Summary Assessment

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Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development
Third session
20-22 October 2021

I. Introduction

The third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development took place on 20-22 October 2021 as a virtual meeting due to ongoing COVID-19 related travel restrictions in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

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

The Committee session discussed the economic policies, especially fiscal (levers) and financing strategies (including innovative green/climate finance instruments and digital tools) to recover from the pandemic and effectively pursue the Sustainable Development Goals. It also reviewed the work in the last two years and sharing feedback to give shape to its future directions. Lastly, it explored mechanisms to have more regular and substantive communication on economic policies and financing strategies between the Committee, the secretariat and relevant government ministries.

II. Attendance

The third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development was attended by 55 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (34 of 62) with 3 participants at the ministerial level. In total, there were 190 registered participants, of whom 71 were female (37.4 per cent). A number of other entities, including Permanent Observers, United Nations bodies and agencies, and intergovernmental organizations, participated in the meeting. From these entities, there were 36 participants of whom 14 were female (38.9 per cent). Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities is 226 individuals and the total number of female participants is 85 (37.6 per cent).

III. Respondent’s Profile

A total of 29 individual respondents from 20 member countries provided feedback to the questionnaire. Of these 29 respondents, 17 respondents are male, 12 are female. All respondents represent the government.

1 The rating scale is 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).
Respondent countries by subregional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEA</th>
<th>SSWA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Philippines</td>
<td>Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENEA</td>
<td>Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Japan</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>France, Turkey</td>
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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 keynote addresses in the opening session provided valuable high-level guidance to the deliberation of the Committee. The respondents gave a slightly lower rating on discussing relevant gender issues as pertaining to the meeting objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please rate your agreement of the following statements</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The issues discussed reflected the present development trends/issues in the Asia-Pacific region.</td>
<td>Average: 4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The keynote addresses in the opening session provided valuable high-level guidance to the deliberation of the Committee</td>
<td>Average: 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The issues discussed were useful for my government/organization.</td>
<td>Average: 4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The meeting discussed relevant gender issues as pertaining to the meeting objectives.</td>
<td>Average: 3.4</td>
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V. Effectiveness

The respondents agreed that the meeting effectively enhanced their knowledge on inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic, as well as on vitalizing innovative and digital financing strategies in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. The meeting promoted ESCAP’s work on (i) the regional transformation towards inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies, (ii) innovative and digital financing strategies and option and would benefit member States, and (iii) regional cooperation, and cooperation and collaboration among participants. The expert panels of agenda item 2 and agenda item 3 were informative and the facilitators effectively engaged with participants in discussions. The meeting documents and presentations were of high quality, concise and clear. Enough time was available for discussion.
Please rate your agreement of the following statements | Ratings
---|---
1. The meeting effectively enhanced my knowledge on “inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic” | Average: 4.2
2. The meeting effectively enhanced my knowledge on “vitalizing innovative and digital financing strategies in support of the Sustainable Development Goals” | Average: 4.1
3. The meeting effectively promoted ESCAP’s work on the regional transformation towards inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies, and will benefit my country | Average: 4.2
4. The meeting effectively promoted ESCAP’s work on innovative and digital financing strategies and options, and will benefit my country | Average: 4.1
5. The meeting effectively promoted regional cooperation and networking among participants | Average: 4.3
6. The expert Panels of Agenda Item2 and Agenda Item 3 were informative | Average: 4.1
7. The facilitators effectively engaged with participants in discussions | Average: 4.0
8. Enough time was available for discussion | Average: 3.7
9. The meeting documents and presentations were of high quality, concise & clear | Average: 4.4

**VI. Efficiency**

Generally, the respondents rated positively on the efficiency of the meeting, in particular, they were highly satisfied with the administrative and logistical arrangement of the meeting and the communications from ESCAP to the member States on the preparation for the meeting. They highly agreed that the meeting was organized in a timely manner and according to the programme and the the duration of the meeting was appropriate.

| Please rate your agreement of the following statements | Ratings |
---|---|
1. I am satisfied with the administrative and logistical arrangement of the meeting | Average: 4.5 |
2. The meeting was organized in a timely manner and according to the programme | Average: 4.3 |
3. The communications from ESCAP to the member States on the preparation for the meeting were effective | Average: 4.5 |
4. The duration of the meeting was appropriate | Average: 4.0 |
VII. Performance of the virtual tool

Overall, the respondents were satisfied with the technology and they were of the view that the test run session one day before the Committee was well-organized and helpful.

