

**ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE  
ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

Bangkok, Thailand  
2-4 December 2009

## **Summary Assessment**

The first session of the Committee on Environment and Development was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 2-4 December 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 good with 66% or 10 of 15 participating delegations responding. However, it must be kept in mind that the overall number of Committee session participants was very low, which means that the responses cannot be generalized.

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 Environment and Development, as contained in resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission.

### **I. Attendance**

The Committee session was not very well attended, with only 24% (N = 15/62) of ESCAP members and associate members participating.

Four respondents indicated that their delegation was from the Capital – Line Ministry, two indicated that their delegation was from the Embassies in Bangkok, two indicated that their delegation was a combination of representatives from the Capital and the Embassy in Bangkok, and two did not specify the composition of their delegation.

Some delegations provided comments and suggestions on how to encourage higher and wider representation from their countries at the Committee sessions, including: (a) ESCAP should hold fewer meetings towards the end of the year; (b) more information should be shared with line Ministries to foster collaborative participation; and (c) Travel arrangement, accommodation and DSA should be provided for the participants.

### **II. Ownership**

The sense of ownership by participants of the Committee was strong, as demonstrated by 30% (N=3/10) of respondents indicating that the Committee session was owned and driven by member States to a great extent and 40% (N=4/10) to a good extent, and 30% (N=3/10) responding that the overall outcome of the deliberations was a result of a collaborative effort to a great extent and 50% (N=5/10) to a good extent. Additionally, 40% (N=4/10) of respondents felt that the draft report adequately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee to a great extent and 30% (N=3/10) to a good extent.

### **III. Relevance**

The feed-back indicates that participants were of the view that the Committee is a relevant mechanism for discussing environment and development in the region. 30% (N=3/10) of respondents agreed to a great extent that the Committee session was relevant to issues and trends regarding environment and development in the Asian and Pacific region, and 60% (N=6/10) to a good extent. Two respondent agreed to a great extent that the agenda

items reflected the needs and priorities of their countries, while half of the respondents (50%, N=5/10) agreed to a good extent, and 30% were neutral (N=3/10). One respondent agreed to a great extent that the benefits of their delegation's attendance outweighed the costs, while 50% (N=5/10) agreed to a good extent, and 30% were neutral (N=3/10). One participant did not believe that their attendance at the session outweighed the costs.

The most relevant agenda items for the delegations in attendance included (in order): (1) High-level panel on key challenges, opportunities and way forward in the area of environment and development; (2) Trends and progress in the field of environment and development; and (3) Programme planning and monitoring.

#### **IV. Efficiency**

The feed-back indicates that member States were satisfied to a good extent with the efficiency of organization and conduct of the Committee session. The responses indicate that there is room for improvement in terms of pre-session documentation. Less than half of respondents agreed to a good extent that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages (40%, N=4/10) and even fewer that the pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner (20%, N=2/10). However, more than half of respondents agreed to a good extent that the Committee used efficiently the time provided (70%, N=7/10), and that the conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient (60%, N=6/10).

#### **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 Environment and 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 (20%, N=2/10), identify priorities and emerging issues (20%, N=2/10), and promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (20%, N=2/10). However, overall the majority of respondents did feel that the Committee was able to fulfill its terms of reference to a good extent.

#### **VI. Most and least successful**

One respondent felt that the most successful feature of the Committee session was the recognition that several countries have differing interpretations regarding the concept of "Green Growth" policy. One respondent rated the "High-level Panel on Key Challenges, Opportunities and the Way Forward" as least successful. However, 90% (N=9/10) of respondents indicated that the panel encouraged policy dialogue to a great or good extent.

One respondent suggested that the Committee prepare country-specific recommendations on how to shift current development policy towards policy based on sustainable development approaches.

#### **VII. Conclusion**

In general, participants at the first session of the Committee on Environment and Development were satisfied with the ownership, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Committee. However, this assessment concludes that the first session was affected negatively by the low participation of member States. The Committee suffered from being the last in the series of three Committee sessions, which were scheduled back-to-back. In the future scheduling matters should be taken into careful consideration.

**Annex I. Questionnaire results****A. Overall relevance of the session**

| <b>1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?</b>                                                                     | <b>To a great extent (1)</b> | <b>(2)</b> | <b>(3)</b> | <b>(4)</b> | <b>Not at all (5)</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| a. The agenda items were timely and relevant to issues and trends regarding environment and development in the Asian and Pacific region. | 30%<br>(3)                   | 60%<br>(6) | 10%<br>(1) | -          | -                     |
| b. The agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of my country.                                                                    | 20%<br>(2)                   | 50%<br>(5) | 30%<br>(3) | -          | -                     |
| c. The benefits of my delegation's attendance justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).           | 10%<br>(1)                   | 50%<br>(5) | 30%<br>(3) | -          | 10%<br>(1)            |

