

## Summary assessment

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### Third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

Bangkok  
27-29 November 2013

#### I. Introduction

The 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 27-29 November 2013.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee session was distributed to delegates of ESCAP members and associate members. The total number of completed individual questionnaires was 14. The overall response rate is therefore 17% (N=14/82).

This year, for the first time, and in line with the secretariat's efforts to reduce the use of paper and move towards paper smart meetings, an online version of the questionnaire was offered alongside the traditional paper version.

The main purpose of this assessment is to support the secretariat's ongoing efforts to improve its servicing of Committee sessions.

#### II. Attendance

The Committee session was attended by 34% (N=21/62) of ESCAP members and associate members, with a total number of 82 participants. The Committee session was also attended by 27 participants from other entities.

Almost a third of delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (62%, N=13/21) – one of which (5%) at ministerial level – whereas the remaining 38% (N=8/21) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok.

In comparison with previous years, attendance is slightly reduced. In 2009, the Committee saw the attendance of 48% of the members and associate members, a number which was reduced to 42% in 2011, and now to 34% in 2013.

### III. Relevance of the session

Respondents overwhelmingly felt that the Committee session was relevant to the needs of the region. As presented with the aggregate ratings<sup>1</sup> in Table 1, there was widespread agreement that the agenda items reflected the development trends and issues of the Asian and Pacific region (84), and also the needs and priorities of their respective countries (84).

There were two suggestions on how to improve the relevance of the Committee session to the needs and priorities of the Asian and Pacific region: Firstly, to incorporate more discussions on sustainable development issues, and secondly, to allocate time for bilateral talks with partners.

**Table 1**

EVALUATED STATEMENT	SCORE (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	84
The agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	84

### IV. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, as can be seen from Table 2, respondents found the session to be very effective in highlighting regional development trends and issues (82), identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region (80), promoting dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (83), and promoting a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels (82). Furthermore, the session documents were found to be of high quality, concise, and stating the issues clearly (80).

Two suggestions were made to improve the Committee session's effectiveness in achieving its mandate: firstly, that the Committee more actively strengthen the partnerships with other regional bodies, global platforms, and development agencies; and secondly, that it should meet more frequently.

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<sup>1</sup> The scores presented in this report are indices calculated according to the below formula, (actual value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses) / (maximum value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses). This allows transforming a raw variable, e. g.  $x$ , into a unit-free index between 0 and 1, and for the different indices to be added together.  $\min(x)$  and  $\max(x)$  are the lowest and highest values the variable  $x$  can attain, respectively.

$$x\text{-index} = \frac{x - \min(x)}{\max(x) - \min(x)}$$

**Table 2**

EVALUATED STATEMENT	SCORE (0-100)
The Committee session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	82
The Committee Session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	80
The Committee Session successfully promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches.	83
The Committee Session effectively promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	82
The session documents were of high quality, concise, and state the issues clearly.	80

#### **V. Efficiency of the organizational aspects of the session**

The efficiency of the organizational aspects of the Committee session was rated very positively. In particular, respondents felt that the secretariat's servicing of the session was very efficient and effective (86), that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session (84) were also very effective, and that the organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions contributed to the efficiency of the session (82).

The adequacy of the time available for discussion during the meetings was also rated very positively, but slightly less so (79).

It was suggested that the servicing of the session could have been improved by providing a copy of each country statement to the delegates.

EVALUATED STATEMENT	SCORE (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meetings was adequate.	79
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	86
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective.	84
The organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently.	82

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

### **a. Most successful features**

According to respondents, the highlights of this session of the Committee were: the opportunity to connect among stakeholders, and with experts, resource persons, development partners; the sharing of best practices and experiences of countries; the country interventions; the high-level panel discussions; and the background notes.

### **b. Least successful features**

Although the amount of time available for discussion was rated very positively overall (see section V), some participants clearly desired that more time be allocated: the main feature mentioned here was that it would have been valuable to have more time available for discussions and interventions.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegates felt that the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction was a success. Due to the relatively low questionnaire response rate, the findings need to be interpreted with caution, and cannot be generalized to the entire population of delegates attending this meeting.

To summarize the main trends highlighted above, the Committee session was overwhelmingly seen as relevant to the needs of the region, and effective in highlighting regional trends and issues, and promoting dialogue and collaboration. The efficiency of the session received highly positive feedback, particularly the servicing of the session by the secretariat. Furthermore, the opportunities provided for interaction were exceedingly popular among responding delegates, and there was a sense that future sessions might benefit from more time allocated to discussion and interventions.

**Annex I**  
Comments from the  
Information and Communications Technology  
and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

**General comments**

The 3rd session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction was well attended by representatives and experts from members States which also attended back-to-back expert group meetings on disaster risk reduction and space applications for disaster risk management, with a total number of 122 participants. The session was positively evaluated by participants.

**Attendance**

In addition to 21 members and associate members which were registered, government agencies from 6 other members and associate members also participated in and benefited from the high-level panel discussions held during the Committee session. Representatives and experts from a total of 27 members and associate members attended the session. The volatile security situation in Bangkok at the time of the Committee Session had negatively influenced the attendance of some members and associate members.

Delegates attending the Committee Session represented various ministries, including the ministries of planning and finance, national disaster management authorities, government agencies in charge of early warning and space agencies, which reflected the interest of member States to the work of ESCAP in mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development planning with a multisectoral approach and promoting regional cooperative mechanisms for disaster risk management.

**Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and most and least successful features**

The secretariat will take into account the suggestions of delegates to improve future sessions of the Committee. In regard to the suggestion to meet more frequently with a view to improve the Committee session's effectiveness in achieving its mandate, additional forum would be organized in between the regular sessions of the Committee which are held every other year according to the established Conference Structure of the Commission, to address emerging issues. Discussions on sustainable development issues, particularly those pertaining to disaster risk reduction in line with the post 2015 development agenda, would be incorporated in future sessions as also suggested.

**Conclusions**

The sessions of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction will continue addressing emerging issues, address priority needs and promote regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction and management relevant to the priorities of the region.