



**SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
COMMITTEE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION***

Bangkok, Thailand
25-27 March 2009

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* Prepared by the Programme Management Division based on feedback provided by government delegations that attended the first session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Summary Assessment of the first session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

The first session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25 to 27 March 2009. A questionnaire was distributed towards the end of the session to obtain feedback from participants on its relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. The response rate to the questionnaire was 63%, corresponding to 19 of the 30 participating delegations.

The present assessment has been conducted on the basis of the feed-back received from delegations together with a qualitative analysis of the draft report of the session, bearing in mind the terms of reference for the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, as contained in resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission.

I. Attendance

The Committee session was well-attended, with 57% (N = 30/53) of ESCAP member States participating.

The majority of delegations that attended the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction comprised High-level officials from the Capital of their respective country (70% N = 21/30). Two thirds of the delegations represented the national office responsible for disaster management (66% N=20/30).

II. Ownership

The sense of ownership by participants of the Committee was strong, with the majority of respondents indicating that the committee session was owned and driven by member States (74%, N=14/19), that the overall outcome of the deliberations was a result of a collaborative effort (84%, N=16/19) and that the draft report adequately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the committee (68%, N=13/19).

III. Relevance

The feed-back indicates that participants were of the view that the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction is a relevant mechanism for discussing disaster risk reduction in the region. The majority of respondents agreed that the Committee session was relevant to issues and trends regarding disaster risk reduction in the Asian and Pacific region (95%, N=18/19), reflected the needs and priorities of their countries (74%, N=14/19) and that the benefits of their delegation's attendance outweighed the costs (79%, N=15/19).

The most relevant agenda items for the delegations in attendance included (in order of relevance): (a) Agenda item 5: Enhancing regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific; (b) Agenda item 4: Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in Asia and the Pacific; and (c) Agenda item 7: Strategic

framework and proposed outputs for the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011.

IV. Efficiency

The efficiency of organization and conduct of the Committee session was rated very highly by respondents. The majority of respondents agreed that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages (89%, N=17/19), were issued in a timely manner (84%, N=16/19), that the Committee used efficiently the time provided (84%, N=16/19) and that the conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient (95%, N=18/19).

V. Outcomes in light of ESCAP resolution 64/1

The majority of respondents agreed that the first session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction addressed effectively the issues outlined in resolution 64/1 that should be addressed by all Committees subsidiary to the Commission, including: to review and analyze regional trends (84%, N=16/19), identify priorities and emerging issues (84%, N=16/19), promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (84%, N=16/19), and promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels (89%, N=17/19).

The qualitative analysis of the session documentation concurred with the results of the questionnaire. For example, regional cooperative mechanisms and knowledge-sharing arrangements for disaster risk reduction, including the role of information, communications and space technology in disaster risk management, were discussed as priority issues for the region. Additionally, the meeting promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches, for example the Committee requested that the feasibility of organizing workshops on the sharing of best practices and capacity building at the regional and subregional levels be explored by the secretariat.

VI. Most and least successful

The exchange of ideas and experiences was rated as the most successful feature of the session by a number of delegations, whereas others highlighted the organization of the meeting.

In terms of the least successful feature of the session, a couple of delegations suggested that more interaction between members during the Committee session and the development of action-oriented recommendations are necessary for future sessions of the Committee.

VII. Conclusion

This assessment concludes that the first session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction was highly successful. High-level attendance and a high level of relevance of the topic for delegations enabled productive substantive discussions and agreement on a number of important issues for disaster risk reduction in the region.

Annex I Questionnaire Results

A. Overall relevance of the session

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)
a. The agenda items were timely and relevant to issues and trends regarding disaster risk reduction in the Asian and Pacific region.	79% (15)	16% (3)	5% (1)	-	-
b. The agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of my country.	42% (8)	32% (6)	21% (4)	-	5% (1)
c. The benefits of my delegation's attendance justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).	63% (12)	16% (3)	21% (4)	-	-

