

Summary Assessment

Fifth session of the Committee on Statistics

Bangkok
14-16 December 2016

I. Introduction

The fifth session of the Committee on Statistics was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 14-16 December 2016.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. In total, 27 of the 35 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 77 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 Committee sessions.

II. Attendance

The Committee session was attended by 56 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (35 of 62). In total there were 118 participants, of which 67 were female. A number of other entities were represented, including United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. From these entities there were 23 participants, of which 10 were female.

Some 97 per cent of delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (34 of 35). One delegation was represented through their embassy in Bangkok.

III. Methodology

For each statement below, an index between 100 and 0 is given, whereby, at a value of 100, all respondents strongly agree with the statement, and, at a value of 0, all respondents strongly disagree. The formula¹ we have used is based on the same principles as the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index² (HDI). This allows the calculation of a unit-free index between 0 and

¹ 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

² More can be found at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2013_en_technotes.pdf

1 from all received responses for each statement. This enables indices to be added together as well as compared among each other.

IV. Relevance of the session

Respondents stated that the Committee session was relevant to the needs of the region. As presented in table 1, there was very positive agreement that the agenda items reflected the present development trends and issues of the Asian and Pacific region, and that they also reflected the needs and priorities of their respective countries.

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the present development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	94
The agenda items are relevant to the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	90

V. Effectiveness of the session

Respondents found the session to be highly effective overall. Good reviews were made regarding agenda item 2 on advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community; agenda item 3b on population and social statistics; and the quality of the session documents. (See table 2).

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

- The panel where countries shared studies was too technical for the session. It should have been a side-event;
- Technical assistance and further strengthening of statistical training activities will strongly support and ensure faster implementation of SDG goals;
- The network could have been more effective through South-south cooperation;
- The recommendation of the 12th session of the Governing Council Meeting will have strong impact on the functioning of SIAP.

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
Item 2. Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community.	91
Item 3a: Achieving the vision through existing regional initiatives: Economic statistics	89
Item 3b: Population and social statistics	90

Item 3c: Civil registration and vital statistics	85
Item 3d: Disaster-related statistics	85
Item 3e: Agricultural and rural statistics	85
Item 4a: The framework for action, partner coordination and stakeholder responsibilities: Consideration of the future focus of the statistics subprogramme of the secretariat	88
Item 4b: Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific	85
Item 4c: Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific	88
The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear.	92
The session documents facilitated deliberations on the agenda items	83

VI. Efficiency of the session

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

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate.	96
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	96
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective.	88
The organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (Bureau, Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics, Friends of the Chair Group on Population and Social Statistics, Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, Regional Steering Committee of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan of the	93

Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics).	
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VII. ESCAP statistical products and services

More than half of respondents are aware of statistical publications. Over 85 per cent are aware of the Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2015 and have used it as reference (See Table 4).

Table 4

Publications	Are you aware of the publication below?		Have you ever used it as reference?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Statistical online database	20 (77%)	6 (23%)	14 (58%)	10 (42%)
2. Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2015	22 (85%)	4 (15%)	15 (63%)	9 (37%)
3. Stats Brief	15 (58%)	11 (42%)	8 (33%)	16 (67%)
4. SD Working Paper Series	14 (54%)	12 (46%)	8 (33%)	16 (67%)

VIII. Other comments

According to respondents, the most useful and successful aspects of the Committee session included:

- The organization of some sessions as panel discussions was very useful and interesting.
- Active participation
- Advancing official statistics for the 2030 agenda for SDGs: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community.
- Economic Statistics
- Smooth moving and good time management.
- Sufficient discussion
- The adoption of the 2030 Agenda once again emphasized the importance of reliable, timely statistics. Collective vision and session discussions contribute for further strengthening of official statistical system in region.
- The agenda item on collective vision. Thank you to the secretariat for the hard work done to make the session successful.
- The call for high level decision makers to assist NSI's on measuring SDG's.
- The endorsement of the report that shows very efficient report that deliberation was not that much from member countries.

- The most useful and successful aspect of this meeting is agenda 2 that is advancing official statistics for the 2030 agenda for sustainable development – in having a collective vision and framework for action by Asia Pacific statistical community with different countries sharing their experiences.
- The most useful aspect of this meeting is “Members could know all the recent development in different sectors especially SDGs.

There were also some other comments and suggestions for future improvement:

- Regarding the future rounds of open consultation by the SDGs, let me mention that countries with a decentralized national statistical system, where numerous agencies are involved in the production of SDG indicators, require a sufficient amount of time to undertake domestic consultation. Therefore, we would appreciate, if a scheduled consultation is announced with sufficient time in advance.
- Every time you have leaflet, please write down the related web address.
- It is very important to meet and discuss all these issues in terms of regional and global cooperation and will positively effect on achieving SDGs.
- Give more opportunity for country to have their hybrid site event.
- Secretariat to print hard copies of all documentations that is to be deliberated at committee meeting as it was observed that not everyone had copies of those documents.
- A format “summary suggestions” from the members may be helpful for the representatives of the member countries for preparation of the meeting.

IX. Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegations felt that the fifth session of the Committee on Statistics was successful.

To summarize the main trends above, the session was positively seen as relevant to the needs and reflected the development trends and issues of the region, especially under agenda item2 on “advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community”.

The efficiency of the session received very positive feedback, in particular, the time available for discussion during the meeting and the servicing of the session by the secretariat.