

Summary Assessment

Fourth session of the Committee on Transport

Bangkok
15-17 October 2014

I. Introduction

The 4th session of the Committee on Transport was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 15-17 October 2014.

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 submitted individual questionnaires was 22. The overall response rate is therefore 21% (N=22/105). The present assessment was prepared on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

In line with the secretariat's efforts to move towards paper smart meetings, an online version of the questionnaire was offered alongside the 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 48% (N=30/62) of all ESCAP members and associate members, with 105 individual participants. The Committee session was also attended by 24 participants from other entities, including other States, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

A majority of delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (73%, N=22/30), whereas the remaining 27% (N=8/30) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok.

In comparison with previous years, attendance increased considerably. In 2008, the Committee saw the attendance of 37% of the members and associate members, a number that slightly decreased to 32% in 2010, increased again to 40% in 2012, and to 48% in 2014.

Comments on what could have been done to encourage greater engagement from delegations at this meeting included the following (verbatim):

- Funding to participant from relevant agencies is an issue to LDCs, LLDCs. Need special contingency fund of ESCAP to support LLDCs.
- Prepare the meeting invitation in advance, if necessary ESCAP should clearly focus the participants from each member country as well.
- We usually been announced late. If the secretariat informs relevant experts before sending official letter to the embassies or member State, it can facilitate better engagement of well informed delegations.
- At the next session of the Committee on transport, there is needed to have each delegation to report the situation of development of Transport sector, especially Transport Facilitation issues.
- Business needs and market development, work study.
- For our country this meeting is very important to increase our capacity thinking.

III. Methodology

For each statement below, an index between 100 and 0 is given, whereby, at a value of 100 all respondents strongly agree with the statement, and, at a value of 0, all respondents strongly disagree. The formula¹ we have used is based on the same principles as the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index² (HDI). This allows the calculation of a unit-free index between 0 and 1 from all received responses for each statement. This enables indices to be added together as well as compared among each other.

IV. Relevance of the session

Respondents felt that the session was relevant to the needs of the region. As presented with the aggregate ratings in Table 1, there was high agreement among respondents that the agenda items reflected the development trends and issues of the Asian and Pacific region (84). Respondents also agreed that the agenda items addressed the needs and priorities of their respective countries (80).

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	84
The agenda items addressed the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	80

¹ Index = actual value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses / maximum value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses

² More can be found at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2013_en_technotes.pdf

Comments on how to improve the relevance of the Committee session to the needs and priorities of the Asia and Pacific region included (verbatim):

- I would like ESCAP to give more efforts on resilience to educate and increase understanding among people in the region.
- Have to improve to develop for water way. This is one of the alternative and priority of Asian and Pacific region.
- Transportation and all of its relevant issues are the main field of the Economic and Trade flows of this region must be considered as much as possible.
- First, the formation of the Technical Expert Group recommended that, not only have the government voice, but also attract participation of national experts.
- Now more awareness of the region was apparent. Participants were sharing their experiences.
- Of course through experience sharing from success stories in Asia-Pacific and other regions.
- There were a lot of useful discussions.
- Through constant interaction through ESCAP platforms.

V. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, as can be seen from Table 2, respondents found the session to have been very effective in identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region (86), in highlighting regional development trends and issues (84), in promoting dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (83), and in promoting a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels (80).

Furthermore, the session documents were found to be of high quality, concise, and stating the issues clearly (83).

The respondents also found the session relatively effective in addressing gender-related issues in the field of transport, but slightly less so (74).

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Committee session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	84
The Committee session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	86
The Committee session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches.	83
The Committee session effectively addressed gender-related issues in the field of transport.	74

The Committee session effectively promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	80
The session documents were of high quality, concise, and clearly state the issues.	83

Comments on how to improve the Committee session’s effectiveness in achieving its mandate included (verbatim):

- The joint session allowed for new perspectives, besides it will help in assessing the pros and cons of such initiatives, including its effectiveness.
- To allow countries to voluntarily enroll in the meeting of technical experts, their commitment to their international air tickets, you can make constructive comments.

VI. Efficiency of the session

The efficiency of the organizational aspects of the Committee session was rated positively, as shown in Table 3. In particular, respondents felt that the servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective (85). Respondents also indicated that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate, that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective, and that the organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (84).

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate.	84
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	85
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective.	84
The organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently.	84

Comments on how to improve the efficiency of the organizational and servicing aspects of the Committee session included (verbatim):

- If secretariat suggested some guidelines for preparing materials presenting by delegations, the objective of meeting will be well accomplished. For example, for railway meeting the guideline of documents worked as a framework.
- The conclusion of meetings is much more substantive.
- Already going well
- Have to improve

VII. Other comments

There were some comments on how the information and resources obtained at the Committee session can be used when they return to their workplace (verbatim):

- Conduct seminars for government and business, propose actions comments.
- To apply in regular work. To inform other agencies.
- Share with relevant agencies and adopt those ideas which will serve Bhutan.
- We will use it in preparation of speeches, presentations etc.
- I will summarize some of the more important topics and distribute it for relevant workmate, mostly expert of International organization field of transportation.
- I'll use the information and resources for references, because we are the new country. And this is the first time for us participated in this conference.
- We will pass on decisions arrived in the report of the Committee to Government of Pakistan for implementation.
- I wrote the report including conclusion and recommendations and provided for public access of the Ministry. The document for regional cooperation for railway facilitation has been distributed to the Railway department for study and use for further policy and planning.
- Somehow, I could bring some information (updating) to clarity and explain ESCAP related issues to my workplace.
- We note that the information and resources obtained are of great importance which will be used for improvement of our works in the future.
- We are going to prepare a detailed report using the information and resources obtain from this meeting and to be handed over to secretary to the ministry.
- Report to relevant Administration and work following the developments guidance for transport in the region, which was agreed at the Committee meeting.

According to respondents, the most successful aspects of the Committee session included (verbatim):

- Forward sustainable Transport for low carbon emission
- Joint conduct of the agenda item 3
- The meeting's preparation on meeting location, time, and etc.
- Transport facilitation and logistics development
- Widely regarded questions

- The most successful aspect of this meeting is who to think about the alternative way for transports in Asian and Pacific region.
- Green and sustainable transport is very useful. We can take the lesson to Bhutan. We can explore possibility to the knowledge and expertise from TD.
- Understand the views of various countries for the development of national policies for enterprise development to provide international consulting.
- Some of delegations presented optimum materials in Transportation. Another one was, covering all issues of Transportation during the explanations of ESCAP Authorities.

There were also some suggestions on aspects that could have been enhanced (verbatim):

- Attract Chinese scholars to participate, to share successful experience.
- Filed visit to MRT or BTS office in Thailand will be useful to participants from LLDCs.
- Making the meeting presentation and speeches (opening remarks) available to member States/delegations in time.
- Integration in management at the meeting according to its objective and think about engaging delegations to discussions.

VIII. Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegates felt that the 4th session of the Committee on Transport was successful. Respondent comments indicating how they intend to use the information and resources obtained at the Committee session upon their return to the workplace were particularly informative.

To summarize the main trends highlighted above, the session was overwhelmingly seen as relevant to the needs of the region, and effective at promoting dialogue and collaboration. The efficiency of the session received particularly positive feedback, especially the servicing of the session by the secretariat.