**B. Organization**

| <b>2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>To a great extent (1)</b> | <b>(2)</b> | <b>(3)</b> | <b>(4)</b> | <b>Not at all (5)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| a. The pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda.                                                                                                      | 10%<br>(1)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 50%<br>(5) | -          | -                     |
| b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.                                                                                                                                          | 20%<br>(2)                   | 20%<br>(2) | 40%<br>(4) | 20%<br>(2) | -                     |
| c. The Committee used efficiently the time available for discussions.                                                                                                                                 | 20%<br>(2)                   | 70%<br>(7) | 10%<br>(1) | -          | -                     |
| d. The conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient.                                                                                                                                | 20%<br>(2)                   | 60%<br>(6) | 10%<br>(1) | -          | 10%<br>(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). | 10%<br>(1)                   | 50%<br>(5) | 30%<br>(3) | 10%<br>(1) | -                     |

**C. Substantive outcome of the session**

| <b>3. To what extent did the deliberations on the following substantive agenda items meet the expected outcomes as described below?</b> | <b>To a great extent (1)</b> | <b>(2)</b> | <b>(3)</b> | <b>(4)</b> | <b>Not at all (5)</b> | <b>No answer</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Agenda item 4:</b> High-level Panel on Key Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forward in the Area of Environment and Development      |                              |            |            |            |                       |                  |

## Annex I. Questionnaire results

| <b>3. To what extent did the deliberations on the following substantive agenda items meet the expected outcomes as described below?</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>To a great extent (1)</b> | <b>(2)</b> | <b>(3)</b> | <b>(4)</b> | <b>Not at all (5)</b> | <b>No answer</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <i>a. To encourage debate on policy issues in the spheres of environment and development faced by Asia and the Pacific;</i>                                                                                                                                                        | 20%<br>(2)                   | 70%<br>(7) | -          | 10%<br>(1) | -                     | -                |
| <i>b. To generate action-oriented recommendations that will be useful to guide member States and the work of ESCAP.</i>                                                                                                                                                            | 10%<br>(1)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 40%<br>(4) | 10%<br>(1) | -                     | -                |
| <b>Agenda item 5: Trends and progress in the field of environment and development</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              |                              |            |            |            |                       |                  |
| <i>c. To share experiences and lessons learned with respect to national policies on integration of environmental sustainability in development policy;</i>                                                                                                                         | 20%<br>(2)                   | 60%<br>(6) | 10%<br>(1) | 10%<br>(1) | -                     | -                |
| <i>d. To share experiences and lessons learned with respect to national policies on enhanced access to services towards socially inclusive and sustainable development: water, sanitation, energy, transport and housing;</i>                                                      | 30%<br>(3)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 20%<br>(2) | 10%<br>(1) | -                     | -                |
| <i>e. To provide the secretariat with guidance in planning and implementing its subsequent activities in the aforementioned areas, including the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, to be held in 2010.</i> | 10%<br>(1)                   | 50%<br>(5) | 40%<br>(4) | -          | -                     | -                |
| <b>Agenda item 6: Programme planning and monitoring</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                              |            |            |            |                       |                  |
| <i>f. To review the implementation of the programme of work for 2008-2009 and provide inputs that facilitate preparatory work for the implementation of the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011;</i>                                                                          | 10%<br>(1)                   | 70%<br>(7) | 20%<br>(2) | -          | -                     | -                |
| <i>g. To provide input on the proposed priorities and key results to be achieved by the secretariat for the biennium 2012-2013.</i>                                                                                                                                                | 10%<br>(1)                   | 50%<br>(5) | 40%<br>(4) | -          | -                     | -                |
| <b>Agenda item 7: Consideration of draft resolutions, recommendations and decisions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-sixth session</b>                                                                                                                                |                              |            |            |            |                       |                  |
| <i>h. To review, from a technical perspective, the proposals and/or texts of draft resolutions put forward by members of the Committee for submission to the Commission at its sixty-sixth session.</i>                                                                            | 10%<br>(1)                   | 50%<br>(5) | 20%<br>(2) | -          | 10%<br>(1)            | 10%<br>(1)       |

## Annex I. Questionnaire results

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

| <b>4. All eight ESCAP Committees have common terms of reference. To what extent did the Committee session succeed in performing the following?</b> | <b>To a great extent (1)</b> | <b>(2)</b> | <b>(3)</b> | <b>(4)</b> | <b>Not at all (5)</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| a. Review and analyze regional trends.                                                                                                             | 20%<br>(2)                   | 60%<br>(6) | 20%<br>(2) | -          | -                     |
| b. Identify priorities and emerging issues, particularly those with implications for the work of the secretariat.                                  | 20%<br>(2)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 30%<br>(3) | 10%<br>(1) | -                     |
| c. Promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes.                              | 20%<br>(2)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 20%<br>(2) | 20%<br>(2) | -                     |
| d. Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.                               | 10%<br>(1)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 30%<br>(3) | 20%<br>(2) | -                     |