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<tr>
<th>Please rate your agreement of the following statements</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The virtual tool was easy to use</td>
<td>Average: 4.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I was able to hear others clearly (audio quality)</td>
<td>Average: 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I was able to see other clearly (video quality)</td>
<td>Average: 4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Internet connectivity is satisfactory</td>
<td>Average: 4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The duration of the virtual meeting was appropriate</td>
<td>Average: 4.1</td>
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<td>6. The screen sharing feature was effective</td>
<td>Average: 4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Interaction tools (raise hands, live polls, Q&amp;A, etc.) were used effectively</td>
<td>Average: 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Adequate technical support from ESCAP was provided during the meeting</td>
<td>Average: 4.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The Test Run session one day before the Committee was well-organized and helpful</td>
<td>Average: 4.5</td>
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VIII. Results achieved

The results achieved through this meeting indicated by respondents included:

- Financing for development in the areas of digital transformation and climate change activities is essential for LDCs in Asia and the Pacific as well as for social and sustainable economic development aligned with the SDGs.
- The meeting was successful in exchange of a broad range of ideas on the efforts by various countries in this region towards inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic recovery from the pandemic, accompanied by an informative discussion on the best practices across the region in innovative and digital financing strategies. Very informative and comprehensive.
- It has served as a means for ESCAP to report back to the Member States and seek guidance for the future. Member States greatly benefited from the high quality of documents/research work prepared by the ESCAP; and shared 'best practices' with each other.
- This program was important to shed light on contemporary issues on macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development. The meeting was also useful to discuss and to lessen the negative impacts of Covid-19 pandemic in the Asia Pacific region.
- Specific country will be able to understand the areas, strategies and mode of cooperation within the region and ultimately cooperation will be strengthened.
- Exposure to, and deepened familiarization with, the latest developments and latest global perspectives on the agenda.
- Sharing practical experience of member countries, so that others can gain some lessons on how their countries can be led to come out of this crisis.
- Well know how to address Debt Risk during the COVID-19.
Building back better after COVID-19 pandemic.
- Covid-19 pandemic is so dangerous for each county's development in the region.
- Expanded dissemination of knowledge on policies and strategies to recover from the pandemic.
- Good results.
- Nothing substantial.

IX. Comments and suggestions

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

- None that I can think of. Perfect in every way.
- I feel that given the Covid circumstances, ESCAP is doing a great job. Unwavering focus on the specified agenda. Some of the interventions that were given appeared to have veered away a bit from the specific agenda items that the UN ESCAP wanted addressed squarely and succinctly. From my modest understanding, I believe that the interventions should have responded to the clarion call of the UN ESCAP for renewed collective commitment to the SDGs and climate action given that the world was — and still is — on the clock. There’s a time and place for self-promotion among countries (mine included), I believe; and it would have been for the best had everyone spoken exclusively about (1) how to capacitate their countries further and better as contributors to the global crusade behind which the UN ESCAP has thrown its weight and 2 how regional cooperation could be better or fully leveraged for this purpose.
- There was a very little interaction and discussion during the meeting. This might be due to the virtual format. So, it would be better to organize such meeting face to face in future.
- Rationalizing time management is strongly required. By reducing the lengthy speeches, the duration could have been shorter with sensible time management. Mr. Masato Abe was helpful.
- The duration of virtual meetings may be reduced.
- More time needs for the agenda specific discussion/presentation.
- Time management needs to be maintained strictly.
- It would be better if you took a bit longer duration of panel discussion.
- Sharing videos on success stories of coming out of the crisis.
- Can we get copies of the delivered key addresses?

X. Conclusion

Overall, delegations agreed that the third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development was well organized and fruitful. The session was generally relevant to promote regional cooperation and multilateralism in the area of macroeconomic policy and financing for development, in particular in the area of innovative and digital financing strategies. 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. More attention could be paid to gender related issues.

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