



Summary Assessment of the Outcome of the 68th session of the Commission*

Bangkok
17-23 May 2012

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* Prepared by the Programme Planning and Partnerships Division based on written feedback to a survey questionnaire provided to the government delegations that attended the 68th session of the Commission.

Summary Assessment of the Outcome of the 68th session of the Commission

I. Introduction

The 68th session of the Commission was held in Bangkok from 17-23 May 2012.

A questionnaire covering aspects related to the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission session was distributed to delegations attending the session. The response rate to the questionnaire was 49%; 23 of the 47 ESCAP members and associate members, which had attended the 68th session of the Commission, provided feedback to the secretariat. The present assessment has been prepared on the basis of the feedback received from those 23 delegations.

The purpose of the assessment is (a) to support the secretariat's ongoing efforts to improve its servicing of sessions of the Commission; and (b) to assist the Commission in making decisions on the structure and functioning of its conference structure.

Pursuant to Commission resolution 64/1, which requested the Executive Secretary to "undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of the conference structure and its link to the programme priorities of the Commission", the assessment will feed into a review of the Commission's conference structure, at its sixty-ninth session. A midterm review was conducted in 2011 at the Commission's 67th session with a focus "in particular on the extent to which the conference structure has served the purpose of improving efficiency and attracting higher and wider representation from members and associate members."

II. Attendance

47 ESCAP members and associate members (~76%) participated at the 68th session of the Commission.

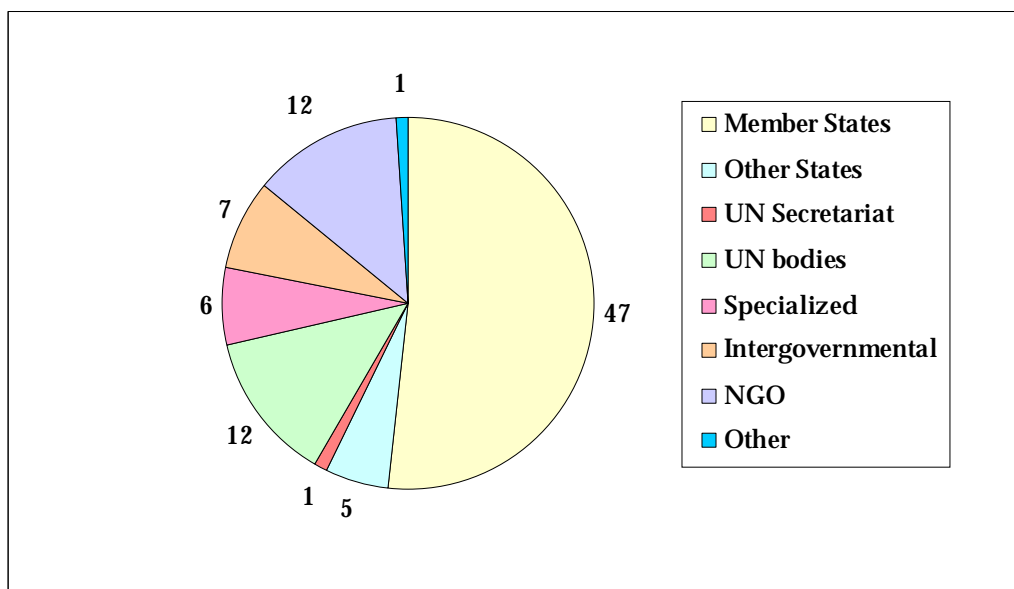
A total number of 463 participants attended the session. Of that total, 362 were from member and associated member States, while 101 participants were from the 47 other entities present, as described in the chart on page 2 (for further details see Annex I, II and III).

Respondents put forward the following main reasons as motivating their governments to designate the level of their delegation to participate in the Commission:

- 1) The role and importance of ESCAP as a regional forum for discussions and exchange of experiences on economic and social development issues; and
- 2) The relevance of the agenda items, especially those addressing the Pacific island developing countries and the preparation for the Rio+20 summit.

Delegates were asked what could have increased the level of their participation, and among the suggestions raised were: better coordination between ESCAP and

permanent missions could enable high-level participation, especially from higher ranking officials.



