ASSESSMENT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Bangkok, Thailand
24-26 November 2010

Summary Assessment

The second session of the Committee on Transport was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 24-26 November 2010. A questionnaire was distributed towards the end of the session to obtain feedback from participants on its relevance, effectiveness and quality, to enable the secretariat to improve on its preparations for and servicing of future sessions. The response rate to the questionnaire was not very good with 42.9 percent or 9 of 21 participating delegations responding. Hence the responses cannot be generalized also in view of the low number of 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 Information and Communications Technology   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 33.8% (N=21/62) of ESCAP members and associate members participating.

Three or 33% respondents indicated that their delegation was from the Capital – Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, one (1) or 11 % indicated that their delegation was from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and 33% indicated that their representatives was mainly from Embassy representatives in Bangkok, while one or 11% indicated that their delegation was a combination of representatives from the Capital and the Embassy in Bangkok.

Some delegations provided comments and suggestions on how to encourage higher and wider representation from their countries at the Committee sessions, including: (a) Encouraging more communication with governments of ESCAP member countries, (b) To have another related forum back to back.

II.   Ownership

The sense of ownership by participants of the Committee was relatively good, as demonstrated by 44% (N=4/9) of respondents indicating that the Committee session was owned and driven by member States to a good extent and 44% (N=4/9) to a satisfactory level, and 22% (N=2/9) responding that the overall outcome of the deliberations was a result of a collaborative effort to a good extent and 67% (N=6/9) to a good extent. 33% (N=3/9) of respondents felt that the draft report adequately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee to a great extent and 56% (N=5/9) to a good extent. Additionally, 44% (N=4/9) indicated that the secretariat's in session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session to a great extent, and 44 % indicated to a good extent.

III. Relevance

The feed-back indicates that participants were of the view that the agenda items of the Committee were timely and relevant to issues and trends regarding Information and Communications Technology in the Asian and Pacific region. The majority 67% (N=6/9) of respondents agreed to a great extent and 22% (N=2/9) indicated to a good extent. Four respondents or 44% agreed to a great extent that the agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of their countries, while 33% of the respondents (N=3/9) agreed to a good extent, and 22% were neutral or did not provide an answer (N=2/9). Four respondents (44%) agreed to a great extent that the benefits of their delegation's attendance justified the costs (travel, time opportunity cost of absence from the office), while 22% (N=2/9) agreed to a good extent, and 11% did not provide an answer. (N=1/9).

The most relevant agenda items for the delegations in attendance included (in order): (1) Regional Capacity Building and Overview of Information and Communications Technology for Development and Information and Communications and Technology for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2) Broadband development in Asia and the Pacific, Mobile Applications in Asia and the Pacific and Regional Cooperation on Information and Communication Technology for development and disaster risk reduction.

IV. Efficiency

The feed-back indicates that member States were satisfied with the efficiency of organization and conduct of the Committee session, with 44%(N= 4/9) indicating that they were satisfied to a great extent and 33% (N=3/9) indicating that they were satisfied to a good extent and 11% (N=1/20) were either neutral or did not provide an answer. Many respondents agreed to a great extent that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages 44% (N=4/9), while 56% (N=5/9) indicated to a good extent. An equal number of respondents indicated that the pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner, 33% (N=3/9), either to a greater extent or 33% (N=3/9) to a good extent while 22% (N=2/9) were neutral and 11% (N=1/9) did not provide an answer. More than half of respondents agreed to a greater extent that the Committee used efficiently the time provided 56% (N=5/9), while 22% (N=2/9) indicated to a good extent and an equal number of 11% (N=1/9) were either neutral or were to a less extent in agreement. The majority of participants also indicated that the conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient 44% (N=4/9) indicating to a greater extent and 33% (N= 3/9) indicating to a good extent while 22% (N=2/9) were neutral.

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 positive the majority felt that the Committee was successful in addressing its Terms of Reference. The session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on Committee on Information and Communications Technology addressed effectively the issues outlined in resolution 64/1 that should be addressed by all Committees subsidiary to the Commission. The majority of participants indicated that they were satisfied with the committee session addressing its terms of reference in particular; to review and analyze regional trends, 44% (N=4/9) indicating to a greater extent, and 56% (N=5/9) indicating to a good extent.

