

**Evaluation Report of the Project  
Supporting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) -  
based Development Strategies through Integrated  
Regional Action**

**By**

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## *Executive Summary*

ESCAP/ADB/UNDP (2008) regional MDG report identified five gaps, which are being considered as responsible for holding back the countries of the region especially the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These gaps include growth gap, policy gap, strategy gap, resource gap and implementation gap. Intensification of efforts both at the national and international levels are required to address these gaps. At the national level, the development strategies of the LDCs need to be aligned with the MDGs, and at the international level, efforts are required to build the capacity of the LDCs with a view to enabling them to formulate, implement and monitor their development strategies consistent with the MDGs.

It is against this backdrop that the ESCAP implemented the project “Supporting Millennium Development Goals (MDG) – based development strategies through integrated regional action” with funding from the United Nations Development Account over a period of three years (July 2009 – June 2012). The Project covered selected countries located in the Asia-Pacific region, including the LDCs, the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), with economies in transition and the Pacific Island developing states (henceforth is referred as CSN). In line with the mandate given to the ESCAP through various resolution of the Commission, the Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division of the ESCAP in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) implemented the Project. The ESCAP also worked in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in implementing and elaborating the project activities.

The main objective of the Project has been to strengthen, through coordinated regional actions, the national capacities of the target-countries to formulate, implement and monitor their national development strategies to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, as well as to improve evidence-based MDG policy advocacy through statistical capacity building in the participating countries. The Project also intended to promote greater cooperation and collaboration under “developing as one”, in line with the Asia-Pacific regional MDG road map developed under the ESCAP/UNDP/ADB regional MDG partnership. Another key objective of the Project has been to engender the MDGs. The Project has explicitly recognized the widespread gender disparities that existed in various countries in the region.

The main purpose of this evaluation exercise has been to assess the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the project results and put forward related recommendations for planning future interventions and derive lessons learnt from its implementation. The evaluation of this Project is undertaken on the basis of a desk review of various project and other related documents, the outcome reports of various meetings and training workshops, assessment received directly from the participants in writing on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the results of the Project, feedback received directly from the participants of the various workshops and meeting through questionnaires, and discussion with the participants of the recently concluded Expert Group Meeting in Bangkok during

May 30 to June 1, 2012. Questionnaire surveys were conducted for 5 workshops with a total of 118 responses received out of 158 participants.

Regarding activities related to integration of MDGs into development policies and strategies, the participants of the selected countries found the results of the project highly useful and relevant to the government needs, particularly in enhancing and understanding of policy, strategies and plan formulation and implementation. Project results enhanced the capacity of the concerned officials and enabled them to incorporate MDGs into their national development strategies and plans, such as 5 year/10 year Development Plans, National Development Strategies, and long-term and periodic socio-economic development plans.

The participants found the project results effective as it helped them identify the gaps in their policy environment, learn from the experiences of the others, improve their policy environment through sharing and exchanging knowledge and experiences from other stakeholders. Some participants found networking with other countries as additional benefit. Many participants were of the view that preparation of presentation at the workshop required consultation with other government officials which itself induced awareness about the MDGs and helped build the capacity of concerned government officials. The participants also found the results highly effective in improving and transforming procedure of integration and implementation of MDGs into their national development plans and improving the monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the participating countries.

On the sustainability of the project results, most of the participants, though found the results highly useful in enhancing the capacities of the concerned government officials, especially in charge of achieving the MDGs in LDCs, they were of the view that further support from regional Commissions will be required to develop capacity in areas such as preparation for graduation strategies of the LDCs, revision and modification needed in MDGs indicators as they move forward, preparation of MDG-based comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plans and preparation of MDGs acceleration framework.

The importance of quality and quantity of statistics for monitoring the progress towards achieving the MDGs cannot be overemphasized. The statistical infrastructure of participating countries was considered too weak to provide their policy-makers with sufficient, relevant, high quality and comparable data in Central Asian countries and the LDCs. The Statistics Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has addressed this challenge through regional workshops in improving the quality of statistics in these countries.

Participants to the meetings and workshops indicated that these activities were highly useful and relevant, since for instance they provided opportunities to identify weaknesses in the statistical system. They also found these activities effective as they increased the capacity in use of data, application of tools, etc.

However, consultation with these countries suggests that there is still a strong need to improve capacities to produce and monitor MDG-related statistics. Their statistical organizations face persistent data gaps, discrepancies in statistics produced

by national and international agencies, have little capacity to conduct regular survey, collect relevant statistics pertaining to MDG indicators, and ensuring the availability of statistics in time with reasonable quality.

Similar feedback were received by the SIAP in the Asia-Pacific region regarding their activities for the LDCs. Like in Central Asian Countries, the LDCs of the Asia-Pacific region also need further training to improve their capacities to produce and monitor MDG-related statistics.

In conclusion, the Project has made major contribution in strengthening the national capacities to formulate, implement and monitor national development strategies consistent with internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. While the Project has covered much ground, still more to be done, more ground to be covered to achieve the ultimate goals of the Project. It is safe to suggest that despite additional efforts on the part of the ESCAP and its development partners in the remaining period up to 2015, some countries in the region especially the LDCs may not achieve all the MDG-related targets. Hence, there would be life beyond 2015. Additional efforts during the period up to 2015 will certainly help the regional countries to fare better in Post 2015.

The participating countries though found the results of the project useful in enhancing their capacities, they were of the view that further support of the regional Commission will be required to develop capacity in the areas of preparation for graduation strategies, revision and modification needed in MDGs indicators as they move forward, preparation for MDG - based monitoring and evaluation plans, and preparation for the MDGs acceleration framework. It is, therefore, recommended that the capacity development project like the one recently concluded may continue for another three years, particularly during the remaining period up to 2015.

There is a growing evidence that the local level planning plays a critical role in delivery of basic services that are crucial for MDG achievements. Hence, the localization of MDG will be essential for which more capacity building at sub-national level will be required. It is recommended that strengthening the capacity of the local level/sub-national level governments should form the integral part of the strategy as we move forward.

Notwithstanding improvement in their National Statistical Offices (NSOs), consultation with MDG focal point in these countries suggest that there is still a strong need to improve capacities to produce and monitor MDG-related statistics. It is recommended that the efforts undertaken by the ECE and SIAP may continue for another three years, that is, up to 2015 (the target date for achieving the MDGs).

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Evaluation

ESCAP/ADB/UNDP (2008) regional MDG report identified five gaps, which are being considered as responsible for holding back the countries of the region, especially the countries with special needs (CSNs), in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These gaps include growth gap, policy gap, strategy gap, resource gap and implementation gap. Efforts need to be intensified both at the national and at the international levels to address these gaps. At the national level, the development strategies of the CSNs need to be aligned with the MDGs, and at the international level, efforts are required to build the capacity of the slow moving as well “off-track” countries so as to enable them to formulate, implement and monitor their development strategies consistent with the MDGs. The most effective and efficient way to do so is to pool the resources together in assisting the countries in the region.

