



Summary of delegations' assessments of the outcome of the 73rd session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific *

Bangkok
15-19 May 2017

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* Prepared by the Strategy and Programme Management Division based on written feedback to a survey questionnaire provided to the government delegations who attended the 73rd session of the Commission.

Summary assessment of the outcome of the 73rd session of the Commission

I. Introduction

The 73rd session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok from 15 to 19 May 2017.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission session was distributed to delegations attending the session. In total 21 questionnaires were returned, with one questionnaire per delegation submitted. The overall response rate was therefore 44 per cent. The present assessment was prepared on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

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. In addition, the Commission session was also attended by 67 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).

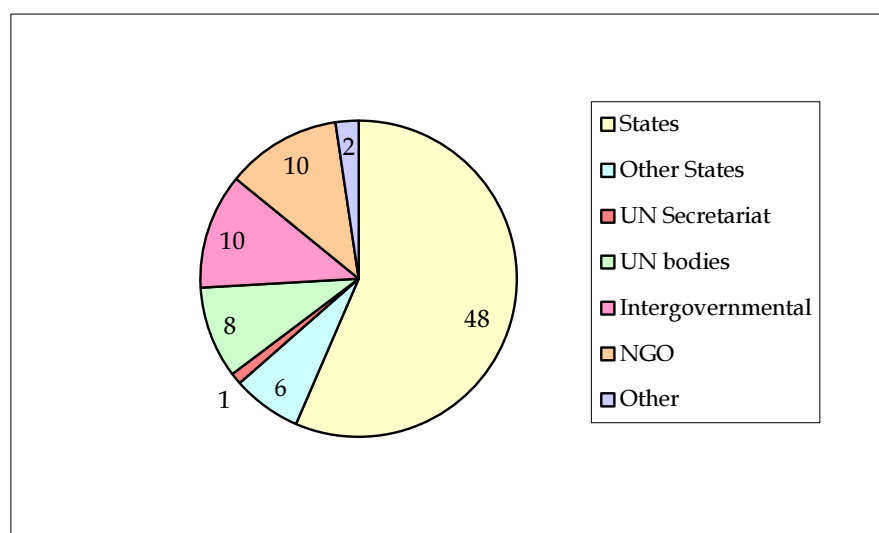


Figure 1: Type and number of entities at the 73rd session of the Commission

16 governments were represented by ministerial level officials, of whom 5 were Heads of State and 10 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.	8(38%)	10(48%)	1(4%)	2(10%)	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).	6(29%)	12(57%)	3(14%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The overall outcome of the deliberations was positive and a result of a collaborative effort by member States.	6(29%)	14(67%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The draft reports accurately reflected the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the Commission.	4(19%)	16(76%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
e. The secretariat's in-session interventions contributed to effective conduct and outcome of the session.	6(29%)	14(67%)	1(4%)	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 73rd session as having achieved a satisfactory outcome.

The majority of respondents 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 73rd session of the Commission, “Regional cooperation for sustainable energy”, 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.	9(45%)	11(55%)	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(38%)	11(52%)	2(10%)	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.	4(19%)	13(62%)	4(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. The theme topic “Regional cooperation for sustainable energy” reflects the current needs and priorities of the region in general, and my country/territory in particular.	9(43%)	10(48%)	2(9%)	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 proposed programme of work 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(19%)	16(76%)	1(5%)	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(14%)	16(76%)	2(10%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The deliberations were effective at deciding on the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies.	2(10%)	16(76%)	2(10%)	1(4%)	0(0%)
d. The deliberations were effective at providing guidance to the work of the secretariat, in particular the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019.	3(14%)	16(76%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	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.	4(19%)	14(67%)	3(14%)	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 agreed that the deliberations were effective in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socioeconomic issues, and at generating policy options. Similarly, most either agreed strongly or agreed that the resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the seventy-third 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.	5(24%)	11(52%)	5(24%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The deliberations were effective in highlighting areas for regional cooperation to address key socioeconomic issues affecting the region.	3(14%)	17(81%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c. The resolutions and decisions adopted reflected the key outcomes of the seventy-third session of the Commission.	5(24%)	15(71%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