B. Organization

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	No answer
a. The pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda.	63% (12)	26% (5)	11% (2)	-	-	-
b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	63% (12)	21% (4)	11% (2)	5% (1)	-	-
c. The Committee used efficiently the time available for discussions.	63% (12)	21% (4)	11% (2)	5% (1)	-	-
d. The conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient.	79% (15)	16% (3)	-	5% (1)	-	-
e. The organization of work prior to/in between Committee sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Committee (ACPR, working groups, task forces, communication with the secretariat).	37% (7)	47% (9)	5% (1)	5% (1)	-	5% (1)

C. Substantive outcome of the session

3. To what extent did the deliberations on the following substantive agenda items meet the expected outcomes as described below?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	No answer
Agenda item 4: Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in Asia and the Pacific:						
<i>a) To provide the secretariat with guidance on its future strategic direction for its work in the area of disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region and facilitation of strengthened regional cooperation on the issue;</i>	68% (13)	26% (5)	-	5% (1)	-	-

3. To what extent did the deliberations on the following substantive agenda items meet the expected outcomes as described below?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	No answer
<i>b) To discuss how ESCAP will contribute to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in coordination with UNISDR and other key members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism;</i>	63% (12)	21% (4)	11% (2)	5% (1)	-	-
<i>c) To provide the secretariat with guidance on its involvement in the preparations for the Fourth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction;</i>	63% (12)	21% (4)	5% (1)	11% (2)	-	-
Agenda item 5: Enhancing regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific						
<i>d) To consider the establishment of a network of networks on knowledge sharing and analysis for disaster management in the region and examine the possible role(s) of the secretariat;</i>	58% (11)	32% (6)	11% (2)	-	-	-
<i>e) To consider how the secretariat could contribute to building collaborative technical and information capacities for disaster risk reduction and management, including recommendations for action that would enable universal early warning throughout the Pacific islands;</i>	47% (9)	32% (6)	11% (2)	5% (1)	-	5% (1)
<i>f) To advise the secretariat on regional priorities with regard to information, communications and space technologies for disaster risk reduction.</i>	63% (12)	21% (4)	11% (2)	5% (1)	-	-
Agenda item 6: Activities of ESCAP cooperative mechanisms on disaster risk reduction						
<i>g) To provide guidance to the secretariat on its work related to the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.</i>	53% (10)	26% (5)	11% (2)	-	-	11% (2)
Agenda item 7: Strategic framework and proposed outputs for the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011						
<i>h) To provide the secretariat with guidance on its work related to disaster risk reduction, including possible work programme outputs that could be reflected in the programme of work for 2010-2011.</i>	47% (9)	16% (3)	5% (1)	5% (1)	-	26% (5)
4. What was the most relevant agenda item for your delegation?						
13 delegations (68% of respondents) provided comments (see Annex II)						

D. Outcome in the light of ESCAP resolution 64/1 and the Committee's general terms of reference

5. All eight ESCAP Committees have common terms of reference. To what extent did the Committee session succeed in performing the following?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	No answer
a) Review and analyze regional trends.	63% (12)	21% (4)	11% (2)	-	-	5% (1)
b) Identify priorities and emerging issues, particularly those with implications for the work of the secretariat.	58% (11)	26% (5)	11% (2)	-	-	5% (1)

c) Promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes.	63% (12)	21% (4)	5% (1)	5% (1)	-	5% (1)
d) Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	47% (9)	42% (8)	5% (1)	5% (1)	-	
6. How can the Committee more effectively address its terms of reference (5 (a- d) above)?						
9 delegations (47% of respondents) provided comments (see Annex II)						

Participation

7. To what extent do you feel that...	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	No answer
a) the Committee session was owned and driven by member States?	42% (8)	32% (6)	5% (1)	5% (1)	5% (1)	11% (2)
b) the overall outcome of the deliberations is a result of a collaborative effort by members of the Committee?	47% (9)	37% (7)	5% (1)	5% (1)		5% (1)
c) the draft report adequately reflects the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee?	47% (9)	21% (4)	11% (2)	5% (1)		16% (3)
d) the secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session?	47% (9)	32% (6)	5% (1)	5% (1)		11% (2)

8. My delegation's attendance at the Committee session was:

5% (1)	mainly from the Capital - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
53% (10)	mainly from the Capital - Line Ministry
5% (1)	mainly from representatives in Bangkok (Embassy)
16% (3)	a combination of the above
5% (1)	other:

9. Is there anything that could have been done to encourage higher and wider representation from your country at the Committee session?