It is against this backdrop that the ESCAP implemented the project “Supporting Millennium Development Goals (MDG) – based development strategies through integrated regional action” with funding from the United Nations Development Account over a period of three years (July 2009 – June 2012). The project was aimed to address the gaps in policy, strategies and implementation, while addressing growth gap and resource gap were beyond the scope of the project. The Project covered selected countries located in the Asia-Pacific region, including the LDCs, the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), with economies in transition and the Pacific Island developing states (henceforth is referred as CSN – countries with special needs). In line with the mandate given to the ESCAP through various resolution of the Commission, the Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division of the ESCAP Secretariat in collaboration with their counterparts in the Secretariat of Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) implemented the Project. The ESCAP also worked in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in implementing and elaborating the project activities.

The main objective of the Project under evaluation has been to strengthen, through coordinated regional actions, the national capacities of the target-countries to formulate, implement and monitor their national development strategies so as to enable them to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

The capacity building aspects of this project had two broad thrusts. Firstly, it intended to focus on enhancing the understanding and capacity of policymakers and their development partners in incorporating MDGs in their

development policies and strategies, and effectively implementing those strategies with particular emphasis on issues such as service delivery and resource mobilization. Secondly, it intended to improve evidence-based MDG policy advocacy through statistical capacity building in the participating countries. Given the diversity of the region and the variation in statistical capacity to incorporate MDGs, this part of the project was implemented by ECE with special focus on the Central Asian Countries and ESCAP Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) in coordination with Statistics Division.

In addition to its main objective, the Project intended to promote greater cooperation and collaboration under “developing as one”, in line with the Asia-Pacific regional MDG road map developed under the ESCAP/UNDP/ADB regional MDG partnership. By acting coherently and collectively, the effectiveness of the assistance provided by the UN System as well as development financial institution was expected to be enhanced manifold. The UN entities and regional financial institution, working in unison with the national level policy-makers and their development partners, were thought to add value to the efforts of the target countries in achieving the MDGs.

Another key objective of the Project has been to engender the MDGs. The Project has explicitly recognized the widespread gender disparities that existed in various countries in the region, and unless these disparities are directly addressed, the achievement of MDGs will remain elusive. It is in this perspective that the project mainstream gender concern to ensure that the achievement of all the MDGs must lead to a situation where men and women benefit equally from all national development efforts.

This project has several distinguishing features, which need to be highlighted. Firstly, this project is largely focused on CSNs, which suffer from serious gaps and are at risk of missing the MDG targets by 2015. Through this project, it is expected that these gaps will be reduced. Secondly, this project has a statistical component that builds on previous work and intends to contribute to increased availability, understanding and use of disaggregated MDG indicators by policy makers and other stakeholders in developing MDG-based national development strategies. Finally, this project represents a continuation of Development Account supported projects that have contributed to achieving MDGs in the region.

## **1.2. Purpose and Scope**

The main purpose of this evaluation exercise has been to assess the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the project results and put forward related recommendations for planning future interventions and

derive lessons learnt from its implementation. The terms of reference of the evaluation exercise is documented in Annex -1.

In assessing the **relevance** of the project, the appropriateness of the results in terms of regional Commissions' priorities, Governments' development strategies and priorities and requirements of the target-countries are examined. In particular, the following questions are answered:

- a. Did the stakeholders find the results useful?
- b. How applicable are the concepts, methodologies, tools, resources, and training materials produced by the project for the countries concerned?

In assessing the **effectiveness** of the results of the project, we looked at as to how far these have resulted in changes in policy environment and made contributions towards policy making in target countries. In particular,

- a. To what extent have the expected outcomes been achieved?
- b. How have the project benefited the target groups?
- c. What is the likelihood that the project will contribute to the objectives in the long-run?

In assessing the **sustainability** aspects, an attempt is made to address the likelihood of the benefits of the project continuing in the future. More specifically, the following questions are answered.

- a. To what extent can the results from the project be continued without the regional commission's further involvement?
- b. To what extent are the results replicable?
- c. To what extent has support from stakeholders (ADB, UNDP etc.) and national partners been obtained to take forward the result of the project?

The **expected results** of the project are documented below:

- i. Improve the capacity of policy makers in target countries so that they could integrate MDGs in their national development agendas.
- ii. Increase the skills of the officials so that they could produce and disseminate relevant disaggregated MDG indicators through effective cooperation of data producers at national and international levels in support of national statistical systems which are based on countries needs and sound methodologies.
- iii. Improve the capacity of key national stakeholders in advocating MDGs and in supporting the achievements of the MDGs, taking advantage of the regional MDG road map.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Description of Methodology

The choice of methodology to evaluate the Project results of the project, depend on the availability of time and space. It is in this perspective that the evaluation of this Project is undertaken on the basis of a desk review of various project document and other related documents, the outcome reports of various meetings and training workshops, assessment received directly from the participants in writing on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the results of the Project, feedback received directly from the participants of the various workshops and meeting through questionnaires, and discussion with the participants of the recently concluded Expert Group Meeting in Bangkok during May 30 to June 1, 2012<sup>1</sup> (Questionnaires and summary of the results are presented in Annex - II).

Under the project, ESCAP organized eight training/advocacy workshops and four expert group meetings and policy dialogues as part of the capacity building efforts. The outcome reports of these meetings/workshops provided vital information about relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the project results. Questionnaire based feedback received directly from the participants, who were mostly mid-career government officials, provided useful information about the success or otherwise of the project under evaluation (see Annex II). Questionnaire surveys for 9 workshops and meetings were examined, with a total of 203 respondents out of 289 participants - details given in Table below. The questionnaire asked direct question about the usefulness and coverage of the workshops, overall rating of the workshop from the beneficiary perspective, quality of experts/resource person invited to educate the participants and the documentation provided during the workshops. The findings of the questionnaire-based survey results have been evaluated here. (see Annex II for questionnaires and summary of the results).

In addition to rating in questionnaire-based survey the participants also provided additional comments/feedbacks on the question listed above in all the meetings/workshops. These comments/feedbacks helped immensely in evaluating the Project outcomes (see Annex II for summary of feedback).

The recently concluded Expert Group Meeting held in Bangkok (May 30 - June 1, 2012) specifically aimed at evaluation of the project by participating countries. Thus, many invitees were those who participated in past activities. They were asked to assess from the beneficiary perspective, about the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the project results and provide examples of a policy or a programme that they implemented or recommended to their Ministry/Department for implementation after

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<sup>1</sup> 19 participants from 8 countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar and Nepal) participated the Expert Group Meeting in Bangkok of which, 17 participants (89.5%) assessed the project results and were also interviewed to gauge their views on the success or otherwise of the project. List of participants are presented as Annex III.

attending at least one of the MDG-related training workshop<sup>1</sup>. The assessment received directly from the participants in writing on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the results of the project forms the critical inputs to the evaluation of the Project.