Many felt that the committee session succeeded in identifying priorities and emerging issues 44% (N=4/9) to a greater extent while 33% (N=3/9) indicated to a good extent, However, a few felt that the committee session promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to a great extent 11% (N=1/9), while 56% (N=5/9) indicated to a good extent and 22% (N=2/9) were neutral and 11% (N=1/9) did not agree. Additionally some participants indicated to a greater extent that the committee session succeeded in promotion of a collaborative approach to address development challenges at the regional and sub regional levels, 22% (N=2/9) indicating to a greater extent and 56% (N=5/9) indicating to a good extent. Overall the majority of respondents felt that the Committee was able to fulfill its terms of reference to a good extent. Of those 67% (N=6/9) felt that there was no need to further improve the way the committee had addressed its terms of reference, while 33 % (N=3/9) felt that there was room for improvement such as:

1. Promoting more communication with the governments of ESCAP member countries.

2. Agenda items should focus more on the achievement of MDGs

3. Secretariat should use time more resourcefully.

VI.   Most and least successful

Some participants felt that the most successful feature of the committee session included but not limited to; The plenary session, Views and Knowledge on ICT Development, Regional capacity –Building and Overview on ICT development. , ICT for Disaster Reduction and Regional Cooperation on ICT for development and Disaster Risk Reduction.

Of the least successful features of the session were; Time Constraints, Lack of information of ICT progress, target of Committee session was not focused and one least successful feature of the committee session was the High –level forum on ICT for development and DRR.

Conclusion

In general, participants at the second session of the Committee on Information and Communications were satisfied with the ownership, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Committee. However, this assessment concludes that the second session was affected negatively by the low participation of member States.

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)	(5)	No Answer
a. The agenda items were timely and relevant to issues and trends regarding Information and Communications Technology development in the Asian and Pacific region.	67 % (6)	22% (2)	0% -	0%	11% (1)	-
b. The agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of my country.	44% (4)	33% (3)	22% (2)	-	-	- -
c. The benefits of my delegation's attendance justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).	44% (4)	22% (2)	22% (2)	-	-	11% (1)

B. Organization

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	No Answer
a. The pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda.	44% (4)	56% (5)	-	-	-	-
b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	33% (3)	33% (3)	-	22% (2)	-	11% (1)
c. The Committee used efficiently the time available for discussions.	56% (5)	22% (2)	11% (1)	11% (1)	-	-
d. The conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient.	44% (4)	33% (3)	22% (2)	-	-	- -
e. The organization of work prior to/in between Committee sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Committee.	44% (4)	33% (3)	11% (1)	11% (1)	-	-

Annex II. Questionnaire comments

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
a). Agenda item 4:Mobile applications in Asia and the Pacific: *Expected Outcome: Member States review and discuss recent trends and developments in mobile access and applications in Asia and the Pacific*	44% (4)	56% (5)	-	-	-	-
b) Agenda Item 5, Braoadband development in Asia and the Pacific: *Expected Outcome: Member States gain an overview of recent dynamic development of broadband networks, as well as their economic impacts and potential for social benefit.*	44% (4)	56% (5)	-	-	-	-
c) Agenda Item 6, Regional Capacity-Building and Overview of Information and Communicatios Technology for Development: *Expected Outcome: Member States are informed of the activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Cantre for Information and Communication Technology for Development during the period 2008-2010, as well as the progress made in implementing the outcomes of the world Summit on the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific.*	67% (6)	33% (3)	-	-	-	-
d) Agenda Item 7, Information and Communications and technology for Disaster Risk Reduction: *Expected Outcome: Member States review the latest trends and emerging capabilities of information and communications technology for disaster risk reduction efforts in the region. Member States discuss and provide recommendations on the needs and approaches used in establishing regional disaster communications capabilities.*	33% (3)	67% (6)	-	-	-	-
e). Agenda Item 8, Regional Cooperation on Information and Communication Technology for development and disaster risk reduction: *Expected Outcome: Member States gain experience on challenges, opportunities and emerging trends from leading experts and key decision-and policymakers on information and communications technology for development disaster risk reduction in the region.*	33% (3)	56% (5)	-	-	11% (1)	-

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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
f). Agenda Item 9, Consideration of future programme focus: *Expected Outcome; Member States provide recommendations on the programme direction and priorities outlined in the strategic framework for 2010-2011 and the draft strategic framework for 2012-2013 in the field of ICT.*	33% (3)	44% (4)	11% (1)	-	-	11% (1)
g). Agenda Item 10, Other matters *Expected Outcome: Member States are informed and decide on any outstanding concerns related to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology.*	22% (2)	33% (3)	-	11% (1)	-	33% (3)

