

Summary Assessment

Fourth session of the Committee on Statistics

Bangkok
25-27 March 2015

I. Introduction

The fourth session of the Committee on Statistics was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25-27 March 2015.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. All 34 members and associate members in attendance submitted a questionnaire. The response rate is therefore 100% (N=34/34). 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 55% (N=34/62) of all ESCAP members and associate members, with 131 individual participants. The Committee session was also attended by 28 participants from other entities, including other States, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

All delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (100%, N=34/34).

As for the attendance rates in previous years, the Committee saw the attendance of 53% of the members and associate members in 2008, a number that slightly increased to 56% in 2010, and increased again to 63% in 2012.

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

- More inputs on strengthening collaborative efforts.
- More time to prep interventions by getting greater input from my colleagues.
- It was a great opportunity for countries to present their needs.
- We have to encourage collaborating to strengthen statistical institutions.
- Early dissemination of materials would be more appropriated.
- The documents to be made available earlier. This is to ensure we have time to check on developments on areas involving other arms of government or development partners which can then be reported accurately by delegates.
- It is very important to participate in this meeting from each country representative. The knowledge sharing from discussion was very important. I thank for ESCAP for their dedicated work to improve statistics in the region.
- We appreciated discussions prior to the meeting with ESCAP that allowed us to intervene in the discussion. However, we were here mainly as observers.
- The prior preparation and the stock-take on the development indicators. With the full understanding to help us deliver in the discussions.

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 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 reflected the development trends and issues of the Asian and Pacific region (85). Respondents also agreed that the agenda items addressed the needs and priorities of their respective countries (83).

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 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	85
The agenda items addressed the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	83

Comments on the relevance of the Committee session to the needs and priorities of the Asia and Pacific region included (verbatim):

- It is really useful to participants given that we are updated on developments in the statistics area.
- Modernization aspect of the data collection and dissemination is very important. In addition continuous training and skill development in new technology also very important.
- The agenda items reflected the development trends but the meeting should focus on SDG indicators of priorities of the Asia Pacific region.

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 (86), in identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region (85), in promoting a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels (84), in promoting dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (81), and in addressing gender-related issues in the field of statistics (82).

Furthermore, the session documents were found to be of high quality, concise, and stating the issues clearly (83).

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The Committee session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	86
The Committee session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	85
The Committee session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to statistics development.	81

The Committee session effectively addressed gender-related issues in the field of statistics.	82
The Committee session effectively promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the statistics development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	84
The session documents were of high quality, concise, and clearly stated the issues.	83

Comments on how to improve the Committee session's effectiveness in achieving its mandate included (verbatim):

- Effectiveness may have been improved with earlier arrival of papers.
- Very effective given the amount of information made available to delegates.
- It is very important to invite participation from National Statistical Office -heads or senior level officers to attend commission meeting to get the maximum benefit to the country.
- The paper was all well written, most deeply stated the issues but many were not nearly as concise as they could have been.
- Not all of documents were provided, if the secretariat could provide materials on time and to meet the needs would be good.

VI. Substantive outcome of the Committee

The respondents mostly agreed that the substantive outcome of the deliberations on each substantive agenda item met their expectations to a great extent, in particular item 3a: Regional Initiatives: Economics statistics; item 3b: Regional Initiatives: Population and social statistics (87); and item 4: Global initiatives: agricultural and rural statistics (88).

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
Item 2: Strategic direction of the Committee on Statistics	82
Item 3a: Regional Initiatives: Economics statistics	87
Item 3b: Regional Initiatives: Population and social statistics	87
Item 3c: Civil registration and vital statistics	85
Item 3d: Environment statistics	74
Item 3e: Disaster risk reduction statistics	72

Item 3f: Modernization of statistical production and services	85
Item 3g: Gender statistics	81
Item 4: Global initiatives: agricultural and rural statistics	88
Item 5a: Coordination for statistics development: statistical training	83
Item 5b: Coordination for statistics development: Partners for Statistical Development in Asia-Pacific	83

VII. Efficiency of the session

The efficiency of the organizational aspects of the Committee session was rated very positive, as shown in 4. Respondents felt that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate, that the servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective, and that the organization of work prior and in between committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (88). Respondents also indicated that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the meeting were effective (87).

Table 4

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.	87
The organization of work prior and in between Committee sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently.	88

Comments on how to improve the efficiency of the organizational and servicing aspects of the Committee session included (verbatim):

- Availability of papers and instructions.
- Session was lively and fruitful. Overall efficient management.
- The communication is very important for efficiency of the session.
- Very efficient and the timing was good.

- 1. Servicing during the meeting was excellent; 2. Serving of papers to member prior to the meeting was, overall, too late and in unhelpful-especially for earlier items before members realized they could intervene without a written statement; 3. Cannot comment on this as I was not part of the scene prior to this meeting.

VIII. Other comments

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

- 19 proposals by the Bureau.
- Agreement on all major initiatives and strategic areas.
- Collaborative approach to addressing the statistics development.
- Good coordination between statistical organizations.
- It was of more bilateral meeting and was not so much of technical side of it.
- Side event was excellent!!
- Support & efficiency of the ESCAP secretariat.
- The timing and engagement of delegates. The side-events were really useful as well.
- Time management; lively discussion. Overall good management.
- Management of time and discussion, good summaries.
- - Understand broadly concepts and purpose of committee on statistics, economic and social commission for Asia and the Pacific. - Strategies direction of the committee on statistics. - Global initiatives Agricultural and Rural Statistics.
- To me everything was fine and it is very much depends on delegates participation in different session.
- 1. Delegates were very active participated and gave very good comments. 2. Experts Groups made hard work and gave good reports.
- Lots of support from ESCAP Division of Stats - Secretariat very helpful and calm despite the stress of the event.
- The participation for this meeting was very useful to improve the overall knowledge about the ESCAP activities and future direction in the region. AIS side event also very important and useful.

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

- Item 3e and 5a
- Promote the dialogue member countries
- Some details particularly in the technically challenging topics such as technology advancements.
- The presentations from the countries could have been coordinated in terms of relevance.
- Timing of papers
- More time for delegations to go through the draft report before the session
- Maybe there is a need to organize a special session, where countries could discuss issues in groups.

- - Coordination for statistics development. – Economic and social statistics. – Data sharing with Asia and the Pacific Region. Important of statistics world days. – National statistical office role.
- Please give more time for development countries to join their opinion and activity, because in every meeting have seen the development countries take more time and explain their activity.
- It is important to develop a score board for each activity for each country in the region to have an idea about the stage of statistics. If possible ESCAP to arrange a site seeing tour in Thailand is greatly appreciated.

IX. Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegates felt that the 4th session of the Committee on Statistics 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 outcomes of the deliberations on the substantive agenda items met their expectations. The efficiency of the session received particularly positive feedback, including the adequate time available for discussion, the servicing of the session by the secretariat, and the organization of work prior and in between sessions.