



Summary of delegations' assessments of the outcome of the 72nd session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific *

Bangkok
15-19 May 2016

Contents

- I. Introduction**
- II. Attendance**
- III. Ownership and participation**
- IV. Overall relevance and outcomes**
 - a. Outcomes of the Senior Officials segment
 - b. Outcomes of the Ministerial segment
- V. Organizational aspects**
 - a. Organization and servicing by the secretariat
 - b. Documents
- VI. Use of ESCAP recommendations and analytical work**
- VII. Most successful features**
- VIII. Conclusion and additional comments**

Annex I. Attendance of ESCAP member States at the 72nd session of the Commission
Annex II. Non-member State participants at the 72nd session of the Commission
Annex III. Ministerial level representation at the 63rd - 72nd sessions of the Commission
Annex IV. Questionnaire comments from respondents

* Prepared by the Strategy and Programme Management Division based on written feedback to a survey questionnaire provided to the government delegations who attended the 72nd session of the Commission.

Summary assessment of the outcome of the 72nd session of the Commission

I. Introduction

The 72nd session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok from 15-19 May 2016.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission session was distributed to delegations attending the session. In total 16 questionnaires were returned, with one questionnaire per delegation submitted. The overall response rate was therefore 33%. The present assessment was prepared on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

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 sessions of the Commission.

II. Attendance

The Commission session was attended by 77 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (in total 48 of 62), with 369 individual participants. The Commission session was also attended by 74 participants from other entities, including other States, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations, as described in Figure 1 (for further details see Annex I, II and III).

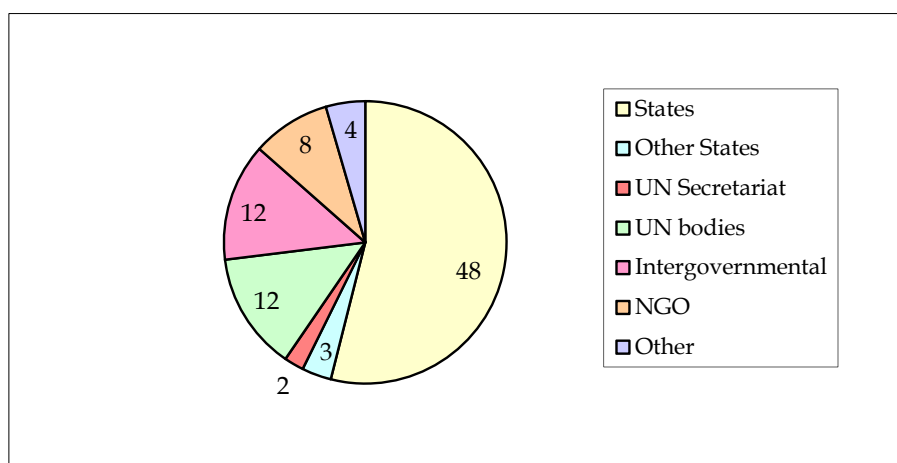


Figure 1: Type and number of entities at the 72nd session of the Commission

Seventeen governments were represented by ministerial level officials, of whom two were Heads of State and eight were full ministers. (see Annex III).

III. Ownership and participation

The responses received regarding the sense of ownership and the level of participation at the Commission session were generally positive.

A majority agreed that the Commission session was owned and driven by member States. A majority also agreed that the benefits of their attendance justified the related costs.

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

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The Commission session was owned and driven by member States.	6(37%)	9(56%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The benefits of my delegation's attendance at the session justified the costs (travel, time, opportunity cost of absence from the office).	4(25%)	11(69%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The overall outcome of the deliberations was positive and a result of a collaborative effort by member States.	5(31%)	8(50%)	3(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The draft reports accurately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Commission.	6(38%)	9(56%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session.	5(31%)	8(50%)	3(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

IV. Overall relevance and outcomes

In general, respondents saw the Commission session as a relevant mechanism for the consideration of issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the region, and the 72nd session as having achieved a satisfactory outcome.

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

All respondents agreed that the session contributed to the achievement of the Commission's mandate to serve as the main economic and social development centre of the UN system for the Asian and Pacific region.

Looking at the synergies and partnerships built by the Commission with other relevant intergovernmental and international organizations (including UN system) most participants viewed the Commission favourably and agreed it had a positive role.

The theme of the 72nd session of the Commission, “Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development”, was seen by almost all respondents to have reflected the current needs and priorities of the region.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (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.	12(75%)	4(25%)	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 UN system for the Asian and Pacific region.	8(50%)	8(50%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The Commission is achieving synergies and building effective partnerships with other relevant intergovernmental and international organizations (including UN system) at the regional and subregional levels.	3(20%)	10(67%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The theme topic “ Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development ” reflects the current needs and priorities of the region in general, and my country/territory in particular.	6(40%)	8(53%)	1(7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

a. Outcomes of the Senior Officials segment

Respondents generally viewed the Senior Officials segment as an effective mechanism for discussing issues of importance to the region.

