

Summary Assessment

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development Eighth session 23-26 March 2021

I. Introduction

The eighth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) took place on 23-26 March 2021 in a hybrid mode due to ongoing COVID-19 related travel restrictions in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The Forum took place under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific”.

An online questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was conducted.¹ The main purpose of the assessment was to support the secretariat’s ongoing efforts to improve its servicing of the APFSD.

The Eighth APFSD adopted a Report² with Annexed Chair’s Summary and Addendum which includes the priority of actions resulting from the Parallel Roundtables held on 24th March 2021.

II. Attendance

The eighth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development was attended by 79 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (49 of 62) with 5 participants at the ministerial level. There were 393 registered participants from member and associate members, of whom 187 were female (48 per cent). A number of permanent observers, United Nations Secretariat, United Nations agencies and bodies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other entities participated. From these entities, there were 365 participants of whom 224 were female (61 per cent). Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities was 758 individuals and the total number of female participants was 411 (54 per cent).

III. Respondent’s Profile

A total of 17 individual respondents provided feedback to the questionnaire. Of these 17 respondents, 7 represent the government, and 10 represent other entities, including NGO and private sector. 7 are male and 10 are female.

¹ The rating scale is 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

² https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/APFSD8_4E_2.pdf

Respondent countries by subregional

SEA	SSWA
Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand	Iran, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India
ENEA	Pacific
Japan	Fiji, Papua New Guinea
NCA	Other
Afghanistan, Kazakhstan	-

IV. Relevance

Overall, respondents agreed that the agenda items reflected the present development trends and issues in the Asia-Pacific region; and that the issues discussed were useful for their government/organization. The respondents gave a slightly lower rating on discussing relevant gender issues as pertaining to the meeting objectives.

Please rate your agreement of the following statements	Ratings
The issues discussed reflected the present development trends/issues in the Asia-Pacific region.	Average: 4
The issues discussed were useful for my government/organization.	Average: 3.8
The meeting discussed relevant gender issues as pertaining to the meeting objectives.	Average: 3.7

V. Effectiveness

The respondents, to some extent agreed that the session effectively enhanced their knowledge of the issues discussed; promoted regional cooperation, and cooperation and collaboration among participants; the resource persons demonstrated mastery of their respective topics; the facilitators effectively engaged participants in discussions; and the meeting documents and presentations were of high quality, concise and clear. However, more time was needed for discussion.

Please rate your agreement of the following statements	Ratings
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The meeting effectively enhanced my knowledge of the issues discussed	Average: 3.8
The meeting effectively promoted regional cooperation, and cooperation and collaboration among participants	Average: 3.4
The resource persons demonstrated mastery of their respective topics	Average: 3.6
The facilitators effectively engaged with participants in discussions	Average: 3.5
Enough time was available for discussion	Average: 3.1
The meeting documents and presentations were of high quality, concise & clear	Average: 3.5

VI. Efficiency

Generally, the respondents rated positively on the efficiency of the meeting, in particular, they highly agreed that the meeting was organized in a timely manner and according to the programme.

Please rate your agreement of the following statements	Ratings
I am satisfied with the administrative and logistical arrangement of the meeting	Average: 3.9
The meeting was organized in a timely manner and according to the programme	Average: 4.1
The communications from ESCAP to the member States on the preparation for the meeting were effective	Average: 3.8
The duration of the meeting was appropriate	Average: 3.6

VII. Performance of the virtual tool

Overall, the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the meeting platform.

Please rate your agreement of the following statements	Ratings
The virtual tool matched with the needs of the meeting	Average: 3.5
Accessibility provisions met my needs	Average: 3.3
It was easy to use and accessible	Average: 3.7

I was able to hear others clearly (audio quality)	Average: 3.6
I was able to see other clearly (video quality)	Average: 3.6
Internet connectivity is satisfactory	Average: 3.5
The duration of the virtual meeting was appropriate	Average: 3.4
The screen sharing feature was effective	Average: 3.5
Interaction tools (raise hands, live polls, Q&A, etc.) were used effectively	Average: 2.9
I received sufficient guidance from ESCAP to use the virtual tool prior to the meeting	Average: 3.8
Adequate technical support from ESCAP was provided prior to and during the meeting	Average: 3.7

Additional comments were provided to improve ESCAP virtual meetings:

- It is advisable to provide simultaneous translations, since not everyone speaks English.
- The KUDO has good interactive features for virtual meeting. But i have refresh it time and again to see video. while refreshing i lost substantial content of the speakers. Also when we refresh, the functions such as 'request to speak' needs to be pressed again.
- First time I had attended ESCAP virtual meeting, thank you very much for providing me an opportunity to be the part of it. In future I would be more interested for active participation in the process.
- My physical present speak the volume of truth and turn the table in positive manner without any public mileage or publicly available for the good cause of world if our 24-25 years financial losses and expenses fulfill immediatly first than I & we can draw the line straight turn the table in positive manner for the good cause of world course of action.
- Consider a different time; language barrier; more space for major groups

VIII. Results achieved

The results achieved through this meeting indicated by respondents included:

- Exposure to what is happening in the region and accordingly adapt in our own country.
- Through meeting and presentation, the knowledge and best practices on sustainable development exchanged. Reviewed institutions administration and finance status, implementation of the programs. Improved solidarity and strength of Asia Pacific Forum on sustainable development. Despite of effects of pandemic the targeted meetings goals are achieved.
- If corruption eradicate from the whole world course of action related water and sanitation than whole corrupt practices system smooth in positive manner without any public mileage or publicly without any political mileage activities Media administration TRP itself innovation and working in positive manner.

- Policy discussion and issues presented based on country context. More participation of the government especially not Foreign Affairs but responsible sectors.
- Sharing knowledge and approaches; Intersectionality among major groups to consolidate our voices; the voices of major groups at the national level are not seen to voice the SDGs

IX. Comments and suggestions

The respondents provided comments and suggestions for improvement of future sessions:

- The offline forum is more efficient
- The systematic collaboration, communication and ensured participation of Intergovernmental institutions and various stakeholders on programs planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation shall be more effective.
- Our only constraints are language barrier and financial freedom than our team mates physical present speak the volume of truth and turn the table in positive manner without any public mileage or publicly available for the good cause of world.
- Cross border issues should also be discussed.
- Invite key responsible sectors to be part of the discussions.
- Strengthening the bargaining position of regional mechanisms to bring priority agendas into global mechanisms
- It is advisable to provide simultaneous translations, since not everyone speaks English.
- The KUDO has good interactive features for virtual meeting. But I had to refresh it a few times. While refreshing I lost substantial content of the speakers. Also when we refresh, the functions such as 'request to speak' needs to be pressed again.
- First time I had attended ESCAP virtual meeting, thank you very much for providing an opportunity to be the part of it. In the future I would be more interested for active participation in the process.
- My physical present speak the volume of truth and turn the table in positive manner without any public mileage or publicly available for the good cause of world if our 24-25 years financial losses and expenses fulfill immediately first than we can draw the line straight turn the table in positive manner for the good cause of world course of action.
- Consider a different time; language barrier; more space for major groups

X. Conclusion

Overall, delegations agreed that the eighth session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development was well organized. The session was generally relevant to the present development trends and issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The efficiency and effectiveness of the session also received positive feedback, in particular the organization of the session was conducted in a timely manner and according to the programme. However, more attention could be paid to the available time for discussion. The virtual modality was relatively efficient but may need more attention and further improvement, in particular the accessibility provisions and the interaction tools used during the session.
