

**ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
ON MACROECONOMIC POLICY, POVERTY REDUCTION
AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Bangkok, Thailand
24-26 November 2009

Summary Assessment

The first session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 24 to 26 November 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 high as 72% or 18 of 25 participating delegations responded.

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 Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development, as contained in resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission.

I. Attendance

The Committee session was fairly well attended, with 40% (N = 25/62) of ESCAP members and associate members participating.

33% (N=6/18) of delegations that responded to the questionnaire regarding the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development were from the Capital – Line Ministry, and 22% (N=4/18) were headed by the representatives from the Embassies in Bangkok.

Some delegations provided comments and suggestions on how to encourage even higher and wider representation from their countries at the Committee sessions, including: (a) Communicate with high level representatives of the Government to ensure high and wide representation; (b) try to hold the meeting at a different time of year, as the high number of meetings held towards the end of the year prohibits wide and high participation from capitals.

II. Ownership

The sense of ownership by participants of the Committee was strong, as demonstrated by 33% (N=6/18) of respondents indicating that the Committee session was owned and driven by member States to a great extent and 44% (N=8/18) to a good extent, and 28% (N=5/18) responding that the overall outcome of the deliberations was a result of a collaborative effort to a great extent and 44% (N=8/18) to a good extent. Additionally, 33% (N=6/18) of respondents felt that the draft report adequately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee to a great extent and 44% (N=8/18) to a good extent.

III. Relevance

The feed-back indicates that participants were of the view that the Committee is a very relevant mechanism for discussing macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development in the region. The majority of respondents agreed to a great extent that the Committee session was relevant to issues and trends regarding macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development in the Asian and Pacific region (72% N=13/18), reflected to a good extent the needs and priorities of their countries (61%, N=11/18) and half of respondents agreed to a great extent that the benefits of their delegation's attendance outweighed the costs (50%, N=9/18).

The most relevant agenda items for the delegations in attendance included (in order):

(1) Impact of the financial and economic crisis on Asia-Pacific economies, patterns of recovery, policy responses and the relevance of regional and international cooperation; (2) Impact of the economic crisis on poverty and inclusive development: policy responses and options; and (3) Implementation in Asia and the Pacific of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010: progress made, obstacles encountered and the way forward.

IV. Efficiency

The feed-back indicates that participants were satisfied to a great extent with the efficiency of organization and conduct of the Committee session. The majority of respondents agreed to a great extent that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages (61%, N=11/18), were issued in a timely manner (56%, N=10/18), that the Committee used efficiently the time provided (56%, N=10/18), and that the conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient (56%, N=10/18).

V. Outcomes in light of ESCAP resolution 64/1

The responses regarding the outcomes relating to the general terms of reference for the Committee were somewhat less positive than those received elsewhere in the questionnaire. Less than half of respondents agreed to a great extent that the first session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development 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 (39%, N=7/18), identify priorities and emerging issues (44%, N=8/18), and promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (17%, N=3/18). However, the remaining respondents did feel that the Committee was able to fulfill its terms of reference to a good extent.

VI. Most and least successful

The Committee's agreement on the overall organization of the Committee was rated as the most successful feature, including the key-note speeches, presentations, insightful documents and productive discussions, and the sharing of experiences among member States on the effects of the global economic crisis. Participation by member States was rated least successful.

Suggestions for improvement included more timely submission of documents, which should be made available to the delegation at least two weeks before the commencement of the session and for the secretariat to encourage more participation from capitals in future sessions. It was also suggested to have a group photograph among participants.

VII. Conclusion

This assessment concludes that the first session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development was successful. The strong sense of ownership by delegations has set a good precedent for future sessions where it is hoped that more participation by member States will enable even more productive and substantive discussions and agreement on macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific.

Annex I. Questionnaire results

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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 macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development in the Asian and Pacific region.	72% (13)	28% (5)	-	-	-
b. The agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of my country.	28% (5)	61% (11)	6% (1)	6% (1)	-
c. The benefits of my delegation's attendance justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).	50% (9)	44% (8)	6% (1)	-	-

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.	61% (11)	33% (6)	6% (1)	-	-	-
b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	56% (10)	44% (8)	-	-	-	-
c. The Committee used efficiently the time available for discussions.	56% (10)	28% (5)	11% (2)	-	-	-
d. The conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient.	56% (10)	39% (7)	6% (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).	44% (8)	33% (6)	17% (3)	-	-	6% (1)

