

**ASSESSMENT OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

Bangkok, Thailand
20-22 November 2012

Summary Assessment

The third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 20-22 November 2012. A questionnaire was distributed towards the end of the session to obtain feedback from participants on its relevance, effectiveness and quality, with a view to enabling the secretariat to improve on its preparations for and servicing of future sessions. The response rate to the questionnaire was relatively low with 9 of 25 (36%) participating delegations responding.

The present assessment was conducted on the basis of the feedback 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 attended by 40.3% (N=25/62) of ESCAP members and associate members.

Almost half of delegations were headed by officials at the senior, albeit not ministerial level from the respective Capital (68%, N=17/25), whereas the remaining 32% (N=8/25) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok.

One delegation suggested that higher and wider representation from their Capital at the Committee sessions could be encouraged by providing the tentative programme earlier in advance of the Committee session.

II. Ownership

The sense of ownership by participants of the Committee was strong, with the majority of respondents indicating that the Committee session was owned and driven by member States (88%, N=8/9), that the overall outcome of the deliberations was a result of a collaborative effort (88%, N=8/9), and that the draft report adequately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee (100%, N=9/9). Further, all respondents indicated that the secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session (100%, N=9/9).

III. Relevance

The feedback indicates that participants tended to see the Committee on Information and Communications Technology as a relevant mechanism for discussing information and communications technology development in the region. All respondents indicated that the agenda items of the Committee were timely and relevant to issues and trends regarding Information and Communications Technology development in the Asian and Pacific region (100%, N=9/9), and reflected the needs and priorities of their countries (100%, N=9/9). 88% (N=8/9) of respondents indicated that the benefits of their delegation's attendance justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).

The most relevant agenda items for the delegations in attendance included (in order): (1) Agenda item 4, Building regional connectivity for sustainable development: the creation of a seamless regional information space (mentioned by 44% of respondents); (2) Agenda item 7, Regional capacity-building on information and communications technology for development (mentioned by 33% of respondents); (3a) Agenda item 5, Technological innovations and knowledge-networked societies: new sources of sustainable and inclusive development (mentioned by 22% of respondents); (3b) Agenda item 6, Measuring progress: targets and information and communications technology indicators of the World Summit on the Information Society (also mentioned by 22% of respondents); and Agenda item 8, Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme (mentioned by 11% of respondents).

IV. Efficiency

The feedback indicates that member States were satisfied with the efficiency of organization and conduct of the Committee session. A majority of respondents agreed that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages (77%, N=7/9), were issued in a timely manner (77%, N=7/9), that the Committee used the time provided efficiently (100%, N=9/9), and that the conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient (100%, N=9/9). Further, a majority of respondents indicated that the organization of work prior to/in-between Committee sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Committee (88%, N=8/9).

V. Outcomes in light of ESCAP resolution 64/1

The majority of respondents agreed that the third session of the 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, including: to review and analyze regional trends (100%, N=9/9), identify priorities and emerging issues (88%, N=8/9), promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (77%, N=7/9), and promote a collaborative approach to address development challenges at the regional and sub regional levels (66%, N=6/9). Overall the majority of respondents felt that the Committee was able to fulfill its terms of reference to a reasonable extent.

The qualitative analysis of the session documentation concurred with the results of the questionnaire: The Committee session saw the need for regional cooperation, and specific relevant mechanisms, highlighted. Note was taken of the international efforts to provide timely, relevant and accurate data to inform and guide policymaking on ICT, as well as the growing availability of data for the core list of ICT indicators. A dedicated briefing informed the Committee of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) programmes, that they were being implemented through an inclusive and participatory approach involving strategic collaboration with partners, and that they were being rapidly adopted and integrated into national capacity-building frameworks. Finally, the delegations of Sri Lanka and the Philippines informed the Committee of their intention to co-sponsor a draft resolution on ICT, calling for a strengthened role of ICT policy in achieving inclusive and sustainable development in the region, and for the facilitation of integrated e-development programmes in the region.