In addition to the critical input, the participants were interviewed by the evaluator during the Expert Group Meeting in Bangkok to gauge their views on the success or otherwise of the Project. Direct discussions with participants were found useful as they reconfirmed to what they have given their views in writing.

EA				participants	countries	reponse
EA1	A1 A3	<i>Partnership Dialogue on Developing and Implementing MDG-based National Development Strategies in Asia-Pacific Countries,</i>	13-15 December 2010 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.	<b>40</b>	<b>12</b>	15
EA1	A2 A4	<i>Sub-regional Workshop for LDCs in Achieving MDGs as Part of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (South-East Asia/East and North-East Asia)</i>	14-16 September 2011, Incheon, ROK	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	23
EA1	<del>A5-1</del> (A4?)	<i>Regional training workshop on "Beyond inflation targets: Policy options and instruments for managing equitable growth and human development"</i>	19-22 December 2011 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	36
EA1	A5-1	<i>Expert Group Meeting on assessing the integration of the MDGs in national development strategies, plans and programmes in selected LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and way forward,</i>	30 May – 1 June 2012, Bangkok	<b>34</b>	<b>8</b>	17
EA2	A5-3	<i>Workshop on MDG Monitoring,</i>	8-11 November 2010, Geneva	<b>14</b>		12
EA2	A5-3	<i>Regional workshop on poverty and employment indicators of the Millennium Development Goal 1</i>	27-28 September 2011, Almaty	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	17
EA2	A5-4	<i>Subregional Training / Workshop on Dissemination and communication of MDG statistics for effective use in policy and decision-making</i>	18-20 October 2010, Daejeon, ROK	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	18
EA3	A6	<i>Advocacy Training Workshop for LDCs in Achieving MDGs as Part of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action</i>	25–28 October 2011 in Siem Riap, Cambodia.	<b>61</b>	<b>10</b>	31
EA3	A6	<i>Advocacy Training Workshop for LDCs in Achieving MDGs as Part of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action</i>	18-20 April 2012, Kathmandu, Nepal	<b>40</b>	<b>9</b>	34

## 2.2. Limitations

This evaluation report suffers from the obvious limitations. Firstly, the Report is completed almost in a month after the completion of the project activities (June 1, 2012). The limited time has prevented the evaluator to have meaningful interaction with stakeholders including the participants due to very wide geographical coverage. Secondly, difficulties in considering the diversified nature of activities undertaken by the two regional Commissions is another limitation of the evaluation exercise. Notwithstanding these limitations we believe that the information we have gathered through various documents including the project document, outcome reports of various workshops and meetings, assessment received directly from the participants either in writing or through questionnaire-based survey, and discussion with the participants in Bangkok, are sufficient to evaluate the results of the project.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Performance Assessment (Integration of MDGs into development policies and strategies)

#### 3.1.1. Relevance

On the relevance of the project, two questions were asked. Firstly, whether the stakeholders found the results of the project useful and secondly, how applicable were the concepts, methodologies, tools, resources and training materials produced under the project for the countries concerned.

The participants of all the target countries found the results of the project highly useful and relevant to the government needs, particularly in enhancing knowledge and understanding of policy, strategies and plan formulation and implementation. (Summary of the questionnaire survey is provided in Section 3.2). Attribution of contribution by the project is difficult, while MDG has been recognized as highly relevant development agenda for most countries and has been incorporated into their national development strategies and plans, such as 5 year/10 year Development Plans, National Development Strategies, and Long-term and periodic socio-economic development plans.

For example; Lao PDR has incorporated MDGs into their Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), National Poverty Eradication Program (NPEP), and the Seventh Five Year National Social Economic Development Plan (NSED VII, 2011-2015).

**Bangladesh** has integrated the MDGs into the successive PRSPs and Annual Development Plans (ADPs). The 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2010-2015) has integrated the MDGs within the broader agenda of the economic and social targets. Interestingly, the 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan coincides with the MDGs, both having 2015 as terminal year. The Vision 2021 also embraces the MDGs.

**Nepal's** 12<sup>th</sup> Three Year Plan (2010/11 - 2012/13) and 20 Years strategic plan centered around the MDGs. They have found the activities and the results of the project very useful because it provided an opportunity to the concerned officials and stakeholders to understand the issue in a better way and helped build their capacity in localizing MDGs.

**Myanmar** is a late entrant to the initiative. It is participating effectively after the return of democracy. They have found the result of the project highly useful because it has enhanced their understanding and capacity and as such helped them integrate MDGs into their 4<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan For Myanmar, advocacy training workshops and Expert Group Meeting, particularly case studies, were directly applicable and useful for national planning because of the absence of UN Country Programme.

Like Myanmar, **Afghanistan** is also a new entrant. The advocacy training workshops and Expert Group Meeting (EGM), particularly the country case studies, were directly applicable and useful to national planning because the country did not have any UNDP country program. Afghanistan will modify the global timetable and benchmark to fit local realities. It has defined its MDG contribution as targets for 2020 from baselines of 2002 to 2005. Afghanistan has prepared their National Development Strategy which at the same time, is its PRSP. The National Development Strategy is a powerful MDG-based and pro-poor development strategy. The spirit of the strategy is fully consistent with the international development goals.

**Bhutan's** overall development is guided by the philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Many GNH indicators share close synergies with the MDGs and thus complements each other. Their representatives found the results of the project highly useful because it enabled them to mainstream MDGs into their national planning framework. In Bhutan, poverty is a rural phenomenon and this project has helped the government in framing policies accordingly.

The representative of **Cambodia** considered the series of advocacy training workshops/meetings as highly helpful and realistic. For them, the advocacy workshops provided direction, reflections and theoretical foundation and as such they were able to allocate local resources into priority areas.

It has helped them in improving the procedure of integration and implementation of MDGs into their national development plans. In 2009, the

second National Socioeconomic Development Plan (NSDP) (2009-2013) incorporated MDGs goals and targets. Cambodia expected to achieve their MDGs by 2015.

### 3.1.2. Effectiveness

As to the effectiveness of the project, the evaluation is based on the extent to which the project has contributed to the government policies in achieving the desired objective. All the participating countries found that various advocacy-training workshops, expert group meetings and other activities undertaken under the project helped identify the gaps and encouraged them to look into achievements of other countries to modify their own activities. Participating countries also found the project useful because it strengthened the capacity of the officials of their countries in charge of formulating and implementing policies/strategies/plans, in particular through sharing and exchanging of knowledge and experiences amongst all the concerned stakeholders. For example, the participant from Nepal stated that the project provided opportunity to the concerned officials and stakeholders to understand issues and develop capacity in poverty reduction initiative, mainstreaming MDGs including gender equality and social inclusion, and using participatory planning approach in plan formulation. The sharing of experience helped Bhutan start initiatives on localization of the MDGs.

