

Summary Assessment

Committee on Environment and Development, fifth session Bangkok 21-23 November 2018

I. Introduction

The Committee on Environment and Development, fifth session, was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 21-23 November 2018.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. In total, 21 of the 28 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 75 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 session.

II. Attendance

The Committee on Environment and Development was attended by 45 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (28 of 62). Fourteen delegations (50 per cent) were headed by senior/high level officials from the respective capital, including one provincial level minister. In total, there were 76 individual participants, of whom 36 were female (47 per cent).

Sixty-five representatives from other entities, including permanent observers, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations attended the Committee. Of them, 22 were female (34 per cent). Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities is 141 individuals and the total number of female participants is 58 (41 per cent).

III. Relevance of the session

Respondents agreed that the agenda items reflected the present development trends and issues in the Asian and Pacific region. The respondents also rated positively on relevance to the needs and priorities of their countries/territories but slightly less (See table 1).

There were some suggestions and comments on the relevance of the session:

- Ocean should be a standalone agenda.
- Have to undertake a countrywide climate vulnerability index and assessment which would assist countries to better allocate resources to the most vulnerable region waste management also has to be addressed as well.
- Should be more based on the Ministerial Declaration and Regional Roadmap for SDGs.

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100) ¹
The agenda items reflected the present development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	85
The agenda items are relevant to the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	79

IV. Effectiveness of the session

The respondents rated positively regarding the session effectiveness in highlighting regional development trends and issues; and in identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region. The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear. However, the respondents gave a relatively lower rating on the effectiveness in addressing gender-related issues (See table 2).

There were some suggestions and comments on the effectiveness of the session:

- Economic performance of the region vis-a-vis consumption and environmental degradation could be more clearly shown in trends/graphs to set the context for moving towards resource efficiency.
- Sub-regional and regional engagements on trend settings should be a priority.
- Earlier circulation of papers and background documents would be helpful.
- ESCAP should raise voice to accelerate finance or fund to address the issues or problems to be faced. Asia-Pacific region should have separate funds.
- Discussion could be more interactive.

¹ Methodology, an index between 100 and 0 is given, whereby, at a value of 100, all respondents rate to a great extent to the statement, and, at a value of 0, all respondents rate to not at all.

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.

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	81
The session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	80
The session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to environment and development.	75
The session effectively addressed gender-related issues.	70
The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear.	82

V. Efficiency of the session

The respondents rated positively on the efficiency and effectiveness of servicing by the secretariat. The communications to the member States on the preparations for the session was also rated positive. The respondents rated lower on the time available for discussion during the session. (Table 3).

There were some suggestions and comments on the efficiency of the organizational and servicing aspects of the session:

- Well organized.
- Secretariat could provide hard copies presented in session which would help to give comments. The secretariat should have served the participants.

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the session was adequate.	74
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	84
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective.	84

VI. Other comments

The respondents indicated concrete actions that their government would take in response to the decisions and recommendations of the session included:

- Well incorporate new ideas into our strategy and work programme.
- Thank you for the Secretariat for excellent preparation and content of the meeting.
- Pursuing a low carbon development plan with increasing emphasis renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy conservation. Installation of solar home system, solar irrigation and solar based vehicles have to be acted on. Urbanization is running fast throughout the world. So, ecosystem and climate change issues in urban areas have to be addressed because, by 2040, half of the population of the world will live in the urban.

VII. Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegations agreed that the fifth session of the Committee on Environment and Development was successful.

The session was positively seen as relevant to the needs of the region. The effectiveness of the session was seen positive, especially in highlighting regional development trends and issues. The session documents were also of high quality, concise and clear. The efficiency of the session also received positive feedback, in particular, the servicing of the session by the secretariat, and the communications between the secretariat and member States.

The issue of addressing gender in the field of environment and development may require some attention in future sessions with a view to further improving the committee's effectiveness.