VI. Most and least successful

One respondent indicated that all issues raised in the session were successful, whereas other respondents specifically highlighted agenda items 4 (building regional connectivity for sustainable development: the creation of a seamless regional information space), 5 (technological innovations and knowledge-networked societies: new sources of sustainable and inclusive development) and 8 (consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme).

Further, the experience and knowledge exchange with other members was highlighted as a successful feature of the Committee.

VII. Conclusion

In general, those participants of the third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied with the ownership, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Committee. Given the low response rate of 36% (9 of 25 delegations responding), the findings and conclusions drawn in the present assessment cannot be generalized to all participating delegations and need to be treated accordingly.

* * * * *

Annex I
Questionnaire results

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 information and communications technology development in the Asian and Pacific region. | 5(56%) | 4(44%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| b. The agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of my country. | 2(22%) | 7(78%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| c. The benefits of my delegation's attendance justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office). | 3(33%) | 5(56%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |

Organization

| 2. 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. | 3(33%) | 4(44%) | 2(22%) | 0 | 0 |
| b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner. | 4(44%) | 3(33%) | 2(22%) | 0 | 0 |
| c. The Committee used efficiently the time available for discussions. | 3(33%) | 6(67%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| d. The conference services provided by the secretariat were efficient. | 3(33%) | 6(67%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| e. The organization of work prior to/in between Committee sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Committee. | 3(33%) | 5(56%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |

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) |
|--|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| a. Agenda item 4, Building regional connectivity for sustainable development: the creation of a seamless regional information space <i>Expected outcome: Member States have considered opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate progress towards an information superhighway that would serve as an anchor for the creation of a seamless information space across the region.</i> | 2(22%) | 6(67%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |

| 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) |
|---|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| <p>b. Agenda item 5, Technological innovations and knowledge-networked societies: new sources of sustainable and inclusive development</p> <p><i>Expected outcome: Member States are informed of the evidence from the region of how recent ICT developments, such as the Internet of Things, open source software and location-specific information, promote sustainable development and e-resilience. Member States also shared country experiences and propose policy actions and regional cooperation measures that may promote sustainable development and build resilience.</i></p> | 1(11%) | 8(89%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <p>c. Agenda item 6, Measuring progress: targets and information and communications technology indicators of the World Summit on the Information Society</p> <p><i>Expected outcome: Member States reviewed and discussed issues raised in the document in view of the rapid technological developments and the growing statistical needs of the region in this area.</i></p> | 2(22%) | 5(56%) | 2(22%) | 0 | 0 |
| <p>d. Agenda item 7, Regional capacity-building on information and communications technology for development</p> <p><i>Expected outcome: Member States are informed of the programmes and activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) related to building human and institutional capacity in using ICT for socioeconomic development.</i></p> | 3(33%) | 5(56%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |
| <p>e. Agenda item 8, Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme</p> <p><i>Expected outcome: Member States provided guidance to the secretariat on the focus of the short-and long-term work in the area of ICT, taking into account the programme direction and priorities outlined in the strategic framework for 2012-2013. Member States also provided guidance to enable full integration of the outcome of the deliberations into the planning of the strategic framework and programme of work for 2014-2015.</i></p> | 1(11%) | 7(78%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |
| <p>f. Agenda item 9, Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session</p> <p><i>Expected outcome: Member States considered possible draft resolutions on priority issues relating to ICT development for consideration by the Commission at its sixty-ninth session.</i></p> | 3(33%) | 6(67%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <p>g. Agenda item 10, Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Committee</p> <p><i>Expected outcome: Member States are informed of the tentative dates, venue and provisional agenda of the fourth session of the Committee in 2014.</i></p> | 3(33%) | 6(67%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <p>h. Agenda item 11, Other matters</p> <p><i>Expected outcome: Member States are informed and decide on any other concerns related to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology</i></p> | 2(22%) | 5(56%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |

