings given to the time for discussion during the meeting. Efficient communication with the Secretariat enabled the session to proceed smoothly. (See Table 3).

There were some suggestions and comments on the efficiency of the organizational and servicing aspects of the session.

- Providing more time for each country to share the recent development of environmental protection and resource efficiency.
- All superb.
- Hard copies of papers, secretariat to provide to delegate instead of e-copies.

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate.	67
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	83
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective.	79

VI. Other comments

According to respondents, the most useful and successful aspects of the Committee session and other suggestions for improvement included:

- Panel and side event discussions.

- Being more thematically focused on challenges in Asia-Pacific would provide the opportunity of enjoying presentation of more pragmatic approaches and sharing experiences.
- Put up social and economic currently happened in the region. Need discussion on region resolution.
- Tajikistan delegation in general did feel comfortable and commends organizers for an efficient preparatory work done to hold the meeting at such a high level. One suggestion could be to ensure wider and closer representation of all countries in sub-regional offices and document preparatory discussions is preferable.
- The deliberations on the agenda items.

VII. Conclusion

Overall, delegations felt that the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment was successful.

The session was seen as relevant to the needs of the region; especially in identifying priority areas and emerging issues. The issue of addressing gender in the field of energy warrants some attention in future sessions with a view to further improving its effectiveness.

The efficiency of the session received relatively lower rating mainly due to the fact that countries would have preferred more time be made available to them, for discussions and sharing of achievements.
