



Summary of delegations' assessments of the outcome of the 74th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific *

Bangkok
11-16 May 2018

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* Prepared by the Strategy and Programme Management Division based on written feedback to a survey questionnaire provided to the government delegations who attended the 74th session of the Commission.

Summary assessment of the outcome of the 74th session of the Commission

I. Introduction

The 74th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok from 11 to 16 May 2018.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission session was distributed to delegations attending the session. In total 21 questionnaires were returned, with one questionnaire submitted per delegation. The overall response rate was 47 per cent. The present assessment was prepared based on these questionnaire responses¹.

The main purpose of this assessment is to support the secretariat's ongoing efforts to improve its servicing of sessions of the Commission.

II. Attendance

The Commission session was attended by 73 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (45 of 62). In total there were 445 individual participants, of whom 180 were female (40 per cent). Twenty-two governments were represented by ministerial level officials, of whom one was Head of State and 11 were full ministers. (see Annex III).

In addition, the Commission session was also attended by other entities, including other States, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations, as described in Figure 1 (for further details see Annex I, II and III). From these entities, there were 107 participants of whom 43 were female (40 per cent).

The total number of participants from both member states and other entities is 552 individuals.

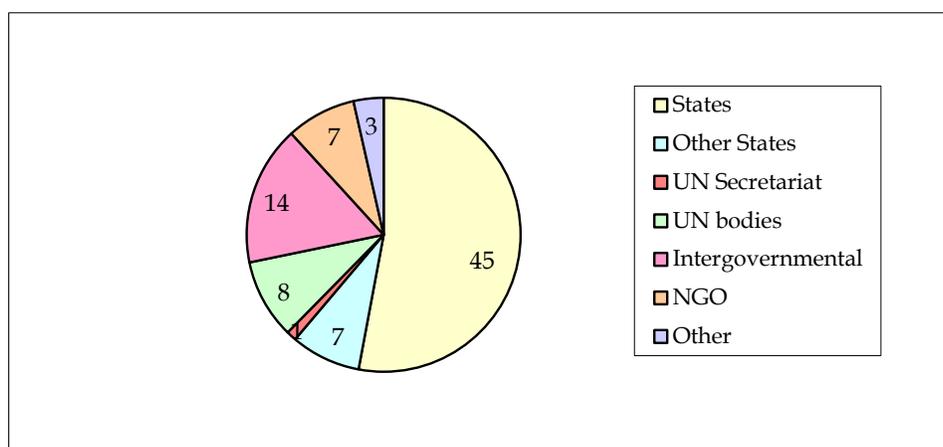


Figure 1: Type and number of states and entities at the 74th session of the Commission

¹ Responses are ranked as follow:

81-100: Very high; 61-80: High; 41-60: Medium; 21-40: Low; 1-20: Very low

III. Ownership and participation

The responses received regarding the sense of ownership, the benefits of attending the session and the outcome of the deliberations at the Commission session were positive. All evaluated statements averaged an index score of 80 and above.

This showed that the delegations were satisfied with their participation in the session and its outcome.

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100) ²
The Commission session was owned and driven by member States.	84
The benefits of my delegation's attendance at the session justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).	83
The overall outcome of the deliberations was positive and a result of a collaborative effort by member States.	84

IV. Overall relevance

Under the theme of overall relevance, it is worth highlighting that the relevance of the theme topic "Inequality in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" scored the highest among all evaluated statements.

Respondents highly agreed that the Commission is a key intergovernmental forum and the most representative body in the Asia Pacific region to discuss and decide on important issues pertaining to inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

It was also agreed that the engagement and contributions of distinguished individuals, high-level representatives of other organizations, corporate leaders and civil society organizations in the session were useful to the discussions at the session.

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Commission is a key intergovernmental forum and the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region to discuss and decide on important issues pertaining to inclusive and sustainable development in the region.	85

² 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 Commission engaged distinguished individuals, high-level representatives of other organizations, corporate leaders and civil society organizations in the session, and their inputs were a useful contribution to the discussions at the Commission.	86
The theme topic “ Inequality in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ” reflects the current needs and priorities of the region in general, and my country/territory in particular.	90

a. Senior Officials segment

The deliberations of the Senior Officials segment were generally positive, but there were areas for improvement (see Annex IV).

The respondents rated favorably (with a score of 80 and above) for agenda items 3 – 6. Results showed that regional economic cooperation and integration, and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, are among the most relevant agenda items for the Senior Officials segment.

Agenda item 2: Special body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries scored relatively lower.