Participant from Lao PDR found that networking with other countries was an additional benefit. Countries hosting workshops benefited immensely from participation of a cross section of people workshops held in Nepal and Cambodia.

Many participants told at the Expert Group Meeting in Bangkok that preparation of presentation at the workshop required extensive consultation within the government, which itself induced awareness and built capacity of the concerned government officials. Many participants also indicated that they have disseminated discussion and outcome of workshops through direct reporting to higher authorities in the government, internal seminars, internal circulation of documents, and so on. (Details given in section 3.1.4). In particular, participants from Afghanistan informed the meeting that the country's priority is still focused on ensuring security, rather than on MDGs, but that the impact of workshops may be reflected in the future plans and policies. All the participating countries found the project useful in improving and transforming procedure of integration and implementation of MDGs into their national development strategies. It also helped them in directing their limited resources in accordance with appropriate priorities. In other words, the project enhanced the efficiency of their expenditures. Furthermore, it also helped the countries to improve their monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

### **3.1.3. Sustainability**

On sustainability of the results of the project, the participants were asked to share their views on the likelihood that the results of the project would continue to benefit them without the support of the regional Commissions.

All the participating countries have stated that the project has played a critical role in enhancing the capacities of the concerned officials, especially those in charge of the MDGs in CSN. The project has benefited the countries through sharing knowledge and experience from others who are at the relatively advanced stage of achieving the MDGs. Therefore, the benefits of the project will continue in the future because of the continued flow of ideas through sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Most countries have undertaken initiatives to incorporate MDGs (or the spirit of MDGs) into their national development strategies, although the extent of the contribution of this project is difficult to single out. However, all the participating countries were of the view that further support will be required to develop capacity in such areas as:

- Preparation of graduation strategies from LDC status
- Revision and modification needed in MDGs indicators going forward
- Preparation of MDG-based comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plans
- Development of policies to link HDR, MDGs reports and periodic plan
- Preparation of MDGs acceleration framework

Most of the countries, especially LDCs argued that efforts would help them to continue receiving financial support from the development partners. Such fund would ease financial constraints thereby allowing them to allocate more resources towards achieving the MDGs by 2015 and graduation from the LDCs by 2020.

It is worth noting that in post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan, all MDGs are not considered of equal importance. Not all segments of Afghan society share the idea of gender equity and women empowerment, especially amongst the poor and the rural populace. Thus, all the goals are not pursued with the same vigour. In this connection, lessons from Nepal can be learnt, that is, engaging the wider society on MDGs and explaining their importance. From the Afghanistan perspective, stability and recovery are higher priorities.

### **3.1.4. Examples of Policy Implementation**

The participants were also asked to provide examples from the respective countries of a policy or a program that they implemented or recommended to their Ministry/Department for implementation after attending at least one of the training /advocacy workshops organized by the ESCAP under this Development Account project. The participants reported the following:

- The findings and learning from the meetings were shared with or communicated to their senior officers/authority/ministers, etc. after their return to the respective countries.
- Reports of the meetings/workshops were often shared across relevant ministries, to enhance their understanding or capacity, especially those in charge of MDGs such as planning department (Myanmar and Laos).
- Afghanistan representative reported that some useful examples from other countries were used to formulate recommendation for certain policies related to achieving the MDGs.
- Some participants indicated that they conducted seminars and shared knowledge that they acquired through this project for the local/sub-regional level civil servants to prepare their local plan in line with achieving MDG targets (Lao PDR, Afghanistan)
- Afghanistan participants informed that experiences of other countries learnt through the workshops have the potential to be applied for further planning and strategic intervention in local planning in their country.

Some country experiences are particularly relevant such as

- Post-conflict development process in Cambodia
- Localization of MDGs in Bangladesh
- Incorporating new dimension such as external economic threats and climate change in Nepal
- Identifying the poorest among the poor in Thailand

### **3.1.5. Summary of Questionnaire – Based Survey**

The participants from target countries also provided their feedback through evaluation questionnaires. In all, 105 participants responded through evaluation questionnaires during the four workshops and EGM and their feedback are reported in Tables 1 and 2<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> *The questionnaires of the below stated workshops and EGM are reported in Annex-II*

- a. *“Sub-regional workshop for LDCs in Achieving MDGs as part of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action”, organized by the ESCAP, September 14-16, 2011 Republic of Korea*
- b. *“Advocacy Training Workshop for LDCs in Achieving MDGs as part of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action”, organized by the ESCAP, October 25-28, 2011, Cambodia*

*Table 1: Questionnaire – based Survey Results*

<b>A. <u>Usefulness of Workshop</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Highly Useful	58.8 – 77.4
• Useful	19.3 – 41.2
• Not that Useful	0.0 – 4.3
<b>B. <u>Coverage of Works hop</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Too Wide	2.9 – 22.6
• Too Narrow	0.0 – 6.5
• Right	71 - 91
<b>C. <u>Overall Rating of the Workshop</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Excellent	26.5 – 60.9
• Good	34.8 – 73.5
• Fair	0.0 – 4.3
• Poor	0.0 – 0.0
<b>D. <u>Quality of Experts</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Excellent	23.5 – 60.9
• Good	30.4 – 71.0
• Fair	0.0 – 8.7
• Poor	0.0 – 0.0

*Table 2: Questionnaire - based Survey Results: EGM*

<b>A. <u>Usefulness of EGM</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Highly Useful	88.2
• Useful	11.8
• Not that Useful	0.0
<b>B. <u>Coverage of EGM</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Too Wide	5.9
• Too Narrow	10.0
• Right	94.1
<b>C. <u>Quality of Experts/Resource Persons</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Excellent	35.3
• Good	64.7
• Fair	0.0
• Poor	0.0
<b>E. <u>Overall Rating of the EGM</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage (%)</u></b>
• Excellent	75.0
• Good	18.8
• Fair	6.2
• Poor	0.0

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c. *“Advocacy Training Workshop for LDCs in Achieving MDGs as part of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action”, organized by ESCAP and Nepal, April 18-20, 2012, Nepal.*

a. *“Expert Group Meeting on Assessing the Integration of the MDGs in National Development Strategies Plans and Programmes in Selected LDCs, LLDC and SIDS and Way Forward” organized by the ESCAP, May 30-June 1, 2012, Bangkok, Thailand.*

b.

As regards the usefulness of the various workshops, 59-77 percent participants found them 'highly useful', followed by 19-41 percent found these workshops 'useful'. Only 4.0 percent participants did not find the workshop much useful.