### E. Participation

| <b>5. To what extent do you feel that...</b>                                                                   | <b>To a great extent (1)</b> | <b>(2)</b> | <b>(3)</b> | <b>(4)</b> | <b>Not at all (5)</b> | <b>No answer</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| a. the Committee session was owned and driven by member States?                                                | 30%<br>(3)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 10%<br>(1) | 10%<br>(1) | -                     | 10%<br>(1)       |
| b. the overall outcome of the deliberations is a result of a collaborative effort by members of the Committee? | 30%<br>(3)                   | 50%<br>(5) | 10%<br>(1) | 10%<br>(1) | -                     | -                |
| c. the draft report adequately reflects the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee?       | 40%<br>(4)                   | 30%<br>(3) | 20%<br>(2) | -          | 10%<br>(1)            | -                |
| d. the secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session?     | 30%<br>(3)                   | 40%<br>(4) | 30%<br>(3) | -          | -                     | -                |

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

|         |                                                       |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 0%      | mainly from the Capital - Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 40% (4) | mainly from the Capital - Line Ministry               |
| 20% (2) | mainly from representatives in Bangkok (Embassy)      |
| 20% (2) | a combination of the above                            |
| 10% (1) | other:                                                |
| 10% (1) | No answer                                             |

## Annex II. Questionnaire comments

### **Annex II. Questionnaire comments**

*[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]*

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

- Agenda item 4.
- Agenda item 4.
- Green growth.
- High-level Panel on Key Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forward in the Area of Environment and Development was useful for our delegation.
- Item 5/6.
- Programme of work. Item 6.

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

- Discussing about review of some reasonable practices would be more useful and understandable for participants in the Committee.
- The Committee should conduct country specific study FOR EVERY member country on their development and environmental issues and need to identify key constraints for implementing environmentally inclusive development policy.
- To promote more focused discussion on agenda items.

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

- Too many meetings in ESCAP are being held over a short period of time. Proper spreading of meetings over a larger time period may help. Just to highlight 3 Committee meetings in 30 days, in addition several other High-level meetings.
- The date of the Committee should be more considered for higher and wider representation from my country at the Committee session.
- More information to the line Ministries such as Ministry of Nature Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Finance, National Development and Renovation Committee is necessary to be delivered for collaborative participation from country. Participation costs/travel, accommodation, necessary DSA/ should be provided for the participants.

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

- Recognizing that there seems to be a gap of the view about promoting “Green Growth” Policy, between several countries.

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

- High-level Panel on Key Challenges, opportunities and the way forward.

## Annex II. Questionnaire comments

### **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:**

- The Committee must prepare recommendations for every country's specific needs based on comprehensive study for changing current development policy trend towards sustainable development. The Committee's current policy recommendations are more general that could not apply for every country in the Region. Therefore, the Committee's commitment for more comprehensive study is important.
- The documents should be drafted much more carefully and reflect intergovernmental processes rather than their inaccurate interpretation.

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## Annex III. Achievement of substantive outcomes

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| <b>Agenda Item</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>Substantive Outcome</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Quantitative survey response</b>                                                                                                        | <b>Qualitative assessment based on a review of the draft report of the session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Agenda item 4:<br/>High-level Panel on Key Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forward in the Area of Environment and Development</p> | <p>To encourage debate on policy issues in the spheres of environment and development faced by Asia and the Pacific;</p> <p>To generate action-oriented recommendations that will be useful to guide member States and the work of ESCAP.</p>                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appx. 15% agree to a great extent and 55% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved</li> </ul> | <p>The substantive outcomes were met to a good extent. Experience was shared and recommendations were made, however, the views of participants illustrates that there was room for improvement.</p> <p>Experiences were shared by the panelists with regard to environment and development including the importance of involving local governments in policy development; establishment of national policies conducive to mobilizing domestic resources in order to fill the financial gap to promote sustainable development; and that green growth could be an important strategy.</p> <p>The Committee recommended enhancing regional and multilateral cooperation to make suitable green technology accessible and affordable to developing countries.</p> |
| <p>Agenda item 5:<br/>Trends and progress in the field of environment and development</p>                                              | <p>To share experiences and lessons learned with respect to national policies on integration of environmental sustainability in development policy;</p> <p>To share experiences and lessons learned with respect to national policies on enhanced access to services towards socially inclusive and sustainable development: water, sanitation, energy, transport and housing;</p> <p>To provide the secretariat with</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appx. 20% agree to a great extent and 50% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved</li> </ul> | <p>The substantive outcomes were met to a good extent. Experience was shared and recommendations were made, however, the views of participants illustrates that there was room for improvement.</p> <p>The Committee shared experiences and lessons learned about policies and initiatives from countries in the region related to the integration of environmental sustainability into development policy.</p> <p>The Committee shared experiences and lessons learned regarding the persisting challenges in the region stemming from the fact that cities had become centres for economic growth and millions of people were without access to adequate housing, electricity, clean water,</p>                                                              |

### Annex III. Achievement of substantive outcomes

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>guidance in planning and implementing its subsequent activities in the aforementioned areas, including the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, to be held in 2010.</p> |  | <p>sanitation and transport.</p> <p>The Committee provided guidance in planning and implementing the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific in Astana from 27 September to 2 October 2010 and the progress was reported by Kazakhstan with regard to the institutional arrangements for the national preparatory process.</p> |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|