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
Agenda item 2: Special body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries	75
Agenda item 3: Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions	80
Agenda item 4: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific	85
Agenda item 5: Regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific	87
Agenda item 6: Management issues	80

b. Ministerial segment

The views on the deliberations of the Ministerial segment were also positive. However, the effectiveness of deliberations at generating policy options that can address key sustainable development issues and the quality of resolutions and decisions adopted need to be improved on.

Results showed that the deliberations were effective in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key sustainable development issues affecting the region.

While the responses were generally positive, some scope remains to further improve the effectiveness of the Ministerial segment (see Annex IV).

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The deliberations were focused and effective at generating policy options for addressing key sustainable development issues affecting the region.	76
The deliberations were effective in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key sustainable development issues affecting the region.	80
The resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the seventy-fourth session of the Commission.	75

V. Organizational aspects

Overall, responses demonstrated that the secretariat effectively and efficiently serviced the 74th session of the Commission.

a. Organization and servicing by the secretariat

Positive feedback was received regarding the servicing by the secretariat in terms of facilitating effective outcomes.

The organization of work between Commission sessions and the communication between the secretariat and member States between Commission sessions contributed to the effectiveness of the Commission session.

Respondents were positive in their feedback on the conduct of meetings for the Working Group on Draft Resolutions, agreeing that it was effective for enabling interactive discussion, and for reaching consensus.

Pre-session servicing by the secretariat through the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective in providing a useful basis for decision-making during the Commission session.

b. Documents

In general, respondents viewed the documentation for the Commission session positively. However, results also showed that the pre-session documents could have been issued in a timelier manner.

Results showed that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues on the agenda.

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
Sufficient time was allocated to agenda items during the session.	80
The servicing by the secretariat facilitated effective outcomes.	86
The organization of work between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session (ACPR, Committees, Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions (IWGDR), etc.).	85
The communication between the secretariat and member States between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session.	88
The conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for enabling interactive discussions and for reaching consensus.	85
Pre-session servicing by the secretariat through the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions provided a useful basis for decision-making during the Commission.	82
The pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues on the agenda.	84
The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	76

VI. Use of ESCAP recommendations and analytical work

Respondents are likely to use ESCAP recommendations and analytical work, presented at the 74th Commission session, when engaging in policy and programme formulation at the national level.

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
How likely is it that you will use any of the ESCAP recommendations and analytical work, presented at the 74th Commission session, when engaging in policy and programme formulation at the national level?	80

VII. Most successful features

The questionnaire provided space for respondents to comment on the most successful features of the Commission session.

The most successful features of the 74th session of the Commission were noted as: the theme topic; country statements and adoption of the resolutions. For further details, please refer to Annex IV.

VIII. Conclusion and additional comments

This assessment demonstrates that the 74th session of the Commission successfully attracted high and wide representation and was conducted efficiently, enabling participants to discuss and negotiate issues of importance for the region.

In conclusion, delegates expressed general satisfaction with the preparations for, servicing and outcome of the 74th session, and continue to consider the Commission as an important regional body for discussing issues of regional and global importance.

Annex I

Attendance of ESCAP member States at the 74th session of the Commission

	Country	No. of participants		Country	No. of participants
1	Afghanistan	3	33	Palau*	-
2	Armenia	2	34	Papua New Guinea	8
3	Australia	2	35	Philippines	19
4	Azerbaijan	1	36	Rep. of Korea	16
5	Bangladesh	15	37	Russian Federation	6
6	Bhutan	9	38	Samoa	2
7	Brunei Darussalam	2	39	Singapore	2
8	Cambodia	8	40	Solomon Islands*	-
9	China	20	41	Sri Lanka	4
10	DPRK	4	42	Tajikistan*	-
11	Fiji	6	43	Thailand	143
12	France	1	44	Timor-Leste	3
13	Georgia*	-	45	Tonga	3
14	India	9	46	Turkey	4
15	Indonesia	13	47	Turkmenistan	2
16	Islamic Rep. of Iran	18	48	Tuvalu*	-
17	Japan	18	49	UK	1
18	Kazakhstan	4	50	USA	6
19	Kiribati	7	51	Uzbekistan	1
20	Kyrgyzstan*	-	52	Vanuatu	5
21	Lao PDR	14	53	Viet Nam	5
22	Malaysia	4			
23	Maldives*	-		Associate members	
24	Marshall Island	6	54	American Samoa*	-
25	Micronesia*	-	55	Cook Islands*	-
26	Mongolia	3	56	French Polynesia*	-
27	Myanmar	18	57	Guam*	-
28	Nauru	3	58	Hong Kong, China	11
29	Nepal	5	59	Macao, China	3
30	Netherlands*	-	60	New Caledonia*	-
31	New Zealand*	-	61	Niue*	-
32	Pakistan	6	62	Northern Mariana Islands*	-
			Total no. of member State participants: 445		