As regards the coverage of the workshops, 71-91 percent participants found them 'right' while 3-23 percent found them 'too wide' and 0-6.5 percent considered them 'too narrow'. On the issue of overall rating of these workshops, 27-61 percent found them 'excellent' and between 35-73 percent considered them as 'good'. Only 0.0 - 4.3 percent rated these workshops as 'fair'. As far as quality of experts invited to these workshops is concerned, 23.5 - 61 percent found them 'excellent' while 30-71 percent termed them as 'good'. Few still considered them as 'fair'.

In short, overwhelming majority (over 90%) of the participants found these workshops between 'useful' to 'highly useful', they thought the coverage of the workshops were 'right'; quality of experts were found to be between 'good' and 'excellent'; and overall rating of the workshops was between 'good' and 'excellent'. Based on the feedback of the participants, it is safe to suggest that these workshops did prove useful for the participants and the objective/purpose of these workshops were achieved to a greater extent.

As regards the feedback on EGM held in Bangkok, 88 percent participants found the meeting 'highly useful' for them. The remaining 12 percent participants found it to be 'useful' (see Table 2). Over 94 percent participants found the coverage of the meeting right. As regards the quality of experts/resource persons invited to attend the meeting, 35 percent rated them as 'excellent' and 65 percent found them 'good'. Over 75 percent participants rated the meeting as 'excellent' while 19 percent regarded this as 'good' while the remaining 6 percent rated the meeting as 'fair'.

In short, the overwhelming majority of the participants found the meeting 'highly useful', the coverage was 'right', quality of experts were either 'good' or 'excellent' and overall rating of the meeting was between 'good' and 'excellent'.

In addition to the rating, participants provided narrative feedback on the training workshops. Participants found these workshops highly useful because they provided opportunities to share their experiences and learn from others in achieving MDG targets. They also found it very useful and informative and learnt many new dimensions of the MDGs. The contents of the workshops were relevant because it helped participants in grasping progress, gaps and limitations of MDGs in their respective countries and familiarizing the practical issues regarding achievement of the MDGs. Participants also found these training workshops highly useful because it provided platform to exchange ideas, the way of implementation, and to learn

from others, both good and bad/ineffective practices. Training provided awareness for participant to share their ideas and come up with concrete local or public input in line with the MDGs. They also indicated that the Project activities also helped countries implement policies/programmes to achieve the desired results pertaining to the MDGs. These include: i) localization of MDGs based on best practices, ii) updating of national indicators following the EGM, iii) transforming skills and knowledge for achievements of MDGs, iv) monitoring and evaluation mechanism for evaluating MDGs achievements, v) focusing more on the off-track MDGs, particularly at local level, vi) MDGs Acceleration framework and LDCs Graduation Strategy (See Annex II).

Some countries listed projects which were implemented after the various meetings under the project. Afghanistan arranged National Health Policy 2020 consensus building workshop; US-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement; finalized National Health Financing Policy 2020; and focusing on Post 2015 planning at the national level. Similarly, Bhutan reported implementation of various policies after attending the meetings. These include: i) translating knowledge gained from attending Trade Agreement Negotiation, particularly mainstreaming MDGs in trade policy, ii) helped in strengthening development plan based on inclusive growth, and iii) integrated MDGs in National Human Resource Development Road Map.

### **3.2. Performance Assessment of statistical component**

It has been recognized that many countries in the region face serious constraints regarding reliable statistics of the MDG indicators. The statistical infrastructure to monitor development in the region, particularly in Central Asian Countries, of which many are LLDCs, and LDCs were considered weak to provide policy-makers with sufficient, relevant, high quality and comparable data. Limited availability of adequate information weakens the capacity of policy-makers to assess the magnitude of the gaps that exist in various areas and to decide on the allocation of resources.

Given the diversity of the region, the variation in statistical capacity and to improve evidence-based MDG policy advocacy through statistical capacity building, the ECE was assigned the task to strengthen statistical infrastructure of the countries with special focus in countries of South-East and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Similarly, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) was given the responsibility to strengthen statistical organizations of the Asia-Pacific region. The main objective of these efforts has been to strengthen the capacity of the national statistical organization with a view to increasing availability, understanding and use of disaggregated MDG indicators by policy-makers and other stakeholders, in developing MDG strategies, preparing MDG reports to monitor MDG achievement, increasing skills to produce and disseminate

relevant disaggregated MDG indicators through effective cooperation of data producers at national and international levels based on sound methodologies.

The capacity building of the statistical infrastructure of the countries through various training workshops were strongly linked with the overall objective of the project, that is, strengthening of the national capacities of the countries to formulate, implement and monitor their national development strategies consistent with achieving the MDGs. As such, the overall effectiveness of this Development Account project was greatly enhanced because of the conscious effort to link MDG-related capacity building with the strengthening of the National Statistical Organizations.

### **3.2.1. Activities for statistical capacity building**

Three regional workshops and EGM were held in Central Asian region to strengthen statistical capacities of the participating countries. The first EGM was held during October 5-8, 2009 in Astana, Kazakhstan, organized by the ECE. Six Central Asian States (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) along with other UN organization, participated in the EGM.

Subsequently two regional workshops were organized under this Project for the National Statistical Office of the nine participating countries from Eastern and South-eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asian region (two representatives each from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan). The purpose of these workshops were to strengthen statistical capacities for monitoring the MDGs, to resolve discrepancies between national and international data related to the MDGs, present the methodologies used by the United Nations and other international institutions, improve the availability of metadata needed for effective national and international monitoring, and present the ECE regional database for MDG monitoring and improving its coverage.

In a similar fashion, ESCAP with support from the SIAP organized one EGM (June 22-24, 2010, Bangkok) and one sub regional training/workshop (Daejeon, Republic of Korea, October 18-20, 2010) to build capacity of data producers and users to produce as well as effectively utilize MDG - related data and indicators in developing MDG - based development strategies: Representatives from China, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam attended the EGM along with the experts from various international agencies.

Based on the outcome of the EGM (Bangkok, 2010), ESCAP in support from SIAP, organized a sub-regional training/workshop on dissemination and communication of MDG statistics for effective use in policy and decision making in Daejeon, Republic of Korea during October 18-20, 2010. Twenty

participants from 9 countries (China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Japan and Russian Federation) and civil society organizations attended the regional workshops.

### 3.2.2. Relevance

All the participants of the countries to the EGM (Astana, 2009) found the results of the EGM highly useful because it provided them an opportunity to find weaknesses in their statistical system, particularly with respect to alignment of their statistics with international definitions and standards<sup>3</sup>. It was also found that these countries urgently needed training and methodological guidance. Furthermore an urgent appeal was made by the participating countries to publish the MDG Metadata Handbook in Russian language.

