



Summary Assessment of the Outcome of the 71st session of the Commission by delegations*

Bangkok
25-29 May 2015

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* Prepared by the Strategy and Programme Management Division based on written feedback to a survey questionnaire provided to the government delegations who attended the 71st session of the Commission.

Summary Assessment of the Outcome of the 71st session of the Commission

I. Introduction

The 71st session of the Commission was held in Bangkok from 25-29 May 2015.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission session was distributed to delegations attending the session. The total number of returned questionnaires was 18, whereby one questionnaire per delegation was submitted. The overall response rate is therefore 35%. The present assessment was prepared on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

In line with the secretariat's efforts to reduce the use of paper and move towards paper smart meetings, an online version of the questionnaire was offered alongside the traditional paper version.

The main purpose of this assessment is to support the secretariat's ongoing efforts to improve its servicing of sessions of the Commission.

II. Attendance

The Commission session was attended by 84% (N=52/62) of all ESCAP members and associate members, with 475 individual participants. The Commission session was also attended by 74 participants from other entities, including other States, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations, as described in Figure 1 (for further details see Annex I, II and III).

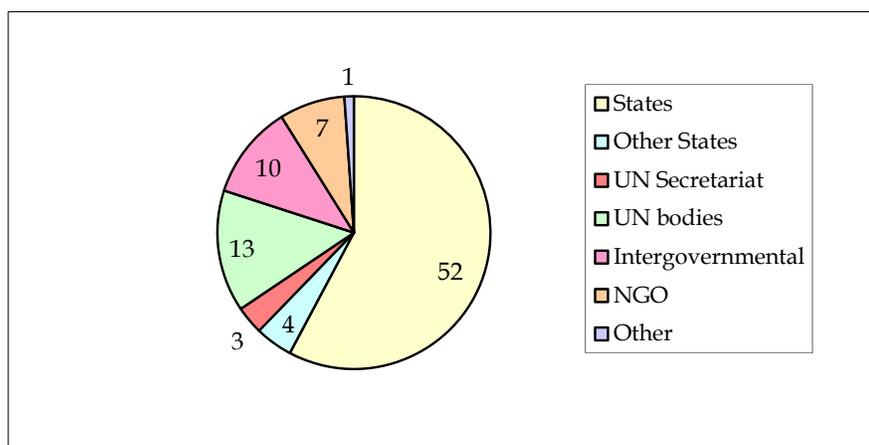


Figure 1: Type and Number of entities attendance at the 71st session of the Commission

Twenty-five governments were represented through ministerial level officials, eight of which were full ministers, and seven of which were Heads of State. As can be seen from the chart in Annex III, in terms of the number of Heads of State in attendance, the 71st session of the Commission ranks first among Commission sessions held over the past ten years (since the 62nd session of the Commission in 2006).

III. Ownership and Participation

The responses received regarding the sense of ownership and the level of participation at the Commission session were generally positive.

A majority agreed that the Commission session was owned and driven by member States. A majority also agreed that the benefits of their attendance justified the related costs.

Many respondents, though not all, agreed that the number of Committees of the Whole (organized as parallel sessions) allowed all delegations to fully participate.

All respondents agreed that the overall outcome of the deliberations was positive, and a result of a collaborative effort by member States. They also indicated that the secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to the effective conduct and outcome of the session. Most respondents agreed that the draft reports accurately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Commission.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The Commission session was owned and driven by member States.	5(28%)	9(50%)	4(22%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The benefits of my delegation's attendance at the session justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).	6(33%)	9(50%)	3(17%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The number of Committees of the Whole (parallel sessions) allowed all delegations to participate fully in the Commission session.	4(25%)	9(53%)	2(12%)	2(12%)	0(0%)
d. The overall outcome of the deliberations was positive and a result of a collaborative effort by member States.	5(28%)	13(72%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The draft reports accurately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Commission.	3(17%)	14(78%)	1(5.6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
f. The secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session.	4(22%)	14(78%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

IV. Overall relevance and outcomes

In general, respondents saw the Commission session as a relevant mechanism for the consideration of issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the region, and the 71st session as having achieved a satisfactory outcome.