V. Organizational aspects

Overall, responses demonstrated that the secretariat effectively and efficiently serviced the 73rd 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(24%)	11(52%)	4(19%)	1(5%)	0(0%)
b. The servicing by the secretariat facilitated effective outcomes.	10(48%)	10(48%)	1(4%)	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.).	8(38%)	11(52%)	2(10%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
d. Communication between the secretariat and member States between Commission sessions contributed to the effective functioning of the Commission session.	8(38%)	11(52%)	2(10%)	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.	8(38%)	10(48%)	3(14%)	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.	3(14%)	12(57%)	5(24%)	1(5%)	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.	5(24%)	14(67%)	2(9%)	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. However, the respondents indicated that the pre-session documents should be 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(29%)	12(57%)	3(14%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b. The pre-session documents were issued in a timely manner.	4(19%)	7(33%)	8(38%)	2(10)	0(0%)
c. The timely posting of documents through the ESCAP website facilitated my delegations review.	5(24%)	9(43%)	6(28%)	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 73rd 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 73 rd Commission session, when engaging in policy and programme formulation at the national level?	5(29%)	7(42%)	5(29%)	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 73rd 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 73rd 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 73rd 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 73rd session of the Commission

	Country	No. of participants		Country	No. of participants
1	Afghanistan	4	33	Palau	3
2	Armenia	2	34	Papua New Guinea	2
3	Australia	3	35	Philippines	5
4	Azerbaijan	5	36	Rep. of Korea	11
5	Bangladesh	11	37	Russian Federation	9
6	Bhutan	8	38	Samoa	3
7	Brunei Darussalam	1	39	Singapore	2
8	Cambodia	8	40	Solomon Islands*	-
9	China	15	41	Sri Lanka	5
10	DPRK	4	42	Tajikistan	2
11	Fiji	5	43	Thailand	125
12	France	1	44	Timor-Leste*	-
13	Georgia	2	45	Tonga	5
14	India	7	46	Turkey	3
15	Indonesia	7	47	Turkmenistan	2
16	Islamic Rep. of Iran	5	48	Tuvalu	6
17	Japan	13	49	UK	1
18	Kazakhstan	4	50	USA	10
19	Kiribati	5	51	Uzbekistan	2
20	Kyrgyzstan*	-	52	Vanuatu	7
21	Lao PDR	11	53	Viet Nam	5
22	Malaysia	5			
23	Maldives*	-		Associate members	
24	Marshall Island	6	54	American Samoa*	-
25	Micronesia*	-	55	Cook Islands*	-
26	Mongolia	7	56	French Polynesia*	-
27	Myanmar	2	57	Guam*	-
28	Nauru	3	58	Hong Kong, China	2
29	Nepal	6	59	Macao, China	3
30	Netherlands*	-	60	New Caledonia*	-
31	New Zealand*	-	61	Niue*	-
32	Pakistan	6	62	Northern Mariana Islands*	-
			Total no. of member State participants: 369		