A majority agreed that the deliberations during the Senior Officials segment were focused and effective at identifying key emerging issues affecting the region.

A majority also agreed that the deliberations were effective at providing guidance to the work of the secretariat, in particular the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019

Similarly, a majority agreed that the Special Body on LDC, LLDC and Pacific Island Developing Countries successfully highlighted priority concerns of these countries and identified measures to address those concerns through regional cooperation.

The respondents generally agreed that the deliberations were effective at discussing progress achieved and gaps requiring priority attention with regard to the implementation of Commission resolutions and decisions; and that the deliberations were effective at deciding on the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies.

Overall, while the responses were generally positive, some scope remains for further improving the perception of the effectiveness of the senior officials' segment (see Annex IV).

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the Senior Officials segment?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The deliberations were focused and effective at identifying the key emerging issues that merit policy attention in the region.	4(25%)	12(75%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The deliberations were effective at discussing progress achieved and gaps requiring priority attention with regard to the implementation of Commission resolutions and decisions.	3(19%)	11(69%)	2(12%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The deliberations were effective at deciding on the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies.	5(31%)	8(50%)	3(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The deliberations were effective at providing guidance to the work of the secretariat, in particular the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019.	4(25%)	11(69%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The Special Body on LDC, LLDC and Pacific Island Developing Countries was successful in highlighting the priority concerns of these countries and identifying measures for regional cooperation.	6(38%)	8(50%)	2(12%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

b. Outcomes of the Ministerial segment

The views on the outcomes of the Ministerial segment were positive. A majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the deliberations were effective both in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socioeconomic issues, and at generating policy options. Similarly, most also either agreed strongly or agreed that the resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the seventy-second session of the Commission.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the <u>Ministerial segment</u> ?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The deliberations were focused and effective at generating policy options for addressing key socioeconomic issues affecting the region.	7(44%)	7(44%)	2(12%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The deliberations were effective in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socioeconomic issues affecting the region.	7(44%)	8(50%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the seventy-second session of the Commission.	5(31%)	8(50%)	3(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

V. Organizational aspects

Overall, responses demonstrated that the secretariat effectively and efficiently serviced the 72nd session of the Commission, but that there were also areas for improvement.

a. Organization and servicing by the secretariat

While a majority of respondents agreed that sufficient time was allocated to agenda items during the session, some indicated this aspect could be improved.

Most respondents strongly agreed that the communication between member States and the secretariat in-between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session.

A majority of respondents were positive in their feedback on the organization of work between sessions, and either agreed or strongly agreed that the conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for enabling interactive discussion, and for reaching consensus.

A majority also agreed that the submission of draft resolutions by member States allowed sufficient time for review. Most respondents indicated that the pre-session servicing by the secretariat through the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions provided a useful basis for decision-making during the Commission session.

Positive feedback was also received regarding the servicing by the secretariat, in terms of enabling effective outcomes.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. Sufficient time was allocated to agenda items during the session.	5(31%)	9(56%)	1(6%)	1(6%)	0(0%)
b. The servicing by the secretariat facilitated effective outcomes.	4(25%)	11(69%)	1(6%)	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 etc.).	5(31%)	10(63%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. Communication between the secretariat and member States between sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission.	8(50%)	5(31%)	3(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The conduct of the meetings of the Working Group on Draft Resolutions was effective for enabling interactive discussions and reaching consensus.	6(38%)	7(43%)	3(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
f. 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.	1(7%)	12(80%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
g. Pre-session servicing by the secretariat through the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions provided a useful basis for decision-making during the Commission session.	5(33%)	9(60%)	1(7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

b. Documents

In general, respondents viewed the documentation for the Commission session positively. All respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda. A majority of respondents agreed that the pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.

Although, most delegations found that the availability of online documentation greatly facilitated their review of these documents prior to the session, some room for improvement was noted here.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Strongly disagree (5)
a. The pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda.	6(38%)	10(62%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	4(25%)	11(69%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The posting of documents through the ESCAP website facilitated my delegations review.	7(44%)	8(50%)	1(6%)	1(5%)	0(0%)

VI. Use of ESCAP recommendations and analytical work

A majority indicated that they will likely use any of the ESCAP recommendations and analytical work, presented at the 72nd Commission session, when engaging in policy and programme formulation at the national level.

	Very likely (5)	Likely (4)	Neutral (3)	Unlikely (2)	Very unlikely (1)
How likely is it that you will use any of the ESCAP recommendations and analytical work, presented at the 72 nd Commission session, when engaging in policy and programme formulation at the national level?	9(56%)	6(38%)	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

VII. Most successful features

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

The most successful features of the 72nd session of the Commission were noted as: the high level events, including the theme topic; the Ministerial Segment; and Working Group on Draft Resolutions, including the adoption of resolutions. For further details, please refer to Annex IV.