Type and Number of entities attendance at the 68th session of the Commission.

III. Ownership and Participation

The responses received regarding the sense of ownership and level of participation at the Commission session were positive. The majority responded that the Commission session was owned and driven by member States to a good extent. A large majority indicated that the benefits of their attendance justified the related costs to a good or great extent.

The majority of respondents agreed that the number of Committees of the Whole (parallel sessions), allowed all delegations to participate fully.

The majority of respondents indicated that the overall outcome of the deliberations was positive and was a result of a collaborative effort by member States. They also indicated that the draft reports accurately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Commission and the secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session.

Overall relevance					
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)
a. The Commission is a key intergovernmental forum and the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region to consider issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.	17(74%)	6(26%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The session contributed to the achievement of the Commission's mandate to serve as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region.	14(61%)	8(35%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The Commission is achieving synergies and building effective partnerships with other relevant intergovernmental and international (including UN system) organizations at the regional and subregional levels.	14(61%)	7(30%)	2(9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The theme for the sixty-eighth Commission session: "Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific" reflects the current needs and priorities of the region in general, and my country/territory in particular.	15(65%)	6(26%)	2(9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

IV. Overall relevance and outcomes

The feed-back indicated that participants found the Commission session a relevant mechanism for the consideration of issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the region and the 68th session to have achieved a satisfactory outcome.

The vast majority of respondents agreed to a great extent that the Commission session was a key intergovernmental forum and the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region for considering issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the region.

Over half (61%) of the respondents agreed that the session contributed to a great extent to the achievement of the Commission's mandate to serve as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region. Respondents also agreed that the Commission was achieving synergies and building effective partnerships with other intergovernmental and international organizations at the regional and subregional levels.

The theme topic chosen for the 68th session of the Commission, "Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific", was seen by the majority to have reflected the current needs and priorities of the region to a great extent.

Outcomes of the Senior Officials segment (17-19 May 2012)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the Senior Officials segment?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	N/A
a. The deliberations were focused and effective at identifying the key emerging issues that merit policy attention in the region.	17(74%)	5(22%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4%)
b. The deliberations were effective at discussing progress achieved and gaps requiring priority attention with regard to the implementation of Commission resolutions and decisions.	17(74%)	5(22%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4%)
c. The deliberations were effective at deciding on the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies.	13(57%)	7(30%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	1(4%)	1(4%)
d. The deliberations were effective at providing guidance to the work of the secretariat, in particular the draft programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015.	14(61%)	8(35%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4%)
e. The Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries was successful in highlighting the priority concerns of these countries and identifying measures to address these concerns through regional cooperation.	14(61%)	7(30%)	1(4%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

a. Outcomes of the Senior Officials segment

The responses regarding the outcomes of the Senior Officials segment demonstrated that it is viewed by respondents as an effective mechanism for discussing issues of importance to the region.

The majority responded that the deliberations during the Senior Officials segment were focused and effective to a great or good extent at identifying key socio-economic issues affecting the region.

A majority also indicated that the session was successful to a great or good extent in reflecting the key outcomes of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission.

More than half of the respondents indicated that the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries was successful to a great or good extent in highlighting priority concerns of these countries and identifying measures to address those concerns through regional cooperation.

Outcomes of the Ministerial segment (21-23 May 2012)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the Ministerial segment?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	N/A
a. The deliberations were focused and effective at generating policy options for addressing key socio-economic issues affecting the region.	14(61%)	6(26%)	2(9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4%)
b. The deliberations were effective in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socio-economic issues affecting the region.	13(57%)	8(35%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4%)
c. The resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission.	15(65%)	6(26%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4%)

b. Outcomes of the Ministerial segment

The views on the outcomes of the Ministerial segment were positive.

The majority responded that the deliberations were focused and effective to a good or great extent at generating policy options for addressing key socio-economic issues affecting the region. The responses regarding the deliberations on highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socio-economic issues affecting the region were even more positive.

The majority responded that the resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission.