D. Committee's General terms of Reference

5. To what extent did the Committee Session succeed in addressing its Terms Of Reference?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	No Answer
a. Review and analyze regional trends.	44% (4)	56% (5)	-	-	-	-
b. Identify priorities and emerging issues, particularly those with implications for the work of the secretariat.	44% (4)	33% (3)	22% (2)	-	-	-
c. Promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes.	11% (1)	56% (5)	22% (2)	11% (1)	-	-
d. Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	22% (2)	56% (5)	11% (1)	11% (1)	-	-

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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?	11% (1)	44% (4)	44% (4)	-	-	-
b. The overall outcome of the deliberations is a result of a collaborative effort by members of the Committee?	22% (2)	67% (6)	11% (1)	-	-	-
c. The draft report adequately reflects the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee?	33% (3)	56% (5)	-	-	-	11% (1)
d. The secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session?	44% (4)	44% (4)	11% (1)	0% -	0% -	0% -

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

33% (3)	mainly from the Capital – Ministry of Transport, Railways , or related agencies
11% (1)	mainly from the Capital – Ministry of foreign Affairs
33% (3)	mainly by representatives in Bangkok (Embassy)
11% (1)	a combination of the above
11% (1)	other:
0% (0)	

Annex II. Questionnaire comments

<u>Additional comments</u>

[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]

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

- Item 4, 6 and 7.
- Agenda item no. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- 6, 7, 8
- Agenda 8.
- Agenda item 5, in terms of deep consideration of the leading role of private sector in ICT areas.
- Despite the rapid development of ICT sector in Mongolia, there's lack of coordination among all ministries, agencies and stakeholders in applying the ICT achievements for socio-economic development and for implementation of MDG's. And e lack analysis and evaluation of the ICT achievements in the context of development. Hence items 6-8 were most relevant for us.
- Agenda items 4,5,6,7
- Agenda item 4 and 5 as there is one of the most actively developing component of ICT.

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

- More communication with the governments of ESCAP member countries.
- Agenda item should be more focused on the areas where it would be related to achievement of MDGs, such as mobile health care application.
- First, and most of all, the secretariat should withdraw the ineffective and time-wasting practice of repeating the statements of participants. Because of that the Committee didn't manage to keep in regalement, and the valuable time was lost.

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

- More communication with the governments of ESCAP member countries.
- Another related forum may have to take place back to back.
- I've pretty sure that ESCAP's have done effectively things but because of the difficulty in the Thailand's political policy today may slow everything down.

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

- Shape of views, knowledge in the ICT development.
- Well organizing, Activities. Reaching the goal. Well done.
- Documents of agenda items 6-8 and deliberations under them were most useful and covered the needs of member States for ICT development and regional cooperation.
- Structured discussions on agenda items.
- The plenary session.

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

- The time was short.
- Lack of promotion and display of ICT progress.
- the discussion was across-the-board, and the target of the committee session was not likely to be refined.
- High-level Forum on ICT for Development and DRR.

6. 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:

- Need to have coffee break. Need more discussion. Need to have exchange information and experiences from among member states countries.
- It's good. I have no comment.
- We would like to request the secretariat: 1. to introduce outline registration system of the attendance; 2. to provide participants with outcome of the previous expert meeting during the Committee session.
- Documents would have been welcome earlier, so would have organizational notices, e.g. program of the session. Guidelines for delivering statements would be useful to the delegates from capital (other then MFA's). Pacific islands were under-represented.
- See item 6.

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Annex III. Achievement of substantive outcomes

Agenda Item	Substantive Outcome	Quantitative survey response	Qualitative assessment based on a review of the draft report of the session
Agenda item 4: Mobile applications in Asia and the Pacific	*Expected Outcome: Member States review and discuss recent trends and developments in mobile access and applications in Asia and the Pacific.*	• Appx. 44% agree to a great extent and 56% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved	The substantive outcomes were met to a great extent. Experience was shared and recommendations made. However, the views of participants illustrates that there was room for improvement. Experiences were shared by the panelists with regard to mobile applications in Asia and the Pacific including the importance of the trends and development in mobile access and applications in Asia and the Pacific and their impacts on the achievement if the MDGs, World Summit on Information Society targets and the Hyogo Framework for Action for inclusive and sustainable development. The committee noted the emerging mobile applications such as mobile banking, payment and remittances and mobile healthcareapplications for public health awareness, patient monitoring and health data collection that were likely to empower the poor and accelerate inclusive development. The Committee emphasized the importance of safety and security linked to mobile applications and the importance of cyber-security measures and the establishment of policies and legislation to protect consumers from possible exploitation.
Agenda item 5: Braoadband development in Asia and the Pacific:	*Expected Outcome: Member States gain an overview of recent dynamic development of broadband networks, as well as their economic impacts and potential for social benefit.*	• Appx. 44% agree to a great extent and 56% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved	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. The Committee shared experiences and lessons learned about policies and initiatives from countries in the region