VIII. Conclusion and additional comments

This assessment demonstrates that the 72nd 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.

In conclusion, delegates expressed general satisfaction with the preparations for, servicing and outcome of the 72nd session, and continue to consider the Commission as an important regional body for discussing issues of regional and global importance.

Annex I

Attendance of ESCAP member States at the 72nd session of the Commission

	Country	No. of participants		Country	No. of participants
1	Afghanistan	3	33	Palau*	-
2	Armenia	1	34	Papua New Guinea	1
3	Australia	5	35	Philippines	10
4	Azerbaijan	6	36	Rep. of Korea	17
5	Bangladesh	6	37	Russian Federation	7
6	Bhutan	4	38	Samoa	1
7	Brunei Darussalam	2	39	Singapore	1
8	Cambodia	10	40	Solomon Islands	1
9	China	10	41	Sri Lanka	7
10	DPRK	4	42	Tajikistan	10
11	Fiji	9	43	Thailand	117
12	France	1	44	Timor-Leste	2
13	Georgia*	-	45	Tonga	1
14	India	8	46	Turkey	5
15	Indonesia	20	47	Turkmenistan	3
16	Islamic Rep. of Iran	6	48	Tuvalu	2
17	Japan	18	49	UK	1
18	Kazakhstan	5	50	USA	8
19	Kiribati	2	51	Uzbekistan	2
20	Kyrgyzstan*	-	52	Vanuatu	1
21	Lao PDR	11	53	Viet Nam	5
22	Malaysia	4			
23	Maldives*	-		Associate members	
24	Marshall Island	1	54	American Samoa*	-
25	Micronesia*	-	55	Cook Islands	1
26	Mongolia	9	56	French Polynesia*	-
27	Myanmar	2	57	Guam*	-
28	Nauru*	-	58	Hong Kong, China	2
29	Nepal	4	59	Macao, China	5
30	Netherlands*	-	60	New Caledonia*	-
31	New Zealand*	-	61	Niue*	-
32	Pakistan	8	62	Northern Mariana Islands*	-
			Total no. of member State participants : 369		