Organization and servicing by the secretariat

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)	N/A
a. Sufficient time was allocated to agenda items during the session.	10(43%)	7(30%)	4(17%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	1(4%)
b. The servicing by the secretariat facilitated effective outcomes.	13(57%)	9(39%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The organization of work between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session (ACPR, Committees, Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions (IWGDR), communication with the secretariat, etc.).	13(57%)	10(43%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

d. The communication between the secretariat and member States between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session.	14(61%)	8(35%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for enabling interactive discussions .	16(70%)	6(26%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4%)	0(0%)
f. The conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for reaching consensus .	13(57%)	8(35%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	1(4%)	0(0%)
g. The submission of draft resolutions by member States before the commencement of the Commission session allowed sufficient time for review by members and associate members of the Commission.	7(30%)	9(39%)	4(17%)	1(4%)	1(4%)	1(1%)
h. Pre-session servicing by the secretariat through the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions related to preparation and review of the draft resolutions for tabling provided a useful basis for decision-making during the Commission session.	12(52%)	9(39%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(1%)

V. Organizational aspects

The responses on the organizational aspects of the Commission session demonstrated overall that the secretariat effectively and efficiently serviced the 68th session of the Commission.

a. Organization and servicing by the secretariat

A majority of respondents agreed that sufficient time was allocated to agenda items during the session, and that the servicing by the secretariat facilitated effective outcomes.

The majority was also positive in their feedback on the organization of work in-between sessions, the responses indicated that there was good communication between member States and the secretariat in-between Commission sessions which contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission, and the submission of draft resolutions by member States before the commencement of the Commission session allowed sufficient time for review by members and associate members of the Commission.

Documents					
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	To a great extent (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Not at all (5)
a. The pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda.	16(70%)	6(26%)	0(0%)	1(4%)	0(0%)
b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	12(52%)	7(30%)	3(13%)	0(0%)	1(1%)
c. The posting of documents through the ESCAP website facilitated my delegations review.	16(70%)	5(22%)	2(9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

b. Documents

The views on documentation for the Commission session were positive. The majority responded that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda, the pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner and that the posting of documents through the ESCAP website facilitated review by delegations to a good or great extent.

VI. Most and least successful feature

The questionnaire provided space for respondents to comment on the most and least successful features of the Commission session.

The Ministerial Roundtable, the High-level Panel and the Working Group on Draft Resolutions received the highest number of comments as the most successful features of the Commission session. Also, some delegations expressed their appreciation of ESCAP's flagship publication: Economic and Social Survey and the administrative support of the secretariat.

A number of least favorite features of the 68th session were cited: some sessions were time management, and lack of consensus on draft resolution of Rio+20.

VII. Conclusion and additional comments

This assessment demonstrates that the 68th session of the Commission successfully attracted high and wide representation and was conducted efficiently, enabling participants to discuss and negotiate issues of importance for the Region. Member States expressed general satisfaction with the preparations for, servicing and outcome of the 68th session and continue to consider the Commission an important regional body for discussing issues of regional and global importance.

Additional comments by respondents indicate a number of issues that could be improved or addressed in order to make deliberations of the Commission even more effective in the future:

- 1) Timely distribution of documents and other information to enable consideration by governments prior to the session;
- 2) Earlier of preparations of theme topic and adoption of draft resolutions;

Annex I

Members State participants

	Country	No. of participants		Country	No. of participants
1	Afghanistan	1	33	Palau	1
2	Armenia*	-	34	Papua New Guinea	13
3	Australia	3	35	Philippines	9
4	Azerbaijan*	-	36	Rep. of Korea	18
5	Bangladesh	8	37	Russian Federation	12
6	Bhutan	2	38	Samoa	2
7	Brunei Darussalam	6	39	Singapore	3
8	Cambodia	9	40	Solomon Islands	1
9	China	8	41	Sri Lanka	7
10	DPRK	4	42	Tajikistan*	-
11	Fiji	5	43	Thailand	116
12	France	2	44	Timor-Leste	3
13	Georgia*	-	45	Tonga	2
14	India	9	46	Turkey	2
15	Indonesia	15	47	Turkmenistan*	-
16	Islamic Rep. of Iran	12	48	Tuvalu	1
17	Japan	11	49	UK	1
18	Kazakhstan	6	50	USA	5
19	Kiribati	2	51	Uzbekistan	3
20	Kyrgyzstan*	-	52	Vanuatu	3
21	Lao PDR	10	53	Viet Nam	6
22	Malaysia	5			
23	Maldives	1		Associate members	
24	Marshall Island	3	54	American Samoa*	-
25	Micronesia	1	55	Cook Islands*	-
26	Mongolia	6	56	French Polynesia*	-
27	Myanmar	4	57	Guam*	-
28	Nauru	2	58	Hong Kong, China	5
29	Nepal	4	59	Macao, China	6
30	Netherlands*	-	60	New Caledonia*	-
31	New Zealand*	-	61	Niue*	-
32	Pakistan	4	62	Northern Mariana Islands*	-
		143			219
Total no. of member State participants			362		

