

Summary Assessment

First session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation Bangkok 5-7 October 2016

I. Introduction

The first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 5-7 October 2016.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. In total, 17 of the 30 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 57 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 Committee sessions.

II. Attendance

The Committee session was attended by 48 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (30 of 62), with 101 individual participants. A further 66 participants attended from other entities, including other States, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

More than half of delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (66 per cent) - four of which (21 per cent) at ministerial level - whereas the remaining 34 per cent 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 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 Committee session was relevant to the needs of the region. As seen in the aggregate ratings in Table 1, there was positive agreement that the agenda items reflected the present development trends and issues of the Asian and Pacific region (88), and that they also reflected the needs and priorities of their respective countries (75).

There were some suggestions and comments that the Committee could share best practices, and discuss more on innovation issues. The sessions thoroughly covered the important areas in STI and ICT. The next step is the rolling out of the recommendations or findings of the Committee meeting before the next meeting.

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the present development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	88
The agenda items are relevant to the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	75

V. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, respondents found the session to be effective in highlighting priority regional development trends and issues (84), addressing gender-related issues (82), and promoting dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (78).

The respondents also found the session documents were of high quality, concise and clear (82). The linkage between ICT and STI issues also rated positively (75).

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

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Committee session effectively highlighted priority regional development trends and issues.	84
The Committee session effectively linked ICT and STI issues.	75
The Committee session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches.	78
The Committee session effectively addressed gender-related issues.	80
The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear.	82

VI. Efficiency of the session

The overall efficiency of the Committee session was rated again positively (See Table 3). Respondents felt that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate (81), that the servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective (85), that the organization of work prior to and in between committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (76). Respondents also indicated that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective (76).

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate.	81
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.	76
The organization of work prior to and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (ACPR, working groups, task forces, communication with the secretariat).	76

VII. Other comments

According to respondents, the most useful and successful aspects of the Committee session and other suggestions for improvement included:

- Debates and endorsement of APIS modalities, regional cooperation and master plan.
- Innovation Forum for Asia and Pacific
- Fruitful discussion on STI and ICT
- APIS master plan, RFD discussion
- Successful aspect of the meeting is so many high officials and Ministers were present and delivered the speech in the inauguration ceremony.
- The meeting was timely. Topics were relevant.
- There wasn't any disagreement among the member States on the agendas discussed in Committee session, which implies there is a common agreement on the ICT and STI.
- To improve, the Secretariat could collect the country statement before the session start. More best practices could be highlighted.

There were some comments on the thematic linking of ICT and STI in the Committee session:

- Very relevant as ICT is means of promoting STI also which in turn is means of implementing for SDGs.
- The two areas are closely linked. It is good for the benefit of all participants to attend all sessions in the two areas rather than have parallel sessions.
- To strengthen the Committee, invite more experts from relevant fields (e.g. STI), to share diverse professional opinions and commitments.
- Name of the Committee is very big. The word "technology" has been repeated twice - it may be reworded.

VIII. Conclusion

The Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation was successful.

The session was seen as relevant to the needs of the region; especially in highlighting priority regional development trends and issues. The efficiency of the session also received positive feedback, in particular, the organizing and servicing of the session by the secretariat.