

Summary Assessment

Fourth session of the Committee on Environment and Development

Bangkok

11-13 November 2015

I. Introduction

The fourth session of the Committee on Environment and Development was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 11 to 13 November 2015.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. Completed questionnaires came from 11 of the 24 members and associate members in attendance. The overall response rate is therefore 46% (N=11/24). The present assessment was prepared on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

In line with the secretariat's efforts to move toward paper smart meetings, an online version of the questionnaire was offered alongside the paper version.

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 39% (N=24/62) of all ESCAP members and associate members, with 69 individual participants. The Committee session was also attended by 14 participants representing non-ESCAP members and associate members, UN entities, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. This was an increase on the previous session in 2013.

Almost half of delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (46%, N=11/24), whereas the remaining 54% (N=13/24) were represented through their embassies 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).

IV. Relevance of the session

Respondents strongly felt that the Committee session was relevant to the needs of the region. As presented with the aggregate ratings in Table 1, there was widespread agreement that the agenda items reflected the development trends and issues of the Asian and Pacific region (86). The respondents also felt that the agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of their respective countries (77).

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	86
The agenda items addressed the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	77

V. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, as can be seen from Table 2, respondents found the session to have been effective in fulfilling its function, with an average score of 75. Among the issues being evaluated, the overall quality of the session documents received a relatively lower score of 70.

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Committee session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	77
The Committee session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	73

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

The Committee session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches.	78
The Committee session effectively addressed gender-related issues in the field of environment and development.	75
The Committee session effectively promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the environment and development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	77
The session documents were of high quality, concise, and clearly stated the issues.	70

VI. Efficiency of the organizational aspects of the session

The overall efficiency of the organizational aspects of the Committee session was rated satisfactorily with an average score of 75, as shown in 3. Respondents felt that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate (80), and indicated that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting received a relatively lower score of 68.

The Committee session received comments that the secretariat should have delivered more information to member States utilizing informal ACPR and/or other channels. It was also suggested that all documents should have been circulated to member States in advance.

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate.	80
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	75
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective.	68
The organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently.	78

VII. Other comments

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

- Promotes regional collaboration in the SDGs.
- Increased understanding of the 2030 Agenda.
- Dissemination of lessons learnt from other countries in the region.

There were also some suggestions on aspects that could have been improved:

- Give specific topic to be discussed in advance to enable better preparation by delegates.
- More clarity on the meeting objectives.

VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion, responding delegates felt that the 4th session of the Committee on Environment and Development was successful.

To summarize the main trends highlighted above, the session was seen as relevant to the needs of the region, and as effective in reflecting the regional environment and development trends and issues. The efficiency of the session on the time available for discussion during the session received particularly positive feedback.