The majority of respondents strongly agreed that the Commission session was a key intergovernmental forum and the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region for considering issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.

Almost half of the respondents strongly agreed that the session contributed to the achievement of the Commission’s mandate to serve as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region.

The responses regarding the synergies and partnerships built by the Commission with other relevant intergovernmental and international (including United Nations system) organizations were almost as positive, however indicating that further improvement could be made.

The theme topic of the 71st session of the Commission, “Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development”, was seen by all respondents to have reflected the current needs and priorities of the region.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The Commission is a key intergovernmental forum and the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region to consider issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.	12(67%)	5(28%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The session contributed to the achievement of the Commission’s mandate to serve as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region.	8(44%)	9(50%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The Commission is achieving synergies and building effective partnerships with other relevant intergovernmental and international (including United Nations system) organizations at the regional and subregional levels.	8(44%)	8(44%)	1(6%)	1(6%)	0(0%)
d. The theme topic for the seventy-first session of the Commission, “ Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development ”, reflects the current needs and priorities of the region in general, and my country/territory in particular.	9(50%)	9(50%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

a. Outcomes of the Senior Officials segment

Respondents generally viewed the Senior Officials segment as an effective mechanism for discussing issues of importance to the region.

A majority agreed that the deliberations during the Senior Officials segment were focused and effective at identifying key emerging issues affecting the region.

A majority also agreed that the deliberations were effective at providing guidance to the work of the secretariat, in particular the draft programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017.

Similarly, a majority agreed that the Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries successfully highlighted priority concerns of these countries and identified measures to address those concerns through regional cooperation.

The respondents generally agreed that the deliberations were effective at discussing progress achieved and gaps requiring priority attention with regard to the implementation of Commission resolutions and decisions; and that the deliberations were effective at deciding on the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies.

Overall, while the responses were generally positive, some scope remains for improving the perception of the effectiveness of the senior official's segment even more (for further details, please refer to Annex IV).

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the <u>Senior Officials segment</u> ?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The deliberations were focused and effective at identifying the key emerging issues that merit policy attention in the region.	6(33%)	9(50%)	3(17%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The deliberations were effective at discussing progress achieved and gaps requiring priority attention with regard to the implementation of Commission resolutions and decisions.	4(22%)	9(50%)	5(28%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The deliberations were effective at deciding on the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies.	2(11%)	11(61%)	5(28%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The deliberations were effective at providing guidance to the work of the secretariat, in particular the draft programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017	4(22%)	12(67%)	2(11%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries was successful in highlighting the priority concerns of these countries and identifying measures to address these concerns through regional cooperation.	6(33%)	10(57%)	2(11%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

b. Outcomes of the Ministerial segment

The views on the outcomes of the Ministerial segment were positive.

A majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the deliberations were effective both in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socioeconomic issues, and at generating policy options. Similarly, most also either strongly agreed or agreed that the resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the seventy-first session of the Commission.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the <u>Ministerial segment</u> ?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The deliberations were focused and effective at generating policy options for addressing key socioeconomic issues affecting the region.	6(33%)	8(45%)	4(22%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The deliberations were effective in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socioeconomic issues affecting the region.	6(33%)	9(50%)	3(17%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the seventy-first session of the Commission.	6(33%)	12(67%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

V. Organizational aspects

Overall, responses demonstrated that the secretariat effectively and efficiently serviced the 71st session of the Commission, but that there were also areas for improvement.

a. Organization and servicing by the secretariat

While a majority of respondents agreed that sufficient time was allocated to agenda items during the session, some indicated this aspect could be improved.

Most respondents agreed that the communication between member States and the secretariat in-between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session.

A majority of respondents were positive in their feedback on the organization of work in-between sessions, and either strongly agreed or agreed that the conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for enabling interactive discussion, and for reaching consensus.

A majority also agreed that the submission of draft resolutions by member States allowed sufficient time for review. Most respondents indicated that the pre-session servicing by the secretariat through the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions provided a useful basis for decision-making during the Commission session.