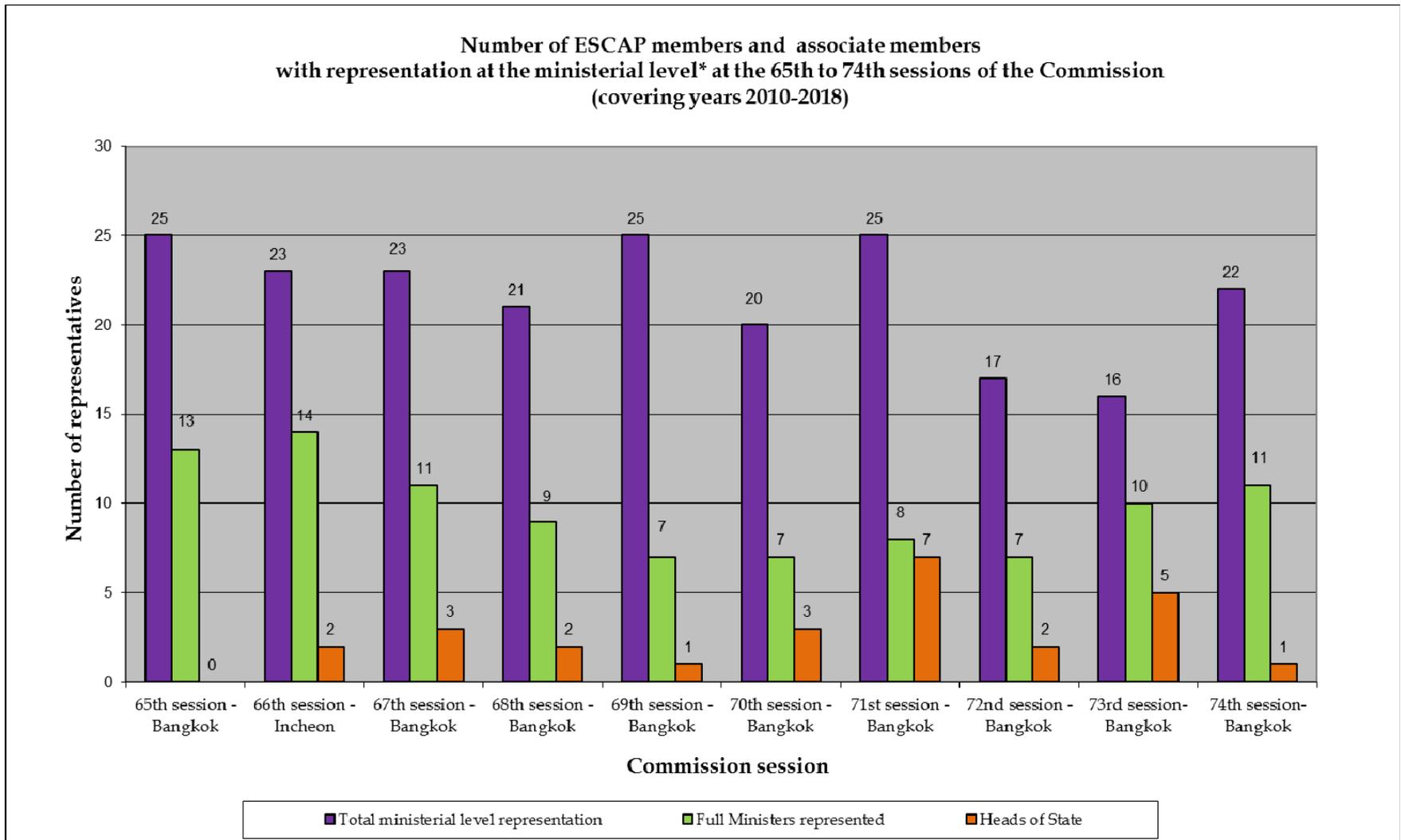
* Countries did not attend

Annex II

Non-members State participants at the 74th session of the Commission

		No. of participants		No. of participants
	Other States			Non-Government Organization
1	Austria	1		Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations
2	Belgium	1		Disabled Peoples International
3	Brazil	1		International Federation of Business and Professional Women
4	Canada	3		International Planned Parenthood Federation
5	Germany	2		LDC Watch
6	Portugal	2		Organization of the Families of Asia and the Pacific
7	Switzerland	2		Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association of Thailand
		12		19
	Intergovernmental Organization			United Nations Agencies and Bodies
	Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization	3		International Labour Organization
	Asia-Pacific Telecommunity	1		International Telecommunication Union
	Asian and Pacific Coconut Community	1		Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
	Asian Development Bank	1		United Nations Centre for Regional Development
	Asian Reinsurance Corporation	1		United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
	Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South	3		UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia	3		United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
	ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee	1		United Nations Population Fund
	Mekong River Commission	2		25
	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	1		Other Entities
	Pacific Islands Development Forum	1		Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability
	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	2		China National Software and Service Co.,Ltd.
	Shanghai Cooperation Organization	3		Sovereign Military Order of Malta
	Universal Postal Union	1		8
		24		
	United Nations Secretariat			Special Guests
	United Nations Regional Commissions	1		
		1		
			Total no. of non-member State participants	107

Annex III



*Includes Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Deputy-Ministers, Assistant-Ministers or their equivalents.