Similarly, all the participants of the countries found the results of the workshops (Geneva, 2010 and Almaty, 2011) highly useful and relevant to their works<sup>4</sup>. These activities have improved the availability and quality of data and have enabled them to develop their own framework of MDG-relevant indicator comprising the core indicators and others, relevant to their national development goals. They gained new knowledge and skills on statistical methods for producing and disseminating disaggregated statistics and indicators.

All the participants of the training workshop (Daejeon, 2010) also found the results of the workshop highly useful and relevant to their work.

### 3.2.3. Effectiveness

EGM (Astana 2009) highlighted the weaknesses of the statistical system of the countries and provided an opportunity to the international agencies to prepare their training program to address the weaknesses. The participating countries were very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the issues they faced in producing MDG - related statistics and requested a follow up workshops to build their capacity.

All the participants (Geneva, 2010 and Almaty, 2011) also found the results of the project effective because it enabled them to increase the use of data for policy-making. It equipped them with proper tools for applying these

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<sup>3</sup> For details, see the Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Indicators in Central Asia, prepared by the UNECE Secretariat, Astana, Kazakhstan, October 5-8, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> For details, see Evaluation Report on Workshop on MDG monitoring, Geneva, Switzerland, November 8-11, 2010 prepared by the ECE and Evaluation Report on Regional Workshop on Poverty and Employment Indicators of the MDG1 prepared by the ECE, Almaty, Kazakhstan, September 27-28, 2011

and now are in a position to assist their respective institutions in understanding and using MDG indicators to monitor MDGs. It has also helped improve the coordination of statistical system and collaboration among ministries/ government departments.

EGM (Bangkok, 2010) met the objective of harnessing substantial information on the nature and type of the capacity building requirements/directions to be undertaken under the project and beyond. It also succeeded in obtaining information on priorities, strategies and the design of the sub-regional workshops. The EGM also provided the environment for frank discussions on issues arising from the MDG reporting process, exchange of experiences, and assessment of strategies for improving statistics and enhancing the coordinating role of the NSOs<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, these workshops also provided them opportunities to meet other participants and learn from their experiences and familiarizing with methodologies of other countries.

#### **3.2.4. Sustainability**

On the issue of sustainability of the results, all the participants (Geneva, 2010 and Almaty, 2011) were of the view that considerable improvement is made in their national statistical organizations, particularly availability of training materials in Russian language as well as establishment of their linkages with specialized international statistical agencies in Central Asian countries. Notwithstanding these improvements, the participants believed that their statistical capacities still remain relatively weak. Many are still unable to conduct household surveys without external financial and technical support. There is a need for more methodological materials in Russian language as well as IT technology to disseminate their MDG related statistics.

They still derive most of their MDG data from internationally sponsored household survey programs, such as those from the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MCIS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). Improvements in availability of survey data are often accompanied by strengthening of administrative data systems.

Participating countries of EGM (Bangkok, 2010) explained the challenges they face in compiling MDG statistics and in preparing national reports on progress, such as the need for better coordination between

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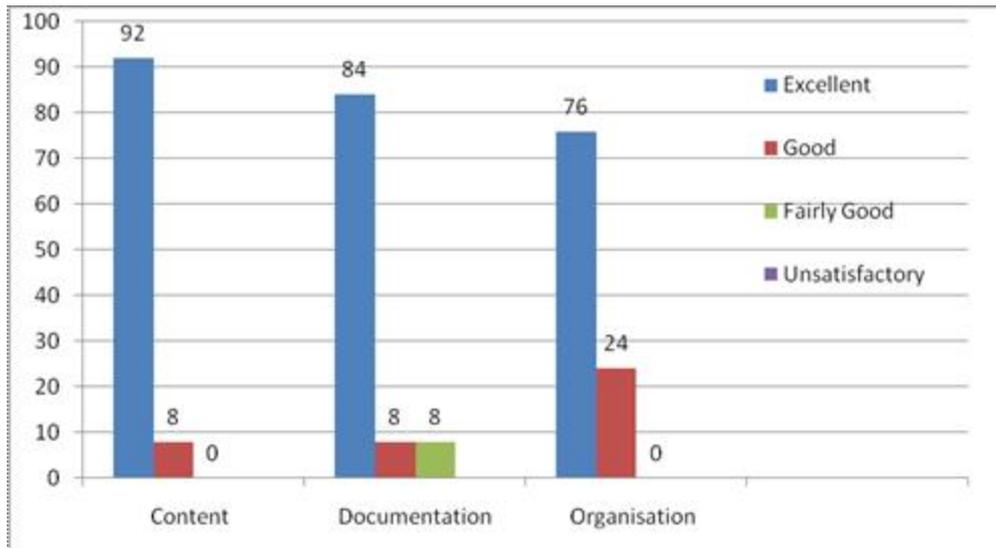
<sup>5</sup> For details, see *Report of the EGM. Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Priorities, Strategies and Designs for Statistical Training on Indicators for Monitoring MDG Progress from 2011-2015, June 22-24, 2010, Bangkok, prepared by UNESCAP and SIAP.*

suppliers of data. From the countries perspective, more efforts are required to fill ongoing data gaps and meet growing demands for disaggregated data.

### **3.2.5. Summary of Questionnaire responses**

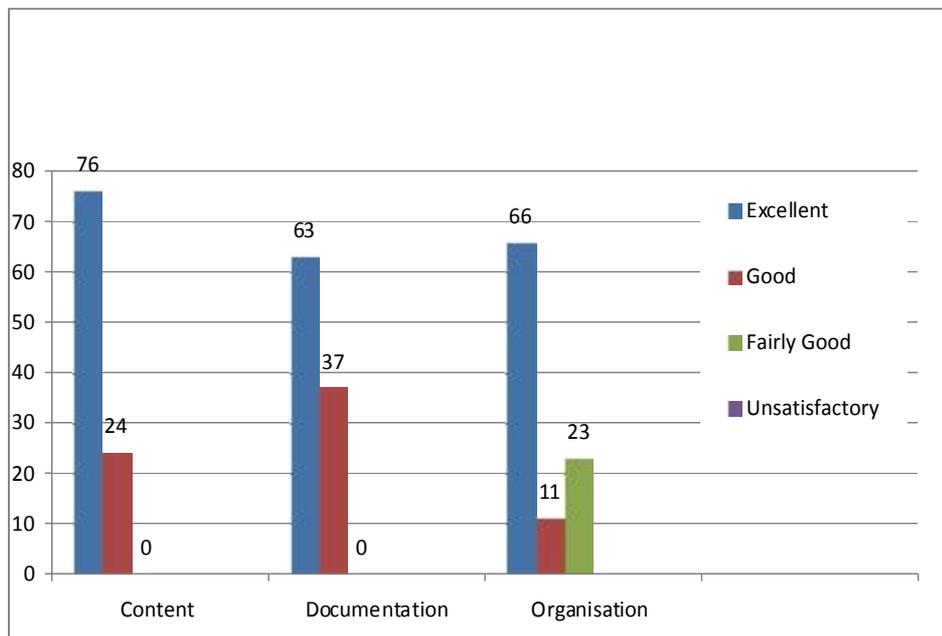
The participants of the two regional workshops evaluated the workshops through evaluation forms. All together 34 participants from 9 countries attended training workshops (14 participants in Geneva, Switzerland, November 8-11, 2010 and 20 participated in Almaty, Kazakhstan, September 27-28, 2011) but 31 evaluation forms were returned thereby yielding a response rate of 91 percent (see Figs 1 & 2).