Particularly positive feedback was received regarding the servicing by the secretariat, in terms of enabling effective outcomes.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. Sufficient time was allocated to agenda items during the session.	3(17%)	10(56%)	3(17%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
b. The servicing by the secretariat facilitated effective outcomes.	4(22%)	14(78%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

c. The organization of work between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session (ACPR, Committees, Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions (IWGDR), communication with the secretariat, etc.).	7(39%)	10(56%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The communication between the secretariat and member States between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session.	5(28%)	12(67%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for enabling interactive discussions.	9(50%)	8(44%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
f. The conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for reaching consensus.	7(39%)	10(56%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
g. The submission of draft resolutions by member States before the commencement of the Commission session allowed sufficient time for review by members and associate members of the Commission.	4(22%)	10(56%)	3(17%)	0(0%)	1(5%)
h. Pre-session servicing by the secretariat through the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions related to preparation and review of the draft resolutions for tabling provided a useful basis for decision-making during the Commission session.	7(41%)	9(53%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

b. Documents

In general, respondents viewed the documentation for the Commission session quite positively.

A large majority agreed that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda. Most delegations found that the availability of online documentation greatly facilitated their review of these documents prior to the session. Although more than half of respondents agreed that the pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner, some room for improvement was noted here.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda.	5(28%)	12(67%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	3(17%)	10(57%)	1(5%)	3(17%)	1(5%)
c. The posting of documents through the ESCAP website facilitated my delegations review.	8(44%)	7(39%)	2(11%)	1(5%)	0(0%)

VI. Use of ESCAP recommendations and analytical work

A majority indicated that they will likely use any of the ESCAP recommendations and analytical work, presented at the 71st Commission session, when engaging in policy and programme formulation at the national level.

Some delegations shared their previous examples of national policy and programme formulation on the basis of ESCAP recommendations and analytical work (see annex IV).

	Very likely (5)	Likely (4)	Neutral (3)	Unlikely (2)	Very unlikely (1)
How likely is it that you will use any of the ESCAP recommendations and analytical work, presented at the 71st Commission session, when engaging in policy and programme formulation at the national level?	3(17%)	11(61%)	4(22%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

VII. Most and least successful features

The questionnaire provided space for respondents to comment on the most and least successful features of the Commission session.

The most successful features of the 71st session of the Commission were noted as: the high level discussions and presentations, including the theme topic; the Ministerial Segment; and Working Group on Draft Resolutions, including the adoption of resolutions.

On the other hand, the time management of some sessions was mentioned as least successful feature. For further details, please refer to Annex IV.

VIII. Conclusion and additional comments

This assessment demonstrates that the 71st session of the Commission successfully attracted high and wide representation and was conducted efficiently, enabling participants to discuss and negotiate issues of importance for the region.

In conclusion, delegates expressed general satisfaction with the preparations for, servicing and outcome of the 71st session, and continue to consider the Commission an important regional body for discussing issues of regional and global importance.

Annex I

Attendance of ESCAP member States at the 71st session of the Commission

	Country	No. of participants		Country	No. of participants
1	Afghanistan	2	33	Palau*	-
2	Armenia	1	34	Papua New Guinea	10
3	Australia	2	35	Philippines	14
4	Azerbaijan	6	36	Rep. of Korea	10
5	Bangladesh	8	37	Russian Federation	9
6	Bhutan	5	38	Samoa	1
7	Brunei Darussalam	3	39	Singapore	2
8	Cambodia	9	40	Solomon Islands	5
9	China	11	41	Sri Lanka	4
10	DPRK	3	42	Tajikistan*	-
11	Fiji	12	43	Thailand	182
12	France	1	44	Timor-Leste	2
13	Georgia	3	45	Tonga	1
14	India	12	46	Turkey	6
15	Indonesia	17	47	Turkmenistan*	-
16	Islamic Rep. of Iran	7	48	Tuvalu	5
17	Japan	16	49	UK	1
18	Kazakhstan	7	50	USA	7
19	Kiribati	6	51	Uzbekistan	3
20	Kyrgyzstan	1	52	Vanuatu	2
21	Lao PDR	13	53	Viet Nam	5
22	Malaysia	10			
23	Maldives	3		Associate members	
24	Marshall Island	7	54	American Samoa*	-
25	Micronesia	1	55	Cook Islands	2
26	Mongolia	1	56	French Polynesia*	-
27	Myanmar	4	57	Guam	2
28	Nauru	9	58	Hong Kong, China	2
29	Nepal	7	59	Macao, China	4
30	Netherlands*	-	60	New Caledonia*	-
31	New Zealand*	-	61	Niue*	-
32	Pakistan	9	62	Northern Mariana Islands*	-
			Total no. of member State participants : 475		