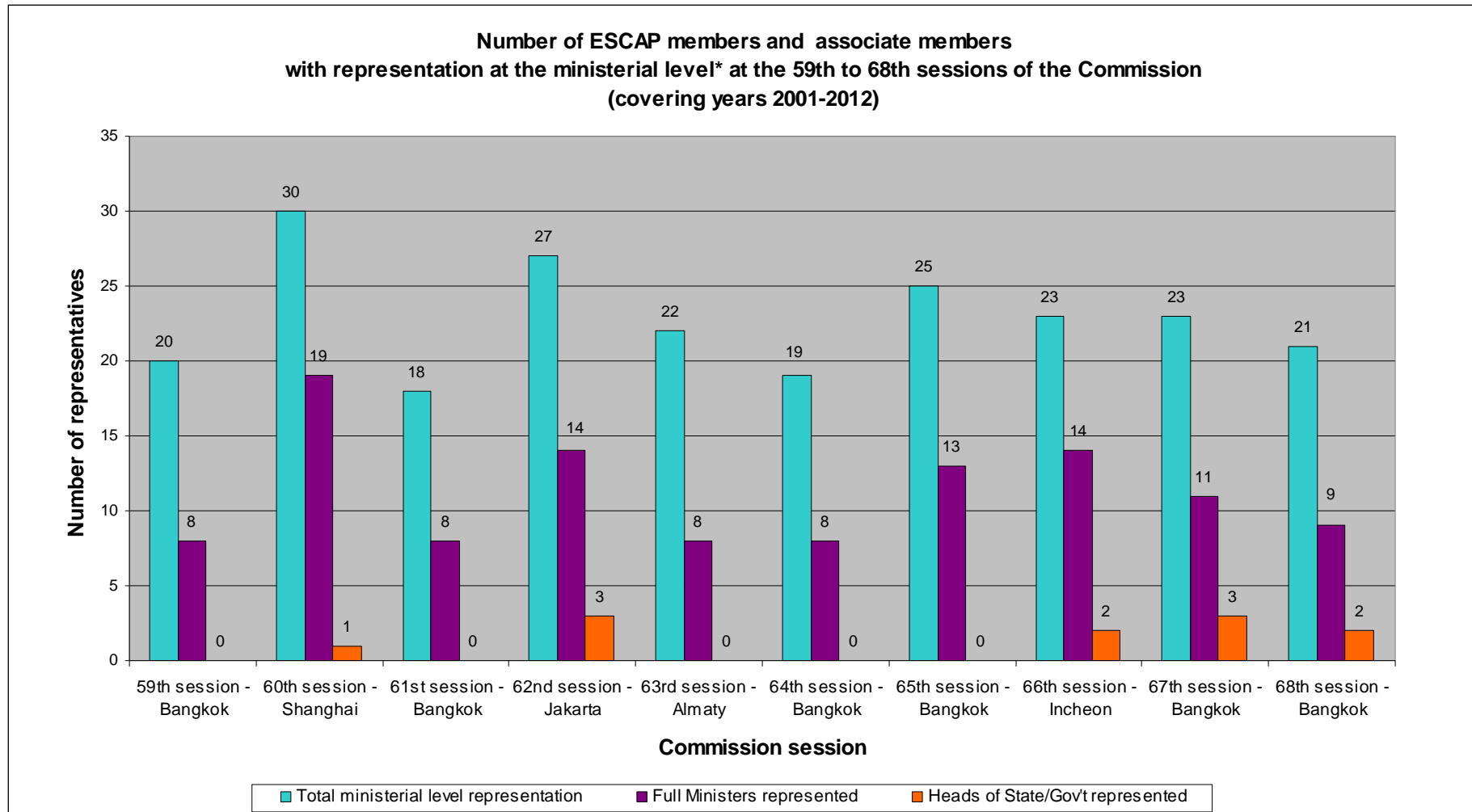
* Countries did not attend

Annex II

Non-member State participants

		No. of participants			No. of participants
	Other States			Intergovernmental Organizations	
1	Egypt	2	28	APCC	1
2	Czech Republic	1	29	ADB	1
3	Germany	2	30	CICA	1
4	Morocco	1	31	CCOP	2
5	South Africa	1	32	IOM	1
		7	33	IPC	1
			34	PIFS	2
	United Nations Secretariat				9
6	RCNYO	1			
		1		Non-Governmental Organizations	
			35	AFPPD	1
	United Nations Bodies		36	IPPF	1
7	ITC	1	37	ITUC	1
8	UNAIDS	2	38	NCWT	3
9	UNICEF	1	39	CONGO	2
10	UNCCD	2	40	WAY	1
11	UNDP	1	41	WVF	2
12	UN WOMEN	1	42	BIC	2
13	UNEP	2	43	DPI/AP	20
14	UNESCO	1	44	LDC WATCH	3
15	UN-HABITAT	1	45	PPSEAWA	9
16	UNISDR	5	46	WASME	1
17	UNOCHA	3			46
18	UNFPA	2			
		22		Other Entities	
			47	APCD	6
	Specialized Agencies				6
19	FAO	3			
20	ITU	1			
21	UNIDO	1			
22	UPU	2			
23	WHO	1			
24	WMO	2			
		10	Total no. of non-member State participants		101

Annex III



*Includes Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Deputy-Ministers, Assistant-Ministers or their equivalents.

Annex IV
Questionnaire Comments
[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]

What could have been done to improve the overall relevance and outcome(s) of the Commission session?

- Limit time that member States + NGO's have for intervention statements.
- Achievable, limited targets could have been set.
- Speak it, support it and implement it.
- More attendance and representative by member States.
- Could have involved other international organizations that operate in Asia-Pacific countries in this event to better coordinate future economic & social activities and to avoid overlapping works.
- Ensure there is follow up on the outcomes with member countries.

What could have been done to improve the Senior Officials segment of the Commission session?

- Tighter time management to allow sufficient time for more participants to make statements/interventions.
- On day 2, simultaneous consideration of reports in COW 1 and COW 2 as well as meeting of WGDR is not optimal draw participation point of view and needs to be staggered.
- None, situation is good.
- Some of the important issues regarding transport (e.g., sea and air links) does not reflect the needs of the islands countries.

What could have been done to improve the Ministerial segment of the Commission session?

- Maybe allowing 5 minutes for country statements (instead of 7).