9 delegations (47% of respondents) provided comments (see Annex II)

Annex II Questionnaire Comments

[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]

Question 4. What was the most relevant agenda item for your delegation?

- [Some countries] need to give emphasis to all of the agenda. Therefore specifically I can say agenda item 7 is most relevant.
- 1. Agenda item 5: Networking/info-sharing; Early warning; and IT/communication, 2. Implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action.
- Agenda item 4-5.
- 4b, 5d, 5f and 7h.
- The question is not on agenda, but how ESCAP could work more intensively before this conference with countries.
- Item 5 a-c. There are enormous existing initiatives and activities which [some countries] and other member countries and organizations have already implemented. Expert group meeting, including institutions should be important to avoid duplication and make good collaboration framework for better work.
- 1. Implementation of HFA and follow up of 3rd AMCDRR. 2. Programme of work 2010-2011 in respect to national capacity building and risk assessment activities.
- I found all the agenda items relevant to my delegation as all the items are interrelated. I would have appreciated if more discussions were discussed in regards to issues in related to disasters affecting the Pacific Islands.
- Agenda items 4, 5 and 7.
- Item 4(a).
- All the agenda items were relevant to our delegation. Agenda item 6(b) tropical cyclone and the earlier info about earthquake were most relevant to our delegation.
- 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 5c, 6.
- Agenda items 4 and 7.

Question 6. How can the Committee more effectively address its terms of reference (5 (a-d) above)?

- Not applicable.
- 5c.
- Have routine consultation with countries before conference; we should stop or reduce consultation during conference only.
- Item 5 (a-c)
- Overall, the Committee effectively addressed the terms of reference.
- Item 5(c).
- By frequent interaction with the member countries of ESCAP, especially the organization involved in disaster management and satellite and other communication Technology operations. Government agencies should be trained to enhance their capacity.
- b, c

Question 9. Is there anything that could have been done to encourage higher and wider representation from your country at the Committee session?

- We could share the experience of cyclone SIDR in a more detailed manner.
- Share information in terms of strategic national action plan which was launched on 18 March this year.
- Any country requesting for presentation through slides may be given opportunity if time permits.
- Looking for the right participants from countries, who could change the policy, programme and activities in DRR.
- No, everything was done OK!
- Advance notice of the Committee session and sponsorship would enhance higher and wider representations.
- Disaster Risk Reduction is cross cutting issues: so more participants in the future programme.
- The support to attend the meeting may be given to more representatives to increase representation.
- From our perspective, the secretariat has done everything sensible to motivate delegates to come.

Question 10. What was the most successful feature of the Committee session?

- To gather all related people from a lot of countries here and discuss related issues.
- Effective sharing and exchange of ideas.
- Deliberation of case studies by member states which shared their experience with member states so the committee would be able to formulate or make any assessment.
- DRR is crucial for both developed and developing countries.
- Proper pre documentation of agenda items.
- Orderly organization.
- Building good collaboration framework among member countries in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Active participation and exchange of ideas, the recommendations.
- High-level roundtable – highlighted the importance of the work of the Committee and importance of the issues we had taken up.
- The coordination and cooperation between the secretariat and respective delegations.
- Regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific.
- Timely arrangement of different session. Full cooperation of the secretariat staff.
- Advocating DRR theme through different ESCAP's umbrella events would make the Committee session more successful.

Question 11. What was the least successful feature of the Committee session?

- Not applicable.
- Little discussion took place between member states but generally, little exchange of views. However, numerous useful proposed were put forward for the secretariat to follow-up.

- CICT is also the most important for DRR.
- Going astray on some occasions.
- More effective actions and results.
- Understanding some of the delegates' statement due to language barriers.
- Considering the current scope of the Committee work duration of the Committee session could be sequenced into 2 days.
- No.
- None.
- The round table failed to become an important event. The secretariat should think more how to make it more interactive.

