

**Evaluation summary of the outcome of Sixty-fourth Session of the Commission
24-30 April 2008
Bangkok**

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1. The Sixty-fourth Session of the Commission was held from 24-30 May 2008 in Bangkok. In order for the secretariat to obtain feedback on the process and outcome of the session, an evaluation questionnaire was distributed to heads of delegations. Responses, which constitute the basis for the following assessment, were received from 35 of the 49 countries which attended (71.4%). Results are expressed as a percentage of the delegations that responded.

Section I: Deliberations on policy issues and strategies

Ministerial Segment

2. About half of delegations (49%) “mostly agreed” that the issues raised during the theme topic for the sixty-fourth session assisted them in providing guidance on policy options for strengthening energy security and sustainable development in the region, while 37% “fully agreed” and 14% “somewhat agreed”. It was claimed by one delegation that climate change issues were not much discussed. One delegation expressed that the theme topic was well chosen and timely. It has been added that the current energy price-hikes have been posing a great challenge for all the member countries in the region, therefore it’s expected that ESCAP will take this issue with more attention. One delegation commented that barriers need to be identified clearly in order to formulate policies. It was also commented by one delegation that enhancement of investment in infrastructure oil and gas sectors is important to make energy supply security.
3. The largest proportion of delegations (60%) “mostly agreed” that the issues raised and discussed during the agenda item on policy issues for the Asia and Pacific region for the Ministerial Segment were focused, timely and relevant to current socio-economic concerns of the region and are issues that could greatly benefit from regional cooperation. 31% “fully agreed” with this statement while 9% “somewhat agreed”.
4. 43% of delegation “mostly agreed” that the country statements made during the Ministerial Segment enhanced their knowledge of key development issues and ‘good practice’ policies in the region. 34% “fully agreed” while 23% only “somewhat agreed”. One delegation suggested that the statements should be sequenced in the sessions according to geography or economy. One delegation expressed that the statements made by representatives of member countries provided them with better understanding and insights in social and economic development in the region. One delegation added that the statements reflected each country’s progress in various undertakings towards achieving MDGs.

Senior Officials Segment

5. Over half delegations (54%) “mostly agreed” that the issues raised during this agenda item for the Senior Officials Segment on thematic and cross-cutting issues and Asia-Pacific perspectives on selected economic, environmental and social development issues to be addressed at major global forums in 2008, were focused, timely and relevant to current socio-economic concerns of the region, and are issues that could greatly benefit from regional cooperation. 26% “fully agreed” while 17% “somewhat agreed” and a small number (3%) did not answer. One delegation commented that the needs of small island states should not be overcrowded by bigger issues affecting larger members. One delegation claimed that though the issues covered relevant social-economic concerns in the region, a range of topics were too broad.
6. Similarly, over half delegations (54%) “mostly agreed” that the reports and recommendations of the three thematic committees were clear, focused and provided a sound basis for relevant policy-related considerations concerning developments and activities at the regional level. Other delegations “fully agreed” (26%), “somewhat agreed” (17%) and one delegation “marginally agreed” (3%). One delegation commented that the reports were well written but it was concerned whether recommendations are practicable in some areas particularly without enough resources. One delegation noted that the reports reflected actual discussion made during various meeting with recommendations which are important for each country, regional and interregional considerations.
7. 29% of delegations “fully agreed” that the recommendations and decisions made during the session adequately reflected the views and concerns of ESCAP members and associate members, including least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and economies in transition. More than half delegations (59%) “mostly agreed” while 14% “somewhat agreed” and one delegation did not answer.
8. About half of delegations (51%) “mostly agreed” that the session provided a valuable forum for sharing of views and information among ESCAP members and associate members, including on monitoring and follow-up of Commission decisions and regional commitments. 34% “fully agreed” and 14% “somewhat agreed.” One delegation commented that Commission session is an important event where they are able to monitor and follow-up activities conducted by the secretariat and its members.

Section II: Deliberations on the programme of work of ESCAP

Senior officials segment

9. More than half delegations (57%) “mostly agreed” that deliberations provided them with a clear understanding of the review of the conference structure of the Commission and assisted them in deciding upon any changes to enhance it as an effective oversight mechanism, while other delegations either “fully agreed” (23%) or “somewhat agreed” (20%). It was recommended by one delegation that the help of ESCAP especially EPOC is needed to educate leaders in the process, and procedures needed to be followed to bring issues of major concern to ESCAP members as well as to the attention of UN GA. One delegation suggested that the resolutions should be

circulated in advance for countries' consideration. One claimed that there was not enough time to talk about the structure. One delegation expected that the new conference structure will make ESCAP more efficient and relevant.

10. Most delegations (63%) "mostly agreed" that deliberations assisted them in reviewing the functioning of ESCAP and providing guidance to enhance the effectiveness of the organization. 20% "fully agreed" and 17% "somewhat agreed". It was commented that evaluation and inspection mechanism to be implemented in a cost-effective way.
11. The largest proportion of delegations (66%) "mostly agreed" that deliberations provided them with a clear understanding to review and endorse the strategic framework for ESCAP for the period 2010-2011. Only 14% "fully agreed" and 20% "somewhat agreed". One delegation noted the time allocated on this issue was not enough.
12. All delegations either "fully agreed" (34%), "mostly agreed" (37%) or "somewhat agreed" (29%) that deliberations provided them with a clear understanding of the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the UN Development in particular the ESCAP component. One delegation expressed that they were not convinced whether subregional offices could enhance and strengthen a development pillar.
13. 31% of delegations "fully agreed", 49% "mostly agreed", and 20% "somewhat agreed" that deliberations provided them with a clear understanding of the technical cooperation activities of ESCAP.