			related to broadband development in Asia and the Pacific as well as emerging challenges and opportunities in developing broadband networks for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. The Committee shared experiences and lessons learned regarding the persisting challenges in the region, especially the Asian backhaul prices which are much higher than those of other regions in the world including America and Europe, more conduits are needed for both submarine and terrestrial connectivity.The Committee highlighted the need for further human capacity development in ICT, including ICT literary enhancement at the community level. The Committee requested the secretariat to continue its assistance in compiling guidelines in infrastructure development, deployment of broadband networks and facilitating the shift from e-government to m-government.
Agenda item 6: Regional Capacity-Building and Overview of Information and Communicatios Technology for Development	*Expected Outcome: Member States are informed of the activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Cantre for Information and Communication Technology for Development during the period 2008-2010, as well as the progress made in implementing the outcomes of the world Summit on the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific.*	• Appx. 67% agree to a great extent and 33% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved	The Committee stressed the importance of the need of support from member States for the academy of APCICT, to ensure that it is localized and customized to a local context and institutionalized into national capacity building frameworks in many counrtries. The committee recognized the various initiatives by ESCAP, as well as ongoing and planned national and regional connectivity initiatives among ESCAP members and associate members The Committee noted the views expressed by different representatives in the region including Mongolia's plans for the national fibre optic network and its program on Broadband development, the Russian Federation initiative for ICT expansion, Bangladesh's efforts aimed at

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			increasing digital data networks, the Global Navigation Satellite System(GLONASS) , the Southeast Asian Ministries of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and ICAO and the need to develop GNSS based procedures as part of disaster preparedness and ICT restoration in disaster risk reduction.
d) Agenda Item 7, Information and Communications and technology for Disaster Risk Reduction:	*Expected Outcome: Member States review the latest trends and emerging capabilities of information and communications technology for disaster risk reduction efforts in the region. Member States discuss and provide recommendations on the needs and approaches used in establishing regional disaster communications capabilities.*	• Appx. 33% agree to a great extent and 67% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved	The Committee continued in its support for the Secretariat in its effort on ICT, including space applications for DRR, with special emphasis on assisting members and associate members in implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action by using proper ICT tools. The Committee welcomed the launch of the Asia-Pacific Gateway on Disaster Risk Reduction and development for sharingvaluable experiences and knowledge in disaster management, encouraged the secretariat to work closely with the regional Interagency Working group on ICT, the committee noted the efforts of Japan for the Sentinel Asia initiative with ESCAP secretariat as a partner to promote space applications for disaster management and offer to share the Integrated Flood Analysis System (IFAS) software system and satellite based rainfall data to improve the quality of flood early warning. Other efforts by the Russian federation in using satellite imageries, mobile phone and other emergency communication equipment to support drought and forest disaster responses were noted.
Agenda Item 8 : Regional Cooperation on Information and Communication Technology for development and disaster risk reduction:	*Expected Outcome: Member States gain experience on challenges, opportunities and emerging trends from leading experts and key decision-and policymakers on information and communications technology for development disaster risk reduction in the region*	• Appx. 33% agree to a great extent and 56% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved, while 11% did not agree	The Committee noted that ICT for development should be embraced from national to community levels, ensuring secure connectivity among relevant stakeholders in promoting long term sustainability. The Committee expressed its continued support to the secretariat for its efforts on applying ICT, including space applications for DRR and further emphasized the need to accord priority to implementation of the Hyogo

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			Framework for Action and the need to promote a public-private partnership to provide accurate storm forecast using mobile phone networks.
Agenda Item 9 Consideration of future programme focus: .	*Expected Outcome; Member States provide recommendations on the programme direction and priorities outlined in the strategic framework for 2010-2011 and the draft strategic framework for 2012-2013 in the field of ICT*	• Appx. 33% agree to a great extent and 44% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved, while 11 % did not give an answer and 11% did not agree	One delegation noted the importance to promote an Asia-Pacific collaborative platform for disaster emergency communications capacities and the need for further detailed connection with the works of the committee on Disaster Risk reduction by the secretariat.
Agenda item 10, *Other matters*	*Expected Outcome: Member States are informed and decide on any outstanding concerns related to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology.*	• Appx. 22% agree to a great extent and 33% to a good extent that outcomes were achieved and 11 % was neutral and 33% did not give an answer	There were no other matters raised.