
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Social Development

Fourth session
Bangkok, 28-30 March 2016

BRIEF FOR OBSERVERS

This document aims to provide you with background information to facilitate your participation in an observer capacity in the Committee on Social Development at its fourth session.

ESCAP

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional arm of the United Nations, playing a unique role as the only intergovernmental forum for all countries and territories of the Asian and Pacific region. Established in 1947, ESCAP today has 53 members and 9 associate members covering over 60 per cent of the world's population, or 4.1 billion people.

ESCAP's mission is to serve as the regional hub promoting cooperation among member States to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP provides the strategic regional link between global, subregional and country-level direction, commitments and programmes. All Governments of the Asia-Pacific region meet annually at the ministerial level to review and discuss economic and social issues and to set the regional development agenda.

ESCAP is headquartered in Bangkok and has four subregional offices, namely in the Pacific (Suva); North-East/East Asia (Incheon, Republic of Korea); North/Central Asia (Almaty); and South/South-West Asia (New Delhi). ESCAP also has five regional institutions, one in each of the following cities: Beijing; Bogor, Indonesia; Incheon, Republic of Korea; New Delhi; and Chiba, Japan. The organization reports to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). (For more information, please visit the ESCAP website at <http://www.unescap.org>.)

Committee on Social Development

The Committee on Social Development is one of eight subsidiary legislative bodies of the Commission. It meets biennially to:

1. Review and analyse regional trends on social development;
2. Identify priorities and emerging issues and consult on regional approaches, taking into consideration subregional aspects;
3. Promote regional dialogue, including subregional synergies, and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes;

4. Consider common regional positions as inputs to global processes and promote regional follow-up to their outcomes;
5. Propose issues for consideration by the Commission as possible resolutions;
6. Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges of the region, where appropriate, between Governments and civil society, the private sector and United Nations and other international institutions at the regional and subregional levels.

The Committee also provides the secretariat, including its regional institutions, with guidance in reviewing its programme of work. The specific issues to be addressed by the Committee on Social Development include:

1. Implementation of internationally agreed commitments, including those agreed at the United Nations on social development, population, ageing, disability, youth, gender equality, and inequalities and social protection;
2. Policy options, strategies and good practices in social policy and protection;
3. Social policies and financing aimed at building inclusive and sustainable societies.

Fourth session of the Committee on Social Development

Notes for observers concerning making interventions

The fourth session of the Committee on Social Development will be convened from 28 to 30 March 2016 in Bangkok. The thematic focus of the 2016 Committee session is on social development issues and challenges in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals; building institutional capacity and adopting innovative approaches to strengthen the social dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals; and regional trends regarding the transition from school to work.

Given that the Committee session is an intergovernmental meeting, it is the prerogative of government delegations to make interventions within the time allocated by the Chairperson. However, if time permits, the Chairperson, at her/his discretion, may invite interventions from observers after all the government delegations have completed their deliberations on the respective agenda items.

Observers who wish to make interventions are requested to note the following:

- Approach the conference officer in Conference Room 3 to register interest in making an intervention. Preferably, register such interest before the agenda item is taken up.
- If time permits and the Chairperson decides to give the floor to observers, speakers will be called upon according to the registration sequence.
- The Chairperson has full discretion with regard to deciding on the duration of interventions by observers, taking into account overall time management and the expected outcomes to be achieved.
- Given that the time allocated for each agenda item is limited, every observer who registers interest may not have the chance to speak. Nevertheless there is opportunity outside the formal session (including during the side events) for networking and sharing.