**Fig.1: Quality of the Meeting in General  
(Geneva, Switzerland, November 8-11, 2010)**



Regarding the quality of the meetings, a large majority evaluated the content, documentation, and the organization of the meetings as 'Excellent'. The remaining marked 'Good' in all cases, except for the organization where 24 percent qualified it as 'Fairly Good' (Almaty)<sup>6</sup>. No respondent was unsatisfied with the meetings in general. According to 60-80 percent (Almaty-Geneva) of the respondents, there was a good balance in the allocation of time between presentations and discussions. Of the remaining participants, 35 percent wanted more time for the working group discussion (Almaty), three quarter of the respondents evaluated the duration of the meeting as 'about right' (Almaty).

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid*



According to the participants in Geneva meeting, 80 percent found a good balance in allocation of time between presentation and discussion<sup>7</sup>. The remaining participants were equally divided between having wanted more time for presentations and discussions. All the respondents evaluated the duration of the meeting as 'about right'. Some respondents however, suggested to slightly increase the duration of the meeting as an improvement for the next meeting. Of the respondents, all but one found that there was sufficient discussion of problems specific for their respective country.

The substantive items of the meetings' agenda were also evaluated by the participants whose results are summarized in Tables 3 and 4. A cursory look at the tables suggest that all the participants found the presentations related to enhancing coordination of national statistical systems for improved reporting of MDG indicators as 'very useful' (Geneva meeting). On the topics of resolving discrepancies between national and international data on the health related MDG indicators and presenting the ECE regional database for MDG monitoring, overwhelming participants found them 'very useful' (Geneva Meeting). Several countries indicated that they would welcome a visit of experts from the UN to their countries to discuss problems in more detail.

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<sup>7</sup> See *ibid*

*Table 3. : Assessment of the substantive items of the Meeting Agenda: Geneva, Switzerland, 8-11 November, 2010*

Agenda Items:	Usefulness of topics for future work			Structure and outcomes of the discussion		
	Very useful %	Partly useful %	Not useful %	Good %	Satisfactory %	Poor %
Coordination of Activities in Forwarding the Implementation of MDG Goals	100	0	0	91	9	0
Communication of MDG Goals and MDG Indicators: Building Relationships with Users as a Strategic Concept	100	0	0	82	18	0
Mechanisms to gather data from national sources, adjustments of national data and mechanisms for validating data with national agencies						
– Indicator 4.1, child mortality	92	8	0	92	8	0
– Indicators 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5, maternal mortality, skilled attendance at birth and antenatal care	92	8	0	83	17	0
– Indicators 5.3, 5.4 and 5.6, contraceptive use, adolescent birth rate and unmet need	92	8	0	83	17	0
The ECE database for MDG monitoring and additional regional indicators	82	18	0	80	20	0

*Source: Evaluation Report of the Geneva Meeting (see footnote 3 for reference)*

*Table 4. Assessment of the substantive items of the Meeting Agenda: Almaty, Kazakhstan, 27-28 September 2011*

Agenda Items:	Usefulness of topics for future work			Structure and outcomes of the discussion		
	Very useful %	Partly useful %	Not useful %	Good %	Satisfactory %	Poor %
Session 1: Poverty Indicators MDG1 (World Bank/UNECE)	88	12	0	88	12	0
Session 2: Employment Indicators MDGI (ILO/UNECE)	65	35	0	88	12	0
Session 3: The ECE database for MDG Monitoring and additional regional indicators (UNECE)	71	29	0	75	25	0

*Source: Evaluation Report of the Almaty Meeting (see footnote 3 for reference)*

Feedback solicited from participants during the EGM (Bangkok, 2010) revealed that they appreciated the opportunity for open interaction and discussions with country partners as well as colleagues in the region on common concerns. The EGM provided deeper understanding of the capacity building issues related to MDGs. Some key recommendations arrived at the final session of the EGM are documented in recommendation part of the report.

The participants of the workshop (Daejeon, 2010) also evaluated the workshop through evaluation form. Of the 20 participants, 18 responded through the 'questionnaire thereby yielding a response rate of 90 percent (see Table 5)<sup>8</sup>. Regarding the level of workshop, 78% found the level as just-right, with 22% found it a bit 'advanced'. As regards the content of the workshop, participants responded equally between 'very useful' and 'useful'; 83% found the duration of workshop as 'just right' with 12% terming it 'very short' and 5% as 'very long'; all the respondents found the workshop between 'useful' and very 'useful' for their work; 61% found the materials of the workshop 'very good' with the remaining 39% terming the materials as 'good'. As regards the presentation technique, 56% found it 'very good' and 44% found it 'good'. Finally, all the respondents found the time allocated to discussion as 'adequate'.

*Table 5: Summary of Workshop Evaluation: Daejeon Meeting*

Workshop Level	<u>Advanced</u> 4	<u>Just Right</u> 14	<u>Elementary</u> 0
Workshop Content	<u>Very Useful</u> 9	<u>Useful</u> 9	<u>Not Useful</u> 0
Workshop Duration	<u>Very Long</u> 1	<u>Just Right</u> 15	<u>Very Short</u> 2
Relevance of Workshop to Your Work	<u>Very Useful</u> 8	<u>Useful</u> 10	<u>Not Useful</u> 0
Workshop Material	<u>Very Good</u> 11	<u>Good</u> 6	<u>Poor</u> 0
Presentation Technique	10	8	0
Time Allocated to Questions/Discussions	<u>Adequate</u> 18		<u>Not Adequate</u> 0

<sup>8</sup> For details, see Course Report (AY 2010), ESCAP Sub-regional Training/workshop on Dissemination and Communication of MDG Statistics for Effective Use in Policy and Decision-making, October 18-20, 2010, Daejeon, Republic of Korea.