C. Substantive outcome of the session

Annex I. Questionnaire results

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: Impact of the financial and economic crisis on Asia-Pacific economies, patterns of recovery, policy responses and the relevance of regional and international cooperation						
<i>a. to share experiences with respect to the impact of the crisis on macroeconomic performance;</i>	50% (9)	28% (5)	17% (3)	-	-	6% (1)
<i>b. to provide guidance on policy suggestions for reviving and promoting economic growth.</i>	44% (8)	39% (7)	6% (1)	6% (1)	-	6% (1)
Agenda item 5: Impact of the economic crisis on poverty and inclusive development: policy responses and options						
<i>c. to share experiences regarding the impact of the crisis on poverty and inclusive development;</i>	61% (11)	22% (4)	11% (2)	-	-	6% (1)
<i>d. to provide guidance on policy options for mitigating the adverse impact on poverty reduction, inclusive development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.</i>	44% (8)	33% (6)	11% (2)	6% (1)	-	6% (1)
Agenda item 6: Implementation in Asia and the Pacific of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010: progress made, obstacles encountered and the way forward						
<i>e. to provide the secretariat with further guidance in taking the review process forward;</i>	33% (6)	44% (8)	17% (3)	-	-	6% (1)
<i>f. to provide the secretariat with guidance in developing concrete cooperation options in leveraging regional and global processes and measures for recovery from the current economic crisis;</i>	22% (4)	39% (7)	28% (5)	-	-	11% (2)
<i>g. to provide the secretariat with guidance in developing concrete cooperation options in promoting sustainable and inclusive development in favour of the least developed countries of Asia and the Pacific</i>	28% (5)	50% (9)	17% (3)	-	-	6% (1)
Agenda item 7: Implementation of Commission resolution 65/4 on the strengthening of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific						
<i>h. To provide the secretariat with guidance on the content of the draft implementation plans, as well as with suggestions on the modalities for the implementation of the activities contained therein;</i>	28% (5)	39% (7)	22% (4)	-	-	11% (2)
Agenda item 8: Programme Planning and Monitoring						

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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>i. To review the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2008-2009 and highlights of the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011;</i>	28% (5)	39% (7)	11% (2)	-	-	22% (4)
<i>j. To review of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013.</i>	33% (6)	33% (6)	11% (2)	-	-	22% (4)

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

4. 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.	39% (7)	44% (8)	-	-	-	11% (2)
b. Identify priorities and emerging issues, particularly those with implications for the work of the secretariat.	44% (8)	39% (7)	6% (1)	-	-	11% (2)
c. Promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes.	17% (3)	56% (10)	11% (2)	-	6% (1)	11% (2)
d. Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	22% (4)	44% (8)	22% (4)	-	-	11% (2)

E. Participation

5. 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?	33% (6)	44% (8)	6% (1)	6% (1)	-	11% (2)
b. the overall outcome of the deliberations is a result of a collaborative effort by members of the Committee?	28% (5)	44% (8)	11% (2)	-	-	17% (3)
c. the draft report adequately reflects the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee?	33% (6)	44% (8)	-	-	-	22% (4)
d. the secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session?	56% (10)	22% (4)	6% (1)	-	-	17% (3)

Annex I. Questionnaire results

5. To what extent do you feel that...	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	No answer
6. My delegation's attendance at the Committee session was:						
6% (1)	mainly from the Capital - Ministry of Foreign Affairs					
33% (6)	mainly from the Capital - Line Ministry					
22% (4)	mainly from representatives in Bangkok (Embassy)					
17% (3)	a combination of the above					
6% (1)	other:					
17% (3)	No answer					

Annex II. Questionnaire comments

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[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]

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

- Agenda 4 and 5.
- Agenda item 6.
- Agenda 4.
- All agenda items were important.
- Agenda 4.
- 5
- All relevant for our delegation.

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

- The Committee should have considered more discussion taking into consideration the impact of the current global economic crisis.
- Quality of data needs to be improved and concerned government data source should be used so long as they are available.
- Increase efforts in interregional interaction and cooperation (c, d).
- Collection of information related to real economic of Timor-Leste isn't accurate also including Timor-Leste on periodic report.

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

- So many meetings, Committees and workshops are held in October, November and December. It is difficult for capital to send people to so many meetings in a short period of time.
- Communication to the higher level authorities of the Government is required to have higher and wider representation.
- I suggest 2 participants from Ministry of Finance and Prime Ministers office be represented and that participants be informed on what to present (statement).