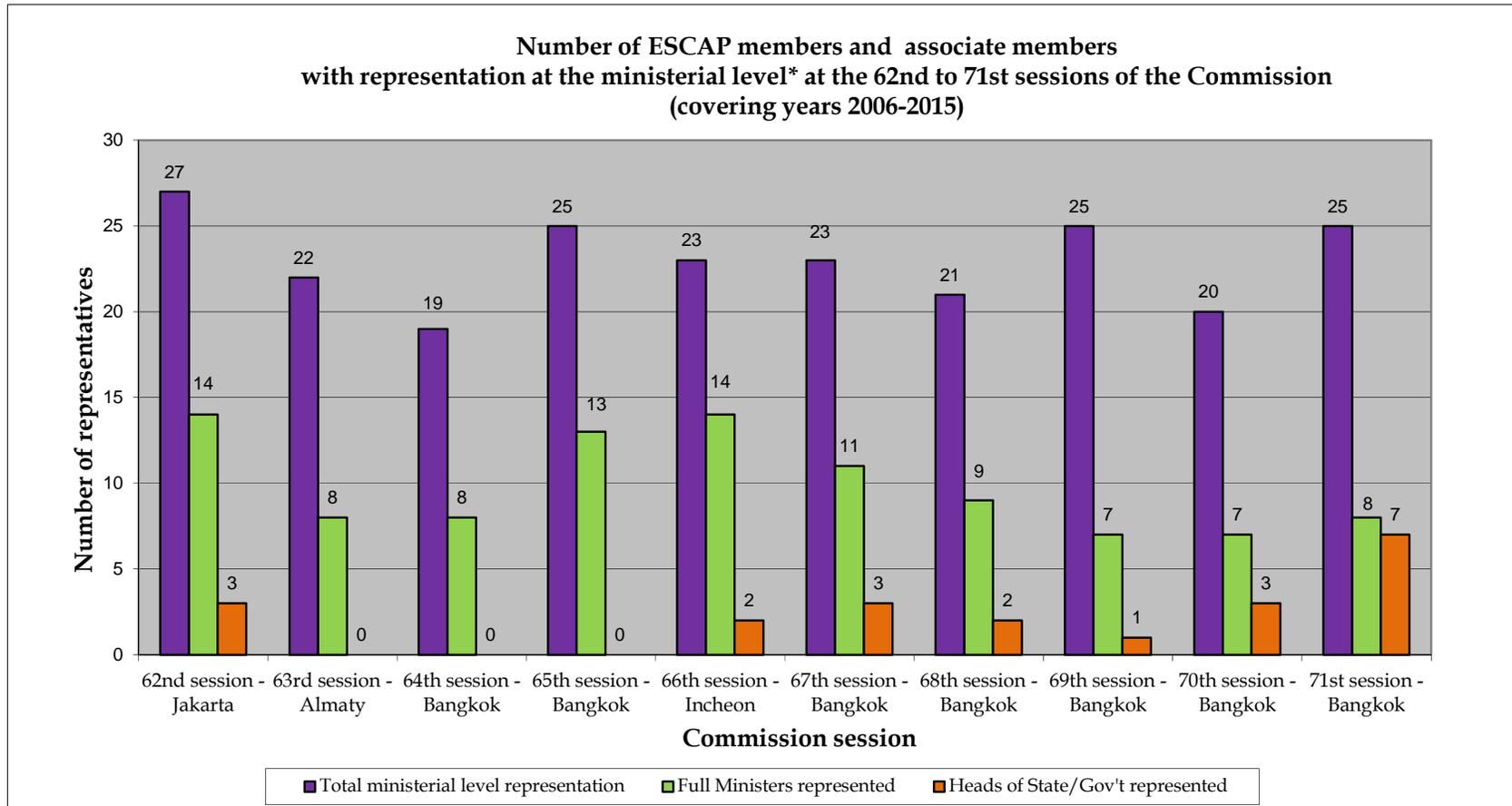
* Countries did not attend

Annex II

Attendance of other participants at the 71st session of the Commission

		No. of participants			No. of participants
	Other States			United Nations Secretariat	
1	Austria	1	22	Department of Economic and Social Affairs	2
2	Czech Republic	1	23	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	1
3	Germany	1	24	UN Regional Commissions New York Office	1
4	Israel	1			4
		4			
				United Nations Agencies and Bodies	
	Intergovernmental Organization		25	Food and Agriculture Organization	3
5	Asian and Pacific Coconut Community	1	26	International Civil Aviation Organization	1
6	Asian Development Bank	1	27	International Labour Organization	11
7	Colombo Plan	4	28	International Maritime Organization	2
8	Conference on Interaction and Capacity Building Measures in Asia	2	29	International Telecommunication Union	1
9	Economic Cooperation Organization	2	30	United Nations Children's Fund	4
10	ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee	1	31	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	2
11	International Organization for Migration	3	32	United Nations Development Programme	1
12	International Peeper Community	1	33	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	1
13	Shanghai Cooperation Organization	4	34	United Nations Environment Programme	1
14	WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones	1	35	United Nations Human Settlements Programme	1
		20	36	United Nations Population Fund	1
			37	World Health Organization	1
	Non-Government Organization				30
15	Baha' i International Community	1			
16	International Road Transport Union	1		Other Entities	
17	Organization of the Families of Asia and the Pacific	1	38	Holy See	3
18	Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association of Thailand	4			3
19	The Associated Country Women of the World	2			
20	World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises	1			
21	WWF International	3			
		13		Total no. of non-member State participants	74

Annex III



*Includes Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Deputy-Ministers, Assistant-Ministers or their equivalents.

Annex IV

Questionnaire Comments

[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]

What could have been done to improve the overall relevance and outcome(s) of the Commission session?

- Align with latest development of the region as well as important global regional initiatives.