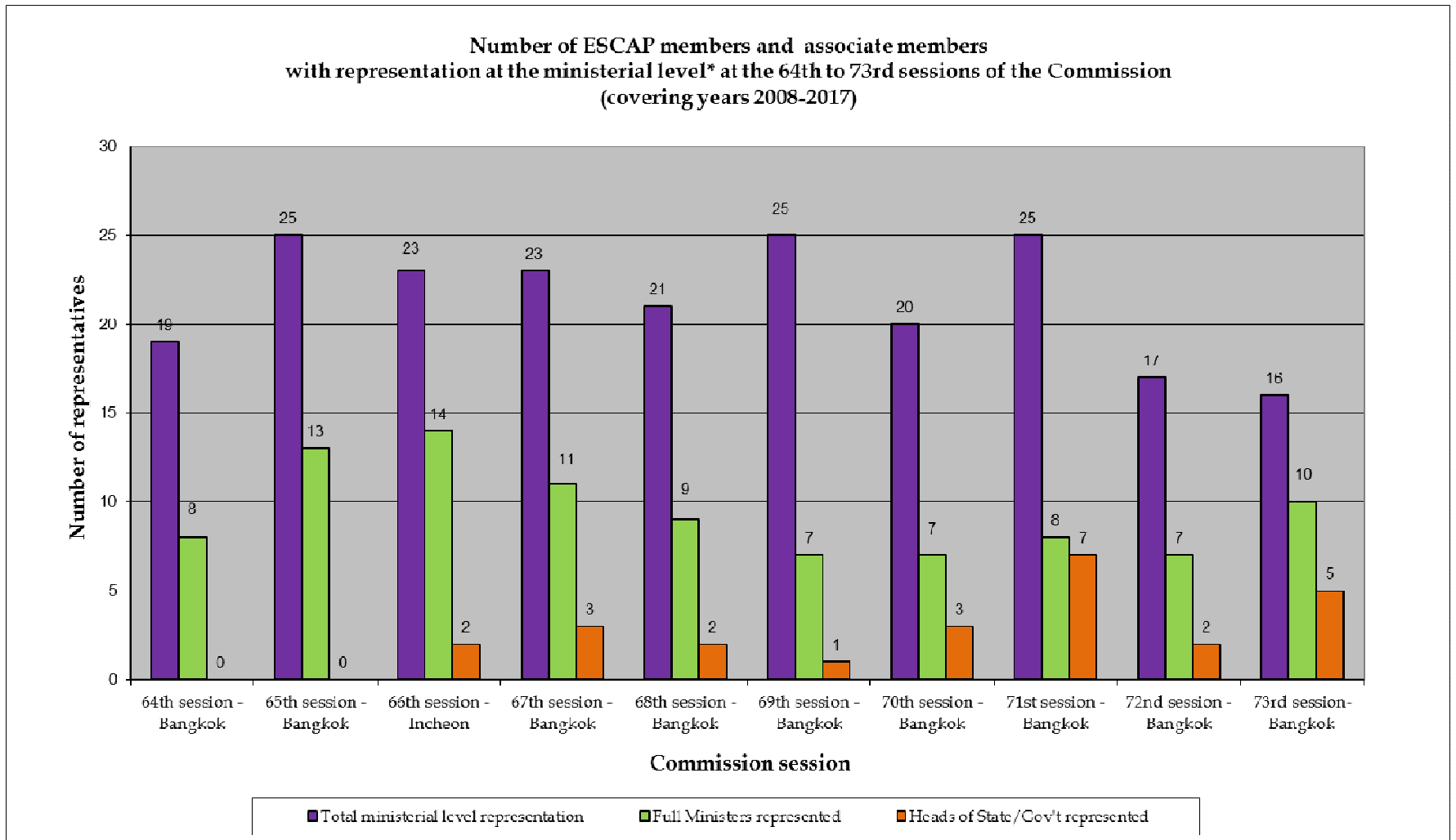
* Countries did not attend

Annex II

Non-members State participants at the 73rd session of the Commission

		No. of participants		No. of participants
	Other States		Non-Government Organization	
1	Belgium	3	Associated Country Women of the World	1
2	Canada	3	Baha'I International Community	1
3	Czechia	1	Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations	5
4	Germany	1	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit	4
5	Portugal	2	International Federation of Business and Professional Women	1
6	Switzerland	1	LDC Watch	1
		11	National Council of Women of Thailand	1
			Organization of the Families of Asia and the Pacific	1
	Intergovernmental Organization		Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association of Thailand	6
	Asia Productivity Organization	1	World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises	2
	Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia	1		23
	Economic cooperation Organization	1		
	ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee	1	United Nations Agencies and Bodies	
	International Organization for Migration	2	International Civil Aviation Organization	1
	Mekong River Commission	2	International Maritime Organization	1
	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	1	International Telecommunication Union	1
	Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia	2	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	2
	Shanghai Cooperation Organization	2	United Nations Development Programme	3
	WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones	2	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	1
		15	UN Industrial Development Organization	1
			Universal Postal Union	1
	Other Entities			11
	Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability	4	United Nations Secretariat	
	Holy See		UN-OHRLLS	1
	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	2		1
		6		
			Total no. of non-member State participants	67

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?

- Advanced documents. Less panel talking and more interactions over the panel and audience.
- Everything was in order
- Extend the time of the session to at least 6 or 7 days so that all the planned items covered and discussed thoroughly.
- I do not have much experience as this is my first year of participation but timing seems to be a common problem. Achievement is therefore effected.
- In general it depends on member states' approaches. But may be outcomes of the Commission session could be more relevant if during the session more practical issues will be considered
- Member States should be given more opportunity to make statements and interact in Q and A during panel discussions.
- More opportunity is given for questions in a panel discussion. This offers more quality deliberations.
- Organizing workshop or follow-up meeting by relevant sector.
- Panels could have fewer speakers, and therefore allow time for a more interactive format.
- Participation of UN Funds & Programme & Specialized Agencies which are members of Regional Coordination Mechanism concerned by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.
- To be able to engage more member States and include more international and regional organizations.

