

Summary Assessment

Fourth session of the Committee on Social Development Bangkok 28-30 March 2016

I. Introduction

The fourth session of the Committee on Social Development was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 28-30 March 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, 15 of the 23 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 65% (N=15/23). 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 37 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (23 of 62), with 56 individual participants. A further 55 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 (52 per cent); whereas the remaining 48 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 presented with the aggregate ratings in Table 1, there was very positive agreement that the agenda items reflected the development trends and issues of the Asian and Pacific region (92), and that they also reflected the needs and priorities of their respective countries (86).

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the social development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	92
The agenda items addressed the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	86

V. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, as can be seen from Table 2, respondents found the session to be very effective in highlighting regional development trends and issues (90), addressing gender-related issues in the field of social development (90), identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region (83), promoting dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (81), and promoting a collaborative approach to addressing the social development challenges at the regional and subregional levels (77).

The respondents also found the background documents to be effective in enhancing their knowledge of the challenges in implementing the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (88), enhancing their knowledge of Regional trends regarding education and employment (88), enhancing their knowledge with regards to the gender dimensions of social development issues relevant to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (85), and enhancing their knowledge of Innovative approaches and

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

modalities to enhance the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (83).

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Committee session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	90
The Committee session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	83
The Committee session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches.	81
The Committee session effectively addressed gender-related issues in the field of social development.	90
The Committee session effectively promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the social development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	77
The background document E/ESCAP/CSD(4)/1 enhanced my knowledge of the challenges in implementing the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals	88
The background document E/ESCAP/CSD(4)/2 enhanced my knowledge of Innovative approaches and modalities to enhance the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals	83
The background document E/ESCAP/CSD(4)/3 enhanced my knowledge of Regional trends regarding education and employment, particularly the challenges arising from the transition from school to work	88
The background documents enhanced my knowledge with regards to the gender dimensions of social development issues relevant to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific	85

VI. Efficiency of the session

The overall efficiency of the Committee session was rated very positively, as shown in table 3. Respondents felt that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate (88), that the servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective (88), that the organization of work prior and in between committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (83). Respondents also indicated that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective (81).

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate.	88
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	88
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective.	81
The organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently.	83

VII. Other comments

According to respondents, the most useful and successful aspects of the Committee session included:

- The involvement of civil society in the discussions.
- The delegates from the Asian Pacific region worked together, shared ideas and experiences to set priorities for the 2030 sub-regional sustainable development agenda.
- Selection of relevant topics under discussion

VIII. Conclusion

Overall, responding delegates felt that the 4th session of the Committee on Social Development was successful.

The session was positively seen as relevant to the needs of the region; especially in highlighting regional development trends and issues; and in addressing gender-related issues in the field of social development. The efficiency of the session also received very positive feedback, including the servicing of the session by the secretariat, and the time available for discussion during the meeting.