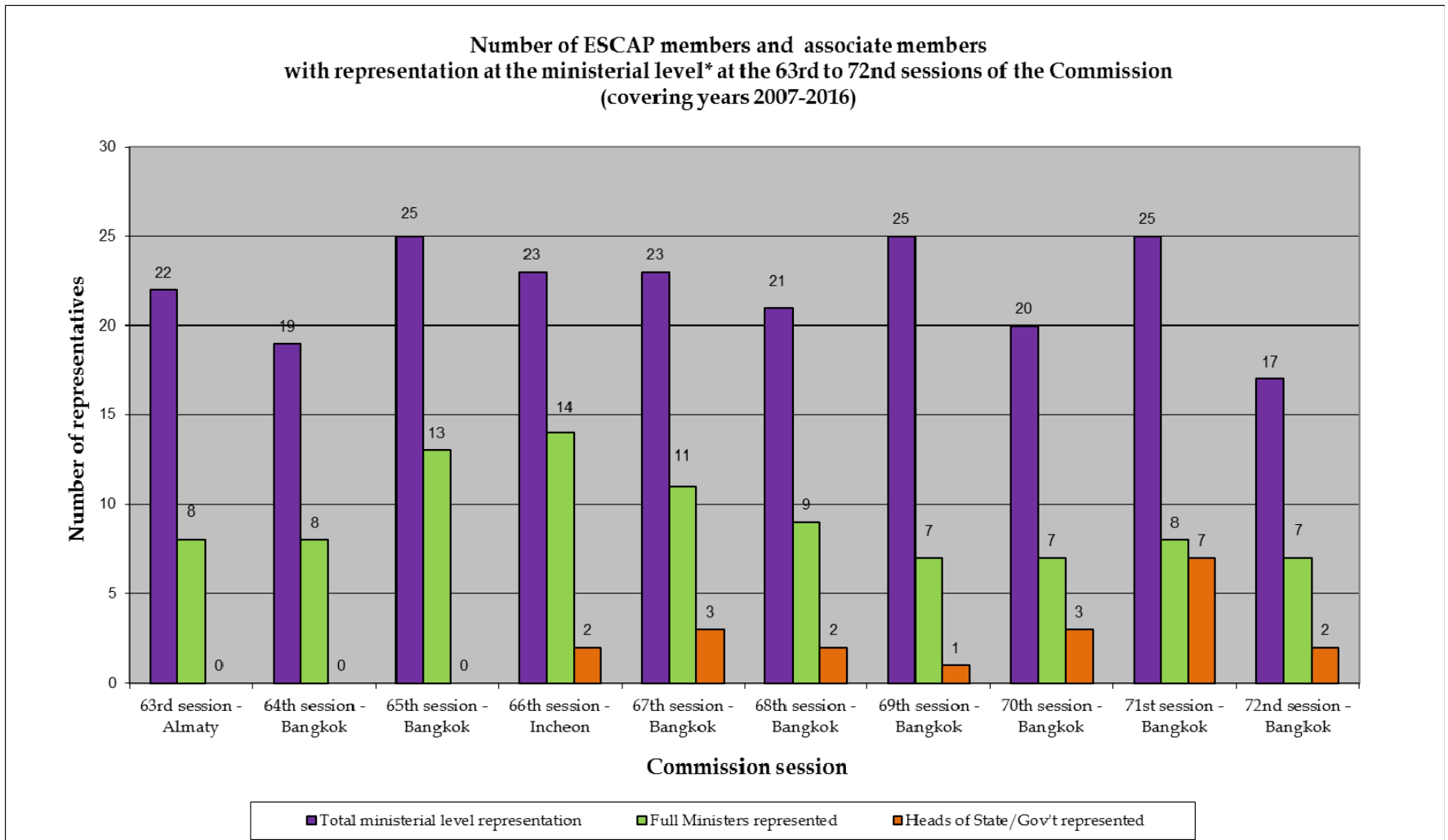
* Countries did not attend

Annex II

Non-members State participants at the 72nd session of the Commission

		No. of participants		No. of participants
	Other States		United Nations Secretariat	
1	Mexico	1	UN-OHRLLS	1
2	Portugal	2	UN Regional Commissions New York Office	1
3	Switzerland	3		2
		6		
	Intergovernmental Organization			
	Asia-Pacific Telecommunity	3	United Nations Agencies and Bodies	
	Asian Development Bank	1	Food and Agriculture Organization	5
	Conference on Interaction and Capacity Building Measures in Asia	3	International Civil Aviation Organization	1
	Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia	1	International Maritime Organization	1
	Economic cooperation Organization	1	International Telecommunication Union	1
	ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee	1	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	3
	Eurasian Economic Commission	1	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	1
	International Organization for Migration	2	UN Convention to Combat Desertification	1
	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	1	UN Industrial Development Organization	1
	Shanghai Cooperation Organization	2	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction	2
	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation	1	United Nations Environment Programme	1
	WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones	2	UN High Commissioner for Refugees	1
		19	World Health Organization	1
	Non-Government Organization			19
	Associated Country Women of the World	2	Other Entities	
	Baha'I International Community	1	Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability	1
	Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations	2	Holy See	3
	International Planned Parenthood Federation	2	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	1
	International Federation of Business and Professional Women	4	Order of Malta	1
	Organization of the Families of Asia and the Pacific	2		6
	Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association of Thailand	5		
	World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises	4		
		22	Total no. of non-member State participants	74

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?

- A collection of best practices in managing sustainable development to be shared among member states.
- Facilitating all member countries to build partnership for development and capacity building.
- Insights of other developing countries in addition to the LLDS in the region might be included for discussion or the session agenda.
- More active high level participation.
- More engagement from delegates.
- Secretariat did everything it could to ensure a successful outcome.
- Resolutions, especially active and proper participation of member States.

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

- Encourage another small members States to raise their concerns and voice
- More statements by member States.
- More time for exchange of views.
- Punctuality (speech)

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

- Allow Ministers to discuss issues of social-economy
- Encourage all member States to participate in all side-events and not overlap each other.
- Time management
- Punctuality (speech)

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

- Proper coordination between secretariat and member States.
- Time management
- Timing is critical and we must start and end as scheduled.
- Keep on increasing the use of ICT in the organization.

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

- It relates to national development planning of our country.
- Mandate and obligations
- The opportunity to engage and develop networks with attending delegates.
- The significant role played by ESCAP in addressing the contemporary needs of regional development and management of sustainable growth.
- The theme and availability of leadership of concerned ministry.
- The topic of the theme study
- To create exposure on the theme of the commission session to the policy makers and representation by the Political leader
- Using multilateral forums such as ESCAP to advance out issues.

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

- Clear projected outcomes of the meetings.
- ESCAP might consider initiating a regional ranking system that reflects the commitment of member States to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- Our delegation was represented at the highest level possible.
- Yes

What was the most successful feature of the seventy-second session of the Commission?

- Adopted resolutions
- Adoption of draft resolutions after long drawn out negotiations, although one was adopted by vote.
- COW-discussions on the sub-themes were useful.
- High level events
- High-level panel discussion
- STI for SDG (#8) round table discussion
- Stressing connectivity for stronger economic cooperation and integration of the reion.
- The grand opening of the Ministerial Segment
- Theme topic and related resolutions
- Resolutions

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