Section III: Draft Resolutions

14. 43% of delegations "mostly agreed" that the structure of the meeting and related proceedings were effective for enabling interactive discussions and for reaching consensus. Other delegations either "fully agreed" (29%) or "somewhat agreed" (26%). One delegation suggested the number of resolutions should be limited.
15. Less than half delegations (43%) "mostly agreed" that pre-session servicing by the secretariat related to preparation and review of the draft resolutions for tabling was effective. 34% were "fully agreed", where 17% "somewhat agreed".

Section IV: Format of the Session and servicing by the secretariat

16. Most delegations were either "fully agreed" (37%) or "mostly agreed" (37%) that the allocation of time for the consideration of agenda items during the sixty-fourth Commission session was appropriate. 14% "somewhat agreed" and only 6% "marginally agreed" while one delegation did not answer. One delegation noted the excellent work done by the secretariat.
17. 37% of delegations "fully agreed" that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages about the issues placed on the agenda. 43% "mostly agreed", 11% "somewhat agreed" and 9% did not answer. One delegation expressed that the pre-session documents were informative and well organized.

18. About half of delegations (49%) “mostly agreed” that the pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner. 34% “fully agreed”, 9% “somewhat agreed” while one delegation (3%) “disagreed” and 6% did not answer. One delegation recommended for improvement as most documents were received rather late and affected their preparations for attendance.
19. Most delegations (77%) accessed the pre-session documents through the ESCAP Website. The remaining 17% did not and the rest (6%) did not mention. Two delegations noted hard copies were sent to the country as well.
20. About half (49%) of delegations “mostly agreed” that the secretariat’s in-session interventions effectively clarified any ambiguity and contributed to productive discussions. 34% “fully agreed”, 11% “somewhat agreed”, 3% “marginally agreed” and one delegation did not answer. One delegation commented that no intervention was observed.
21. Feedback on the level of conference servicing by the secretariat was generally positive, with 46% “fully agreeing” that it facilitated smooth conduct of the session, and the remaining 31% “mostly agreeing”, 9% “somewhat agreed”, 6% “marginally agreed” and two delegations did not answer. One delegation commented that there was no airport service. One noted the unlevel support given to one of Pacific Island Minister.
22. The majority of delegations “mostly agreed” (69%) that the draft reports adequately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the session. 26% “fully agreed” and 3% “marginally agreed”, while one delegation did not answer.

Section V: Side Events

23. The side event on the Asia Pacific Business Forum was perceived to be useful with 29% suggesting it promoted exchange of views and/or raised relevant awareness among stakeholders “to a great extent”, 43% “to a reasonable extent”, 3% “to a small extent”, and the rest delegations (26%) did not mention.
24. For the launching of the MDG III report side event 23% felt it promoted exchange of views and/or raised relevant awareness among stakeholders “to a great extent”, over half (57%) “to a reasonable extent”, and 3% “to a small extent”, and 17% did not answer.
25. For the side event on Towards a supportive financial system for achieving the MDGs, 23% thought it promoted exchange of views and/or raised relevant awareness among stakeholders “to a great extent”, 46% “to a reasonable extent”, and 6% “to a small extent”, while 26% did not mention.
26. For the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Towards inclusive development in Asia-Pacific side event 26% felt it promoted exchange of views and/or raised relevant awareness among stakeholders “to a great extent”, 40% “to a reasonable extent”, 3% “to a small extent”, and 31% did not mention.

Section VI: Future improvement of the Session

The following additional comments and suggestions were provided on how future sessions of the Commission session could be improved:

- It was suggested that stricter time limit should be imposed to facilitate better time management for the statements made by member countries, especially for the policy issues.
- The key statements of the Executive Secretary should be distributed to the delegations during or immediately after delivery.
- Sub-Regional Informal meetings to be considered for much focused interaction of development issues, for which outcomes can be recommended for resolutions.
- One of the delegations believes both collective leadership and ownership is necessary in cooperative governance in ESCAP. In this regard, approach of member states and the Executive Secretary for promoting subregional cooperation particularly in respect to subregional organizations are very important in this context cooperation of ESCAP with ECO is very essential for whole of the region.
- It was commented that more time should be allocated for discussions for the Ministerial Roundtable on Energy Security rather than to panelists in order to make the Roundtable more interactive. And the Plenary Session should be livelier. Therefore, the secretariat should see appropriate ways to improve this Session.
- It was recommended that the ministerial segment should be reorganized the sequencing of country statements by geographic subregions or economy, rather than by country requests.
- It was suggested the secretariat to improve protocol and transport arrangements between hotel and ESCAP.
- It was requested that secretariat should provide assistance in the macro formulations of an economic and social development strategy or plan base on Statements.
- It was recommended that the future ministerial meetings of the Commission should be held in Bangkok as it would be much better in terms of cost efficiency.
- One delegation expressed grateful satisfaction to the Executive Secretary and staff members of the secretariat of their efforts and hard works which made it possible for member countries to have pleasant and effective deliberations on various social and economic issues facing us nowadays.
- Similarly, one delegation expressed word of thanks to ESCAP for the tremendous arrangements made for the Commission session. A proposed suggestion has been added to reduce number of meeting days to within a week.
- Appreciation has been expressed particularly to the Executive Secretary for her effort in making ESCAP a revitalized organization.