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) | Not at all (5) |
|---|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| a. Review and analyze regional trends. | 3(33%) | 5(56%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| b. Identify priorities and emerging issues, particularly those with implications for the work of the secretariat. | 4(44%) | 4(44%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |
| c. Promote dialogue on regional and subregional approaches and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes. | 4(44%) | 3(33%) | 2(22%) | 0 | 0 |
| d. Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels. | 3(33%) | 3(33%) | 3(33%) | 0 | 0 |

Participation

| 7. To what extent do you feel that... | To a great extent (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | Not at all (5) |
|--|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| a. the Committee session was owned and driven by member States? | 4(44%) | 4(44%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |
| b. the overall outcome of the deliberations is a result of a collaborative effort by members of the Committee? | 3(33%) | 5(56%) | 1(11%) | 0 | 0 |
| c. the draft report adequately reflects the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Committee? | 5(56%) | 4(44%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| d. the secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session? | 4(44%) | 5(56%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 3(33%) | mainly from the Capital | |
| 0 | mainly from the Capital - Ministry of Foreign Affairs | |
| 2(22%) | mainly by representatives in Bangkok (Embassy) | |
| 3(33%) | a combination of the above | |
| 1(11%) | other: | |

Annex II

Questionnaire comments

[Verbatim from the completed questionnaires]

What was the most relevant agenda item for your delegation?

- Agenda item 6 and 7.
- Agenda item 4: Building regional connectivity for sustainable development.
- Agenda item 5, 7 and 8.
- Regional connectivity, and issue of sustainable development.
- Item 4, 5 and 7.
- Item 4 and 6.

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

- Addressed effective enough.

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

- The tentative programme could have been available well in advance of the Committee session.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications; and the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- My government was widely represented.

What was the most successful feature of the Committee session?

- All the issues raised in the session.
- The panelists' presentations under agenda items 4 and 5 are informative and insightful.
- Experience exchange; get more experience from; knowledge of world wide.
- Deliberation on future programme focus.

What was the least successful feature of the Committee session?

- Because the lighting was not adjusted, the presentations on the screen were somewhat difficult to see.
- The cooperation.
- Consideration of the draft Resolution – it was not properly presented by the sponsor country.

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:

- It is not related solely to the Committee session, but the temperature at the Conference room 3 is usually set at too low to feel comfortable.
- 1. set up the member participants; 2. take time to prepare to the Committee; and 3. fund to developing country.
- Since it was the first session of the Committee after the midterm review, the agenda was focused purely on ICT issues (no DRR component). It turned out to be profound and further-action oriented with a number of good new initiatives.

.....

