

Summary Assessment

Third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development

Bangkok

1-3 December 2015

I. Introduction

The third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 1-3 December 2015.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. The total number of submitted questionnaires came from 20 of the 33 members and associate members in attendance at the session. The overall response rate is therefore 61% (N=20/33). The present assessment was prepared on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

In line with the secretariat's efforts to move toward 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 53% (N=33/62) of all ESCAP members and associate members, with 78 individual participants. The Committee session was also attended by 50 participants 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 (72%, N=24/33), whereas the remaining 27% (N=9/33) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok.

The Committee has seen an increase in attendance rates. In 2009, 40% of the members and associate members attended the Committee, a number which increased to 45% in 2011 and to 53% in 2015.

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

- Invite more participants from different ministries
- More time for Q&A
- Timely communication of tasks for better preparation
- Clear identification of policies that need focused discussion
- Forward booking and arrangement for country representatives, mainly due to inadequate human resource personnel in office and small number of staff in respected institutions (finance and planning ministries).

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).

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 widespread agreement that the agenda items are well chosen and timely and also reflected the emerging sustainable development trends/issues of the region (89). Respondents also agreed that the agenda items highlighted the needs and priorities for sustainable development of their respective countries (84).

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The agenda items of the Committee are well chosen and timely.	89
The agenda items reflected the emerging sustainable development trends/issues of Asia and the Pacific region	89
The agenda items highlighted the needs and priorities for sustainable development of my country/territory.	84

V. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, as can be seen from Table 2, respondents found the session to have been very effective in highlighting regional development trends and issues (88), in identifying

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

priority policy areas and emerging sustainable development challenges in the region (86), in promoting dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to dealing with sustainable development challenges (85), in promoting collaborative approach to addressing the macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development challenges (86), and in addressing gender-related issues in the field of macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development (79).

The respondents also found that the remarks of the participants are insightful and enhanced their understanding of sustainable development challenges in the Asia-Pacific region (81).

The Exhibition Halls on macroeconomic policy and financing for development are also found informative and well prepared in partnerships with member States, CSOs, ESCAP and UN agencies (83)

Furthermore, the session documents were found to be of high quality, concise, and stating the issues clearly (85).

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Committee session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	88
The Committee session effectively identified priority policy areas and emerging sustainable development challenges in the region.	86
The Committee session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to dealing with sustainable development challenges.	85
The Committee session effectively addressed gender-related issues in the field of macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development.	79
The Committee session effectively promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	86
The remarks of the participants are insightful and enhanced my understanding of sustainable development challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.	81
The session documents were of high quality, concise, and clearly stated the issues.	85
The Exhibition Halls on macroeconomic policy and financing for development are informative and well prepared in partnerships with member States, CSOs, ESCAP and UN agencies.	83

VI. Efficiency of the session

As shown in table 3, the efficiency of the organizational aspects of the Committee session was rated very positive, especially the Round Table on LDCs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remarks which were insightful and enhanced their understanding of LDCs issues in the context of the sustainable development agenda (91). Respondents felt that the organisation and servicing by the secretariat was efficient and high-quality (89), that the High-level Policy Dialogue on the Strategic Regional Partnership for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific panel discussion effectively prompted exchange of ideas and dialogue between different stakeholders and participants (88), that the background materials and other reports for the Committee are informative and well prepared (85)

Respondents also indicated that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective (83), that the organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (82), and that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate (81).

The Committee session received a comment on efficiency of the session that the secretariat should have uploaded the final draft report to the website sooner to allow more time for delegations to prepare.

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate.	81
The organisation and servicing by the secretariat was efficient and high-quality.	89
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective.	83
The organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently.	82
The background materials and other reports for the Committee are informative and well-prepared.	85
The Round Table on LDCs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remarks are insightful and enhanced my understanding of LDCs issues in the context of the sustainable development agenda.	91
The High-level Policy Dialogue on the Strategic Regional Partnership for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific panel discussion effectively prompted exchange of ideas and dialogue between different stakeholders and participants.	88

VII. Other comments

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

- Given opportunity to share the experiences.
- Item 7 - Reducing poverty through sustainable agriculture
- Organisation of the Committee session
- Discussion of regional financial cooperation and issues of countries with special needs
- Side events and discussion on 3 specified areas
- Discussion on Sustainable development and poverty reduction
- Timing and opportunity to participate in discussions
- Great engagement between the organizers, presenters, and the member States so the challenges, progress, and needs could be effectively addressed in the context of global, regional and country level developments.
- Well-chosen agenda items, well-prepared documents and efficient coordination of the proceeding of the session.

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

- Learning from other countries experience
- More awareness on Advocacy Plan for SDG Implementation
- Time management
- Please involve all Pacific Island States (small islands economics) to attend these types of high level meeting.

VIII. Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegates felt that the third session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development was successful.

To summarize the main trends above, the session was overwhelmingly seen as relevant to the needs of the region, and effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues. The efficiency of the session received particularly positive feedback, including the Round Table on LDCs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remarks; and the organisation and servicing by the secretariat.