Annex IV

Questionnaire Comments

[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]

What was the most successful feature of the 74th session of the Commission?

- The country statements given on agenda items is a brilliant way to showcase the progress made by countries and strategies adopted by them.
- The theme is very relevant.
- Engagement of member States.
- Sharing of information and best practices from delegations and also from presenter/ panel members.
- Expert presentations on different topics.
- The inequality report deliberations, and side events on disaster information system, LDCs and aging were inherently useful.
- Many high-level invitees are present such as the President of the General Assembly, several Head of States, SRSG for DRR. Side-events also got full attendance.
- Participation of prominent political leaders representing various countries in Asia-Pacific region and out of it.
- It seems the united decision of all present delegations to support the consumed time and work – we all spent together – for keeping the precious soul of consensus at ESCAP regardless of one who tried to break this strong regional integrity was the most important feature in the ESCAP 74th session of the Commission.
- The adoption of the resolutions
- Diversity of voices on pressing issues facing the region.
- Policy issues, drafting of resolutions
- The non-governmental key speakers were particularly good this year. Very informative.
- Inviting representatives from think tanks, private sector to talk about major technology trends.

What could have been done to improve effectiveness of the Senior Officials segment of the Commission session?

- An assessment of the investment in each of the policy sectors by the member countries and UNESCAP, along with assistance given by member countries as part of SDGs - ODA should be included.
- Encourage more participation from member States. Promote more interactive discussion on the related chosen/ subject topics.
- There should be better time management, so as not to delay the conduct of important business, such as the WG on draft resolutions.

- Secretariat to prepare well not to avail time for the Committee to be involved in procedural discussion.
- It would be better if we could consult in advance with member countries - additional focal persons before setting agendas/themes of the sessions.
- One less agenda item during this segment would leave more time for member States to discuss other items more in deep.
- May be thinking of STI innovations and trying to render them in the ESCAP expanded multi-days occasions like S.O segment of the annual Commission would help all the delegations to be prepared for deliberations and interventions without any exhaust out of transnational trips in due time.
- Be good if the ESCAP can advise all the state members to actively involve during the discussion of the draft declaration or resolution.
- Decrease the time allocated to each speaker.

What could have been done to improve the Ministerial segment of the Commission session?

- This is being organized - today is 14th May.
- Expert speak too long while member States are restricted to speak up to 5 minutes. Not clear why some experts were selected - criteria not clear.
- Country experiences should be encouraged for sharing in the sessions.
- Mini breaks in each session are encouraged to allow delegates to refresh. Keynote speakers in each session should have time limit for their speeches (7 mins max.) to allow member States to speak.
- the current arrangements are good but the time for the speech extends to at least 5 to 10 minutes if possible? just for the Ministers but for the rest, we can stick with 3 to 5 min. Just only suggestion

What could have been done to improve the organization and servicing of the Commissions session?

- It was a remarkably and extremely impeccably organized session.
- Early availability of documents will greatly help delegations in their preparation for participation.
- Pre-negotiations can be done over electronically in advance.
- Considering dissemination of all related documents at once in a appropriate time either in soft or hard copies would help to create a comprehensive picture of the Commission to be held. But, in any way the struggle of the Secretariat in providing documents even in parts is appreciated.
- Please continue with your effective communication with state members. what the secretariat has done so far is good. Appreciate all the efforts and congratulations.

What could have been done to encourage higher (rank) and wider (intersectoral) representation from your delegation at the Commission session?

- Side events should be more, and participation of delegates in the side events will make them more interactive and participatory.
- Earlier coordination with participating organizations composing the delegation.
- Early confirmation of meeting dates to allow high-level delegate to better plan and be present at the session.
- More strategic and concrete topics of national interest can encourage higher representation.
- Not applicable for the delegation of I.R of Iran as the head of delegation was the Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. But, thinking of the theme "inequality" probably it's rational to reconsider privilege granted to delegations based on the rank they'd acknowledged the Commission.
- The invitation should be sent early to the state members special the high official delegation. Be good to send early.
- Increase the focus on social development issues, including social protection, gender equality and disability-inclusive development.

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