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 |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Agenda item 4, Building regional connectivity for sustainable development: the creation of a seamless regional information space</p> | <p>Expected Outcome: Member States have considered opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate progress towards an information superhighway that would serve as an anchor for the creation of a seamless information space across the region.</p> | <p>88% (8/9) agree to a great or good extent</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to promote regional cooperation, creating equal access to cutting-edge network resources and stimulating the development of research networks in developing countries was highlighted, along with several regional cooperation mechanisms, including the Greater Mekong Subregion information superhighway network. • The Committee noted that bandwidth prices in the Asian and Pacific region were, on average, up to six times higher than those in Europe and North America, and that one way of addressing that disparity was to develop an open access mesh network. It was also mentioned that terrestrial cables could be laid alongside Asian Highway or Trans-Asian Railway routes, and that enhancing intra- and interregional ICT connectivity through the use of optical fibre was vital to building regional connectivity. |
| <p>Agenda item 5, Technological innovations and knowledge-networked societies: new sources of sustainable and inclusive development</p> | <p>Expected Outcome: Member States are informed of the evidence from the region of how recent ICT developments, such as the Internet of Things, open source software and location-specific information, promote sustainable development and e-resilience. Member States also shared country experiences and propose policy actions and</p> | <p>100% (9/9) agree to a great or good extent</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee was informed that e-content services were bringing numerous economic and social benefits that addressed inequalities in education, employment and health. • The growing influence of initiatives such as the Internet of Things, Big Data, Open Data, cloud computing, high-value manufacturing and the convergence of media and telecommunications, was noted, and that those technological innovations were contributing to sustainable development by reducing |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | regional cooperation measures that may promote sustainable development and build resilience. | | <p>material use and other efficiencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view was expressed that significant progress had been achieved in bringing ICT to poor communities across the Asian and Pacific region, and that ICT and cross-border collaboration was vitally relevant to the economic integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) planned for 2015. The Committee was provided with a preview of the <i>Information Economy Report 2012</i>, which was scheduled to be launched on 28 November 2012. |
| Agenda item 6, Measuring progress: targets and information and communications technology indicators of the World Summit on the Information Society | Expected Outcome: Member States reviewed and discussed issues raised in the document in view of the rapid technological developments and the growing statistical needs of the region in this area. | 77% (7/9) agree to a great or good extent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing the important role played by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, the Committee took note of the international efforts to provide timely, relevant and accurate data to inform and guide policymaking on ICT, as well as the growing availability of data for the core list of ICT indicators. Such measurement was deemed even more crucial due to the current rapid evolutions made in the field of ICT. |
| Agenda item 7, Regional capacity-building on information and communications technology for development | Expected Outcome: Member States are informed of the programmes and activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) related to building human and institutional capacity in using ICT for socioeconomic development. | 88% (8/9) agree to a great or good extent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the APCICT report on its activities during the period 2010 to 2012 (E/ESCAP/CICT(3)/4), the Committee was briefed on the progress made by APCICT as part of its flagship capacity-building programme for policymakers entitled the “Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders” (Academy) as well as its programme for capacity-building among youth entitled “Turning Today’s Youth into Tomorrow’s Leaders”. The Committee was informed that the programmes were being implemented through an inclusive and participatory approach involving strategic collaboration with partners, and that they were being |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| | | | <p>rapidly adopted and integrated into national capacity-building frameworks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee benefited from a panel-discussion which highlighted areas in which further work was required, and discussed ways to facilitate effective knowledge-sharing. |
| <p>Agenda item 8, Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme</p> | <p>Expected Outcome: Member States provided guidance to the secretariat on the focus of the short-and long-term work in the area of ICT, taking into account the programme direction and priorities outlined in the strategic framework for 2012-2013. Member States also provided guidance to enable full integration of the outcome of the deliberations into the planning of the strategic framework and programme of work for 2014-2015.</p> | <p>88% (8/9) agree to a great or good extent</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The secretariat presented an overview of the strategic framework for the bienniums 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 of the subprogramme on information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction, which served as basis for developing the related programme of work. |
| <p>Agenda item 9, Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session</p> | <p>Expected Outcome: Member States considered possible draft resolutions on priority issues relating to ICT development for consideration by the Commission at its sixty-ninth session.</p> | <p>100% (9/9) agree to a great or good extent</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delegations of Sri Lanka and the Philippines informed the Committee of their intention to co-sponsor, at the sixty-ninth session of the Commission, a draft resolution on ICT, calling for a strengthened role of ICT policy in achieving inclusive and sustainable development in the region, and for the facilitation of integrated e-development programmes in the region. The delegations of Nepal, the Republic of Korea and Timor-Leste expressed support for the proposal. |
| <p>Agenda item 10, Dates, venue and provisional</p> | <p>Expected Outcome: Member States are informed of the tentative dates, venue and</p> | <p>100% (9/9) agree to a great or good extent</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee agreed that its next session would be held in Bangkok during the fourth quarter of 2014. |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| agenda for the fourth session of the Committee | provisional agenda of the fourth session of the Committee in 2014. | | |
| Agenda item 11, Other matters | Expected Outcome: Member States are informed and decide on any other concerns related to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology | 77% (7/9) agree to a great or good extent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No other matters were discussed. |