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

- The key-note speeches were of good-quality in contents.
- The Committee session was successful with insightful documents by secretariat followed by productive discussions.
- Sharing experiences of the member countries about the effects of the global economic crises and probable solution to address the crises.
- Distinguished Experts presentations.
- Sharing of information relating to macroeconomic policy of poverty reduction issue.

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- The country Participation was the most active and successful. Country experience was shared and we learn a lot from there.

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

- More active participation from the delegates to discussions.
- Some of the member countries did not participate in the session.
- Panel discussions.

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:

- Since this is the first session of the Committee after revitalization, more participation from the capitals of the member countries should have been there. Secretariat may like to ensure more participation from capitals in future.
- The documents for discussions should be made available to the delegation at least 2 weeks before the commencement of the session so that sufficient time is available for discussions within the concerned government agencies.
- ESCAP efforts may be more effective if they were more narrowly focused.
- The participants should have a group photograph in the future.

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Annex III. Achievement of substantive outcomes

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Agenda Item	Substantive Outcome	Quantitative survey response	Qualitative assessment based on a review of the draft report of the session
Agenda item 4: Impact of the financial and economic crisis on Asia-Pacific economies, patterns of recovery, policy responses and the relevance of regional and international cooperation	to share experiences with respect to the impact of the crisis on macroeconomic performance; to provide guidance on policy suggestions for reviving and promoting economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appx. 47% agree to a great extent and 33% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved 	<p>The substantive outcomes were met to a great extent.</p> <p>Experiences were shared by two high level panelists from Geneva and Kuala Lumpur and various countries including: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Pakistan, Russian Federation and Timor-Leste</p> <p>The Committee provided guidance on policy suggestions for reviving and promoting economic growth by recommending that the secretariat focus on enhancing regional cooperation concerning exchange rate policies and crisis management, as well as strengthening the intermediation of regional savings to address the region's investment and consumption needs. The Committee also recommended that social protection schemes be strengthened and requested the secretariat to review and analyze social protection initiatives and their impact on national fiscal balances.</p>
Agenda item 5: Impact of the economic crisis on poverty and inclusive development: policy responses and options	to share experiences regarding the impact of the crisis on poverty and inclusive development; to provide guidance on policy options for mitigating the adverse impact on poverty reduction, inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appx. 53% agree to a great extent and 27% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved 	<p>The substantive outcomes were met to a great extent.</p> <p>Experiences were shared by two high level panelists from Sri Lanka and Vietnam and various countries including: China, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation and Timor-Leste.</p> <p>The Committee provided the following guidance on policy options for mitigating the adverse impact on poverty reduction, inclusive development and the achievement of the MDGs: At</p>

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	development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.		the national level, the development of physical infrastructure, and development of comprehensive social protection systems. The Committee also recommended that Governments allocate more resources to the development of the agriculture sector, particularly for research and extension services. Further, the Committee requested the secretariat to strengthen its efforts with regards to the sharing of experiences, with a particular emphasis on South-South cooperation.
Agenda item 6: Implementation in Asia and the Pacific of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010: progress made, obstacles encountered and the way forward	To provide the secretariat with further guidance in taking the review process forward; To provide the secretariat with guidance in developing concrete cooperation options in leveraging regional and global processes and measures for recovery from the current economic crisis; To provide the secretariat with guidance in developing concrete cooperation options in promoting sustainable and inclusive development in favour of the least	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appx. 28% agreed to a great extent and 44% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved 	<p>The substantive outcomes were met to some extent.</p> <p>The Committee generally endorsed the review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 and noted with satisfaction the process of review that the secretariat was facilitating, which included a national report from each LDC , two subregional reports and a regional report.</p> <p>No guidance to the secretariat was given regarding concrete options for leveraging regional and global processes and measures for recovery from the current economic crisis.</p> <p>No guidance to the secretariat was given regarding concrete options for cooperation options in promoting sustainable and inclusive development in favor of the LDCs of Asia and the Pacific.</p>

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	developed countries of Asia and the Pacific		
Agenda item 7: Implementation of Commission resolution 65/4 on the strengthening of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific	To provide the secretariat with guidance on the content of the draft implementation plans, as well as with suggestions on the modalities for the implementation of the activities contained therein;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28% agree to a great extent and 39% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved 	<p>The substantive outcomes were met to a good extent.</p> <p>The Committee provided guidance and suggestions on the modalities for the implementation of the draft implementation plans of CAPSA.</p>