#### 4. Conclusions

ESCAP implemented the project “Supporting Millennium Development Goals (MDG) - based development strategies through integrated regional action” with funding from the United Nations Development Account for the LDCs of the Asia-Pacific region. The objective of the project has been to strengthen the national capacities of the target countries to formulate, implement and monitor their national development strategies to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

A concerted effort has been made through the Project under evaluation to build capacity in target countries and bridge various gaps (policy gap, strategy gap and implementation gap) that have hindered the progress towards achieving the MDG targets. The Project has made major contribution in strengthening the national capacities to formulate, implement and monitor national development strategies, consistent with internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. However, countries particularly the CSNs including the late entrants (Afghanistan, Myanmar) still face capacity constraints as they have limited human capital to implement MDGs. Furthermore, their National Statistical Organizations of the CSNs and the Central Asian States are still weak as they have little capacity to conduct survey regularly, collect relevant statistics pertaining to MDG indicators and ensuring the availability of statistics in time with reasonable quality. Thus, the monitoring and evaluation systems are expected to remain weak.

At the end, it is concluded that the Project has made major contribution in strengthening the national capacities to formulate, implement and monitor national development strategies consistent with internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. While the Project has covered much ground, still more to be done, more ground to be covered to achieve the ultimate goals of the Project. It is safe to suggest that despite additional efforts on the part of the ESCAP and its development partners in the remaining period up to 2015, some countries in the region especially the CSN may not achieve all the MDG-related targets. Hence, there would be life beyond 2015. Additional efforts during the period up to 2015 will certainly help the regional countries to fare better in Post 2015.

#### 5. Recommendations

(1) **Project Life:** The participating countries though found the results of the project useful in enhancing their capacities, they were of the view that further support of the regional Commission will be required to develop capacity in the areas of preparation for graduation strategies, revision and

modification needed in MDGs indicators as they move forward, preparation for MDG – based monitoring and evaluation plans, and preparation for the MDGs acceleration framework. It is, therefore, recommended that the capacity development project like the one recently concluded may continue for another three years, particularly during the remaining period up to 2015. This will enable firstly the ‘off track’ countries and the late entrants to cover more grounds in terms of further strengthening of their national capacities to formulate, implement and monitor their development strategies, consistent with the MDGs. Secondly, it will help the LDCs to prepare for graduation strategies and acceleration framework.

(2) **Workshop Modality:** If accepted, some refinement in the strategy will be required as we move forward:

- Instead of inviting one/two official(s) from target countries in ESCAP Secretariat to attend training workshops, it would be more useful if more workshops are held in different countries in collaboration with national governments
- In such workshops, selection of participants must include representation from private sector, media and civil society besides government officials from concerned Ministries/Divisions. Private sector participation will be useful because they provide gainful employment. Participation of civil society will be essential because they help improve service delivery for marginalized and vulnerable groups. Presence of media can help create awareness among the masses about the importance of achieving the MDGs. Knowledge and awareness about the MDGs in masses will encourage government to allocate adequate resources to Ministries/Divisions in charge of the MDGs. This will enable the ESCAP and its partners to reach wider segments of the informed public.
- Such workshops may be held preferably in off track countries and late entrants. This will help these countries to build capacity of their officials in a relatively larger scale.
- Holding workshops in off track countries and late entrants will have added advantages
  - while Senior Government Officials may find it difficult to travel abroad because of their pressing engagement at home, they would feel comfortable in attending such workshops at home
  - presence of Ministers and Senior Officials in such workshops will create their ownership and reiteration of commitment at the State level
  - will ensure participation of Senior Officials of the concerned Ministries/Divisions
  - more mid-level officers participation will be ensured
  - the objective of the workshop will get wider coverage in print and electronic media
  - it will help create awareness among the masses

- experiences of countries hosting workshops (Myanmar, Nepal, Cambodia) suggest that they benefited immensely because of the wider participation of cross-section of society

(3) **Localization of MDG:** MDG achievements will largely be determined by what happens at the sub-national levels. There is a growing evidence that the local level planning plays a critical role in delivery of basic services that are crucial for MDG achievements. Hence, the localization of MDG will be essential for which more capacity building at sub-national level will be required. It is recommended that strengthening the capacity of the local level/sub-national level governments should form the integral part of the strategy as we move forward. This can be done through holding workshops in select counties where the representatives of the local or sub-national government officials may be invited to attend workshops.

(4) **Statistical Capacity Development - Modalities:**

Given the strong need to improve capacities to produce and monitor MDG-related statistics as described in earlier sections, it is recommended that the efforts undertaken by the ECE and SIAP may continue for another three years, that is, up to 2015 (the target date for achieving the MDGs). In this connection the following areas need special attention as pointed out by the participants:

- a) streamlining methodological approaches across the countries of the region, in line with international standards
- b) metadata is a key to resolving discrepancies as definitions and methodological approaches are clearly explained. There is a need to establish metadata system at the national level. The ECE and other international agencies dealing with statistics can help strengthening capacities related to metadata
- c) develop a separate publication on MDG-related statistics by the national statistical organization
- d) include a chapter on MDG indicators in their annual Statistical Yearbooks
- e) educate users on the MDGs and how the statistics can be useful to them
- f) hold seminars in respective countries to share best practices
- g) publish the MDG Metadata Handbook in Russian language

(5) **Statistical Capacity Development - scope of the activities:** More efforts are required in further strengthening the capacity of these National Statistic Offices to enhance the quality and quantity of Statistics. In this regard the following areas need special attention.

- a) enhance capacity (to collect data and monitor) at the grass root level, so that in turn the macro-level could be fed into;
- b) introduce the MDG and other sector indicators down to the grass root level including mobilization of the community;

- c) SIAP may master trainers from NSOs so that they can be used to train staff from NSOs, line ministries and policy makers
- d) various United Nations agencies and partners are providing training and development to improve MDG-related statistics. There is a need to better harmonize these efforts so that countries receive consistent and coordinated assistance
- e) training should be linked with other aspect of capacity development. Countries stressed the need for national ownership rather than having initiatives imposed upon them
- f) initiative at community level in catering to address crucial data needs to be recognized as part of MDG monitoring process. Improvement and integration of such data initiative should become eventually a port of the NSOs.

#### **(6) Workshop / meeting management**

Recommendations below summarizes comments/feedback received from the participants of the workshops and Expert Group Meetings.

- Conference document should not only be confined to power point presentation. It is recommended that short papers may be written and circulated during the meetings
- Time management in various workshops/EGM was found to be an issue. It is recommended that the ESCAP may specify the total number of slides and time allocated to each presenter and may strictly observe. Or, some template may be given to each presenter to economize on time.
- It was noted by participating countries that some experts invited by the ESCAP had poor communication skills. It is recommended that the experts invited must speak English with clear pronunciation. Furthermore, experts may come from government, civil society and local activist, to have broader perspective on the subject. It is recommended that the invitees may include representatives from relevant ministry(ies) responsible for achieving the MDGs, academicians with vast knowledge of the subject, civil society activists etc.
- Some participants have pointed out that the conference document may be made available to the participants before the meeting so that they can have time to read the documents before coming to the meeting. It is recommended that if possible, at least the Executive Summary of the document may be sent to the participants before the meeting. After the conference/workshop, these papers may be compiled and given to the participants in CDs.