- Presenting a trending or projections of progress from year to year.
- Result based on Sustainable Development.
- Timely distribution of important documents before the session.
- To focus on the theme and keep to time limits.
- Concentrate on concrete projects and being inclusive as well as focusing on poverty reduction.
- More interactive sessions. Preparing compilation of recommendations of member States – receiving recommendations from member States on topics for discussions.
- Better scheduling and more time allocation for the high-level events will give officials more opportunities about domestic policy reforms.

What could have been done to improve the Senior Officials segment of the Commission session?

- Organizing interactive panels; organizing youth forum.
- Bring out more evidence of how the identified gap areas were addressed.
- Give more attention to disaster risk mitigation program.
- Better registration of participants and interpretation.
- Reduce activities/ meetings conducted simultaneously to allow senior officials to participate in all segments of the meetings.
- 1. Better time management on the deliberations made by a number of delegations would have increased the efficiency of the Session. 2 Apart from the online access to the Session documents, it is recommended to the Secretariat to produce complementary technical notes or highlights on the various cooperative initiatives and related programs as well as their implementation statuses, in addition to the results achieved, thus far, in the various fields under the MDG, towards a better understanding of the regional cooperation and integration processes within the Asia and Pacific Region.

What could have been done to improve the Ministerial segment of the Commission session?

- Better scheduling and more time allocation.
- Better time management on the deliveries of keynotes addresses made by member States.
- Ministerial statements to be more focused on thematic areas highlighted.
- More interactions in Ministerial Roundtable.
- -organizing the whole ministerial segment as ministerial roundtables - allowing member States to ask questions (Q&A).
- To ensure every speakers abide to the allocated timing. Thank you. The secretariat can indicate earlier the sequence of delivery country statements.
- Narrow down the topic of ministerial roundtable and focus on the most pressing issue of the region.

What could have been done to improve the organization and servicing of the Commissions session?