Question 12. Please provide any additional comments you may have on the Committee session and further suggestions on how we may improve on secretariat preparations for and the servicing of future session:

- Overall, it was a successful meeting. The ideas and proposal put forward by member states would hopefully help the secretariat to develop programme for Disaster Risk Reduction for the Asia Pacific region.
- The agenda papers prepared in advance may also invite comments from participating countries before finalization.
- Listen more to countries on their specific needs, and less formal format of discussion.
- Preparation of document in advance is crucial for fruitful discussion.
- Overall, I have no comment. I think the Committee session was well executed and presented. Thank you.
- No - Thanks.
- For the sake of continuity if possible the same group of experts may be invited to the next meeting.

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Annex III
Qualitative Assessment of the substantive outcomes of the Committee session

Agenda Item	Expected outcome	Quantitative questionnaire response	Qualitative assessment based on a review of the draft report of the session
Agenda item 4: Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in Asia and the Pacific	(a) To provide the secretariat with guidance on its future strategic direction for its work in the area of disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region and facilitation of strengthened regional cooperation on the issue;	95% (18/19) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The expected outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee requested that the ESCAP secretariat continue to promote regional cooperative mechanisms and knowledge sharing arrangements for disaster risk reduction, including on information, communications and space technologies (ICST), to improve different aspects of disaster risk management, such as multi-hazard assessment, preparedness, early warning and response to disaster risks.
	(b) To discuss how ESCAP will contribute to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in coordination with UN/ISDR and other key members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism;	84% (16/19) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The expected outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee requested that the ESCAP secretariat further enhance partnerships and collaboration with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and other UN entities as well as with regional and subregional organizations, and stressed that such partnerships should be aimed at strengthening cooperation among member countries.
	(c) To provide the secretariat with guidance on its involvement in the preparations for the Fourth Asian Ministerial Conference	84% (16/19) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The expected outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee encouraged the secretariat to continue to play a leading role in the Regional Coordination Mechanism in the area of disaster risk management in order to help to support

	on Disaster Risk Reduction;		major regional events, such as the Asian ministerial conferences on disaster risk reduction and to build regional consensus as inputs to major global events.
Agenda item 5: Enhancing regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific	(a) To consider the establishment of a network of networks on knowledge sharing and analysis for disaster management in the region and examine the possible role(s) of the secretariat;	89% (N=17/19) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The expected outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee requested that proactive action be taken by the secretariat to promote and establish an Asia-Pacific gateway on disaster risk reduction and development for information sharing and analysis for disaster risk reduction, in collaboration with regional and other partners working in the field and called on the international donor community to provide support.
	(b) To consider how the secretariat could contribute to building collaborative technical and information capacities for disaster risk reduction and management, including recommendations for action that would enable universal early warning throughout the Pacific islands;	83% (N=15/18) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The expected outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee requested that a module on ICT for disaster risk reduction be introduced for capacity building as soon as possible at the APCICT. The committee requested that multi-stakeholder public-private partnerships to assist member countries in the areas of capacity-building, and knowledge and data sharing be promoted. The Committee requested that the feasibility of organizing workshops on the sharing of best practices and capacity building in the area of early warning systems at the regional and subregional levels be explored.
	(c) To advise the secretariat on regional priorities with regard to information,	84% (N=16/19) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The expected outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee requested that assistance be provided to members in knowledge-sharing

	communications and space technologies for disaster risk reduction.		using information, communications and space technology and that regional cooperative mechanisms being developed in the areas of data collection and dissemination, early warning, disaster monitoring and evaluation, and disaster emergency communications be promoted.
Agenda item 6: Activities of ESCAP cooperative mechanisms on disaster risk reduction	(a) To provide guidance to the secretariat on its work related to the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.	88% (N=15/17) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee recommended that the two regional bodies involve more countries from the region, especially those which had less capacity in typhoon-and cyclone-related disaster risk reduction and management, in their capacity-building and other activities, and that more assistance be provided to them.
Agenda item 7: Strategic framework and proposed outputs for the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011	(a) To provide the secretariat with guidance on its work related to disaster risk reduction, including possible work programme outputs that could be reflected in the programme of work for 2010-2011.	86% (N=12/14) agree to a great or reasonable extent	§ The outcome was met to a great extent. § The Committee expressed support for the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 pertaining to disaster risk reduction with one change to the wording of an output.