

Summary Assessment

Committee on Trade and Investment, 5th session

Bangkok

31 October to 2 November 2017

I. Introduction

The Committee on Trade and Investment, 5th session was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 31 October to 2 November 2017.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. In total, 12 of the 31 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 39 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 session.

II. Attendance

The Committee on Trade and Investment, 5th session was attended by 50 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (31 of 62). Some 18 of delegations (58 per cent) were headed by officials from the respective capital, 1 of which at ministerial level (6 per cent); the remaining 13 (42 per cent) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok. In total there were 69 individual participants, of whom 25 were female (36 per cent).

A number of other entities participated, including United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. From these entities, there were 35 participants of whom 7 were female. Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities is 104 individuals.

III. Relevance of the session

Respondents agreed that the session was relevant to the needs and priorities of their countries and the agenda items reflected the present development trends and issues in the trade and investment development in the Asian and Pacific region (See table 1).

There were some suggestions and comments on the relevance of the session to the needs and priorities:

- The forum was very relevant, appropriate and timely in terms of needs and priorities of the Asia-Pacific region.
- Special economic zone as an attractive incentive for much needed FDI in LDCs and developing countries.
- I'd like to see more innovative policy solution/suggestions present in the meeting.

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100) ¹
The agenda items reflected the present development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	81
The agenda items are relevant to the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	81

IV. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, the respondents found the session to be effective in highlighting regional development trends and issues; promoting regional dialogue and subregional approaches; and identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region. The Committee documents were rated to be of high quality, concise and clear. Respondents rated positively but slightly less in addressing gender related issues (See table 2).

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

- The session was very professionally organized and provided a forum to share experience, learn, and develop way forward plans and strategies.
- Presentations made by the UNESCAP Secretariat were concise and clear. It'll be useful for the UNESCAP to provide summary of findings, besides the outcome and recommendations.
- ESCAP should organize a dialogue to be held at sub-regional levels like the Pacific for greater interface and involvement.

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	79
The session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	75

¹ Methodology, an index between 100 and 0 is given, whereby, at a value of 100, all respondents rate to a great extent to the statement, and, at a value of 0, all respondents rate to not at all.

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.

The formula we have used is based on the same principles as the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI). This allows the calculation of a unit-free index between 0 and 1 from all received responses for each statement. This enables indices to be added together as well as compared among each other. For more detail, see http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2013_en_technotes.pdf.

The session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to trade and investment development.	75
The session effectively addressed gender-related issues.	67
The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear.	84

V. Efficiency of the session

Respondents mostly agreed that the communications to the member States on the preparations for the session and the servicing by the secretariat were effective. Respondents felt that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate (See Table 3).

There were some suggestions and comments on the efficiency of the organizational and servicing aspects of the session:

- The organizers have provided a very efficient facilities and services.
- Some countries/ delegates were given almost 50% of costs of participant's airtickets/accommodation refunds almost others were less or nil, why?
- Parking could be better facilitated.

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the session was adequate.	83
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	90
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective.	92

VI. Other comments

According to respondents, the most useful and successful aspects of the Committee session and other suggestions for improvement included:

- Giving an opportunity to present national policy, share knowledges, learn about regional trends on trade and investment.
- Congratulations for successfully organizing the session.
- We can get the brief review of the role of trade and regional integration and the updated information of the importance of trade facilitation, paperless trade, e-commerce for achieving SDGs.
- Sectoral dialogue/discussions like e-commerce and paperless trade session.

VII. Conclusion

Overall, delegations agreed that the Committee on Trade and Investment was successful. The session was seen relevant to the needs of their countries and reflected the present development trends of the Asian and Pacific region. The session was effective in highlighting regional development trends and identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region. They generally felt that session effectively provided the forum to share experiences, knowledges, and learn in the field of trade and investment. The efficiency of the session received highly positive feedback in servicing of the session and communication to the member States by the secretariat.