- Adhere to timelines.
- Speakers should be strongly advised to abide to the timing allocated. Thank you.
- Publishing and distributing all documents well in advance - having more ESCAP volunteers publishing the results of evaluation.

What motivated your Government to designate the level of your delegation to participate in the Commission session?

- Fixed practice in the MOFA.
- Importance attached by our Government to ESCAP.
- Our country sponsored two important draft resolutions.
- The important role of ESCAP in the region's economic and social development and cooperation.
- The level of HoD of other MS and the nature of the session.
- -visibility - strong relationship with ESCAP - ESCAP as a reliable partner - theme by Commission and importance of ESCAP platform
- 1. The theme/topic of the Commission session; 2. Indication from the Permanent Representative's office; 3. Advise from the Foreign Affairs Ministry.
- Corporate knowledge of mechanics of Commission session and due to unavailability also of ministerial representation.
- Due to an urgent assignment/meeting at the capital, our ministerial level meeting representative was unable to attend.
- As an Associate member of ESCAP, we have participated in the annual Commission sessions as well as in its capacity building activities to keep abreast

of the key initiatives and developments in the Asia and Pacific region. The rank and background of our delegation representation commensurate with ESCAP's various policy and work areas under the MDG Agenda.

Is there anything that could have been done to encourage higher (rank) and wider (intersectoral) representation from your delegation at the Commission session?

- Further enhance the role and effectiveness of ESCAP.
- Our rank of representation is appropriate for this Commission session.
- None – quality of representative not compromised in any way.
- If there's a relevant issues that being discussed.- Invitation to become panelist/speaker – side event.

Please indicate previous examples of national policy and programme formulation for which ESCAP recommendations and/or analytical work were used.

- - 2008 NSA – joining transport initiatives with ESCAP – ICT connectivity
- Disaster management
- Social Economic Survey for preparation LDC reports.
- We are of the view that ESCAP has served as an effective forum to facilitate regional cooperation and capacity building in areas that promote sustainable development. Though attending ESCAP meetings and its related activities. We have gained invaluable insights and inspirations from ESCAP's analytical work and recommendations, particularly in the areas of environmental, economic and social issues. The sharing of best practices and experiences are indeed very useful resources when devising our SAR's policies and programs in related areas.
- Initiatives undertaken by ESCAP on Statistics, data mobilization, disaster risk reduction and management were endorsed/adopted.

What was the most successful feature of the seventy-first session of the Commission?

- High level presentations – efficient discussions – relevance of themes
- Dedicated panel discussions
- High level of participation as well as adoption of 14 resolutions
- Maritime connectivity
- Ministerial Panel Discussion on the Theme Topic
- Ministerial Panels and country statements
- Passing substantive resolutions
- The resolutions passed
- The theme emphasis
- Working group on draft resolutions

- The high-level panel discussions provided an opportunity to member countries to share their respective policy challenges in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.
- 1. Members commitments and efforts towards formulation of perspectives for Post-2015 Development Agenda in order to build regional infrastructure and connectivity in the Asia and Pacific through cooperation for greater capacity development.

What was the least successful feature of the seventy-first session of the Commission?

- Just one negative moment – failure in planning the interpreters’ work during COW I.
- Ministerial Roundtable
- Program/session overruns with regard to time
- Round table discussion on theme topic
- Time constraints
- None
- Time management during Panel discussions, country statements, and other events continues to be poor.

Please provide any additional comments you may have on the seventy-first session of the Commission and any suggestions for the improvement of the future sessions.

- Focus on theme and actions of implementations.
- Keep the theme for next year but focus on implementation.
- Thank you!
- Thanks for the excellent job that the Secretariat has done.
- Better coordination between the secretariat, particularly the divisions, and offices of Permanent Representatives/Embassies would be helpful in facilitating Commission related activities, i.e. draft resolutions, high level events, requests for participation by officials. There were instances when divisions communicated directly with line agencies without informing the embassy. It is the responsibility of the Embassy/officials of permanent representatives to inform and communicate with line agencies.
- The pre-session documents should be made available at least 2 weeks earlier before the commencement of the meeting. This will allow full review from respective stakeholders. – Provide more variation of Muslims food perform their prayers.

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