- More time may be allocated to the Roundtable Discussion in the first day of the segment.
- Noting much - except asking speakers to stick to the time given.
- More time to allow action from delegates.

What could have been done to improve the organization and servicing of the Commissions session?

- Organisation this year was solid
- Resolutions should be submitted a month in advance.
- The participants should have been well briefed before the event taken place.

What motivated your Government to designate the level of your delegation to participate in the Commission session?

- A number of factors including travel cost, need for specialty/high level attendance and capacity of Bangkok embassy to attend and represent appropriately.
- Foreign Secretary and acting foreign Minister was designated to lead the delegation. But due to other engagement, could not attend and Embassy was directed to participate.
- To set benefit from the discussion.
- The designated Minister was unfortunately otherwise engaged elsewhere.
- The Director of Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore is responsible for enhancing the relations with the ASEAN countries.
- Importance attached to ESCAP.
- The need for promoting an Asian vision for enhancing cooperation and coordination at the regional level to deal with global challenges, especially the current global financial crisis.
- The Commission is a key intergovernmental forum and the most representative body in the region.
- Recognition by the Government of the important role of ESCAP in discussing economic and social development issues of the region and delivering useful policy recommendations, timeliness and importance of the theme topic, good relations and cooperation with ESCAP, including in the area of LLDC's.
- Motivation was the importance of the meeting as well as the importance of the issue to the country's overall economic development.
- Support, understanding, cooperation by ESCAP.
- Being the member of ESCAP and our organization is responsible for the socio-economic development of the country has motivated our delegation to participate in the session.
- Sri Lanka appreciates the efforts of ESCAP to promote socio-economic development in the region and looking forward to further strengthen the partnership with ESCAP.
- Not sure – we were not well brief on this issue.
- To keep up consistency and to keep abreast with issues discussed for Asia-Pacific!
- The discussion on Pacific special case for the Rio+ 20 Summit.

