

Summary assessment

Asia and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing +20 Review

Bangkok

17-20 November 2014

I. Introduction

The Asia and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing +20 Review was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 17-20 November 2014.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the Conference was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. The total number of submitted questionnaires came from 35 of the 47 members and associate members in attendance at the session. The overall response rate is therefore 74% (N=35/47). 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 the Conference.

II. Attendance

The Conference was attended by 750 participants. Of that total, 267 were from the 47 participating ESCAP members and associate members, while 483 participants were from ESCAP and other entities. 76% (N=47/62) of all ESCAP members and associate members participated in this Conference.

A majority of delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (79%, N=34/43)—eighteen of which (53%) at ministerial level —whereas the remaining 21% (N=9/43) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok.

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 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, and enables indices to be added together as well as compared among each other.

IV. Relevance of the Conference

As presented with the aggregate ratings in Table 1, there was widespread agreement that the deliberations reflected the key issues with regards to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Asian and Pacific region (85).

It was also noted that all respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the background document enhance their knowledge and awareness of regional progress and gaps in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The deliberations reflected the key issues with regards to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Asian and Pacific region.	85

According to the comments received regarding the relevance of the Conference to the needs and priorities of the Asia and Pacific region, most respondents felt that national and regional needs, priorities and concerns were well addressed, and that the discussions were useful. Respondents commended the round table approach to interactive discussions. Some respondents suggested that the future conferences could include specific sessions to look at sectorial issues concerning women.

V. Effectiveness of the Conference

Overall, as can be seen from Table 2, respondents found the conference to be very effective in providing a regional platform for developing consensus on priority areas of action to accelerate the Beijing Platform for Action (85), in providing an overview of the progress and remaining challenges in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific (85), and in promoting dialogue on regional approaches to addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.

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

Furthermore, the session documents were found to be of high quality, concise, and stating the issues clearly (82).

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Conference provided a regional platform for developing consensus on priority areas of action to accelerate the Beijing Platform for Action.	85
The Conference effectively promoted dialogue on regional approaches to addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.	84
The Conference effectively provided an overview of the progress and remaining challenges in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific.	85
The session documents were of high quality, concise, and clearly stated the issues.	82

Most respondents felt that the conference was effective in achieving its objectives, including a progressive outcome document.

VI. Efficiency of the Conference

The efficiency of the Conference was rated very positively. In particular, respondents felt that the time available for discussion during the meetings was adequate (90). The respondents also felt that the servicing by the secretariat was very efficient (83), that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective (81), and that the organization of work prior and in between sessions enabled the Conference to proceed efficiently (80).

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meetings was adequate.	90
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient.	83
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective.	81
The organization of work prior and in between sessions enabled the Conference to proceed efficiently.	80

Most respondents highly appreciated and commended the organization and servicing of this conference. Suggestions to improve time management were indicated. .

VII. Highlights of the Committee session and aspects that could have been enhanced

According to respondents, the highlights of the Conference were the success of the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration; the excellent leadership of the chairpersons; and the deliberation of the outcome document. Some respondents felt that Conference could have benefited from more time management on some of the sessions.

VIII. Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegates felt that the Asia and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing +20 Review was highly successful.

To summarize the main trends highlighted above, the Conference was overwhelmingly seen as relevant to the needs on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the region, effective in providing a regional platform for dialogue, and as providing a helpful overview of the progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. The efficiency of the session received very positive feedback, particularly the time available for discussion during the meetings.