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

- To be fair timing has to be strengthened to allow better achievement.
- Everything was in order
- May be some concrete issues could be considered during Senior Officials segment
- More detail discussion on the work of the Commission through interactive panel discussion with feedback/statements or Q & A from member States is required

- The current arrangements are fine and have provided a lot of opportunities for countries to intervene and make recommendations.

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

- Reduce time of statements of Executive Secretary, in particular at the opening session. This must be done by the next Commission session. Statements of chairs on Agenda items were too long. Chairs should just summarize discussions, not reading proceedings.
- May be more concrete issues could be considered during Ministerial segment
- Member States need to be given more opportunity to interact in panel discussion i.e. number of panelists may be reduced and more time should be given for Q and A.
- More time to be given to speakers or panelists during their presentations and deliberation.
- There needs to be thought as to how to keep member States engaged, so soon after the APFSD. There is a degree of meeting - fatigue evident. Our delegation was invested at higher level in the APFSD this year, given the gender focus + our interest in the.
- We would suggest moving the country statements as forward as possible

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

- The secretariat should have avoided to organize two high-level meetings in April. These meetings took delegates' time to negotiate draft resolutions and to prepare for the Commission session. Also documents of these meetings were distributed very lately. Timely documentation must be maintained.
- Communications on programmes is important especially last minute changes.
- Draft Resolution should be submitted by members for consideration of the ACPR as early as possible
- Give more time for the meetings of working group on draft resolutions.
- Informal Working Group on draft resolution should start earlier.
- More attention could be putted on protocol and representative issues (for example flags of member states on the podium in ESCAP Hall should be pressed)

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

- Traditional relations with ESCAP - The role of ESCAP in connectivity - Partnership with our country
- Good opportunity to promote Government's initiatives and learn about other member states' experiences
- Spirit of friendship and cooperation among Asia and Pacific countries.
- Substantive issues
- The level of participation is a sovereign decision by any Government and is not a matter for discussion
- The relevance of the theme topic of the session with the national issues and its work on SDGs and financing for development
- The theme of the 73rd session of the Commission. It's timing to discuss such important theme which incorporates nearly all the SDGs.
- Timing (around our budget week) and decision that only limited resources (one capital-based officer) should attend given other meeting/travel commitments by staff with relevant expertise.
- The theme and agenda of the Commission session
- The theme topic

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

- May is not convenient for our Ministers. Higher level representation would be most likely if back-to-back with other regional meeting, eg. APEC, EAS, etc.
- Invitations should be sent at least three months prior to the session. Separate invitation (i.e. two invitations) to senior officials and ministers can be useful.
- It depends on schedules of high ranked representatives
- Reduce the time of panel discussions and place country statements sessions rights after the opening of the Ministerial Segment. Scheduling must be received next year's session.
- The level of participation is a sovereign decision by any Government and is not a matter for discussion
- To invite high level official as panelists on relevant issues.

- Very thankful and satisfied with the presentation of our country in this 73rd session of the Commission.

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

- Another useful opportunity to meet and share experience with friends and neighbours
- Covering all the items or issues as scheduled in the week's programme. Also appreciate the ESCAP's assistance and support in the preparatory work of the side event.
- Despite major differences between some delegations, all resolutions were passed.
- Exchange of information and learning from different experiences. Provides platform for future deliberations for partnerships.
- Exchange of views and experiences of member states on achieving SDG goals
- Exchange views and policies related to sustainable energy, social development and regional connectivity shared by member States and panelists at each session.
- High Level round-tables on the theme topic.
- Resolutions discussion is a process of building consensus and identifying the common aspiration and priority. That's the most successful part.
- The main topic
- The panel discussions and the side events.
- The preparatory work was successful in avoiding votes on resolutions.
- There were no PBI for all resolutions as well as voting in this regard.
- The Ministerial Roundtable on the theme study

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