Is there anything that could have been done to encourage higher (rank) and wider (intersectoral) representation from your delegation at the Commission session?

- Outcomes that require attendance special unity.
- Some more time could be given for the ministerial discussions.
- Wider and more beneficial cooperation with ESCAP.
- Not in this 68th session.

- This is the highest level that could be represented.
- ESCAP has encouraged participation at the highest level possible; however, participation on sessions is also dependent on some other factors such as previously scheduled or urgent meetings of equal importance.
- Does not arise. Sri Lanka is well represented.
- It could have been a high level communication with my government with full briefing on the issues that concern my country & other countries.

What was the most successful feature of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission?

- The theme study
- Ministerial roundtable on ‘Enhanced Regional Economic Interaction in Asia-Pacific’.
- High Level Panel discussion on the Theme Topic and substantive discussions on draft resolutions.
- The Ministerial Roundtable on the theme of the 68th session.
- Provide an effective platform for exchange of ideas and regional collaborations among member States.
- The developmental and connectivity agendas.
- We believe policy dialogues and panel discussions, as well as some of the draft resolutions have been some of the successful features of this meeting of the Commission.
- HLP on the Asia-pacific Economic and Social Survey.
- The issue deliberation and recommendation.
- Policy recommendations and suggestions by secretariat under the theme study were interesting. Economic and Social Survey was comprehensive, informative and highly useful.
- High level forum.
- Well articulated documents related the current global and the regional issues regarding socio-economic development.
- The high level panel discussion where DPM Kittirat was keynote speaker.
- High-level Panel on “Steering inclusive development amidst global turbulence and volatility” (session held on 22 May 2012).
- All the countries are agreed on the issues that raised in this event.
- Roundtable meetings.
- Regional integration and Rio+ 20 Submit.

What was the least successful feature of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission?

- Mostly successful.
- Perhaps the 'Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries'. There was disappointing lack of comments from members outside of PSIDs.
- The pointless debate on the Seoul outcome document
- It was beyond the control of the secretariat but it would have been helpful if the speakers list for the country statement on May 21 could have been made available sooner.
- The implementation plan for the issues and strategy address.
- Lack of consensus on the resolution on sustainable development (Rio+20).
- Time management.
- Discussion of the draft resolution of Rio+ 20 and adoption of the draft report of the Commission on environment cooperation.

Please provide any additional comments you may have on the sixty-eighth session of the Commission and any suggestions for the improvement of the future sessions.

- Any improvement, possible further, by ESCAP would be most welcomed. The current formula is already highly unbelievable and excellent.
- Since time for break is short, place for having snack should be more than one in order to avoid a long queue line. During the break of Ministerial Segment, there should be specific big room for Minister, senior ones for meeting and talking during the break. Chair should be equipped with much more power to decide with minor change of wording which is not so necessary, but due to political interest of each state behind.
- We wish to thank the ESCAP Secretariat for an exceptional and successful commencing of the 68th session of the Commission.
- 1. Punctually 2. distribute of papers at earlier stage before the meeting convene.
- Motivation to participate all the delegates through out programme felt necessary.
- On IWGDR, it would be appreciated if the draft resolutions are received earlier thus allowing more time for consultations with the Capital. In the delivery of country statements, it would be better had the timer been placed in an area where the speakers can see them. This would make them more conscious of their time allocation for the delivery of their message.
- The theme study must be submitted for consideration of the Commission in advance in accordance with the rule of the procedure of ESCAP.
- On the transport issue – it could have been better to include air and sea transports to reflect the needs of the island countries.

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