

Summary Assessment

Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, First Session Bangkok 6-8 December 2017

I. Introduction

The Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, First Session was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 6 to 8 December 2017.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the meeting was distributed to each delegation of ESCAP members and associate members. In total, 16 of the 33 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 48 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 Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, First Session was attended by 53 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (33 of 62). Some 25 of delegations (76 per cent) were headed by officials from the respective capital, including 8 participants at ministerial level. In total there were 91 individual participants, of whom 23 were female (25 per cent).

A number of other entities participated, including United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. From these entities, there were 40 participants of whom 12 were female. Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities is 131 individuals.

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 rated positively but slightly less on relevance to the needs and priorities of their countries and (See table 1).

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

- Before adopting agenda, we may discuss the needs and priorities to be included with the member countries. Special problem (if any) may also be included to the discussion.
- More time for discussions would be useful.
- The sessions can be made more relevant through having more case studies based on Pacific Island countries so that it is relevant to the specific needs.
- Written statements shall be allowed for countries to submit.
- Intervention by countries after panelist shall related to specific report related to agenda. There should be exclusive agenda on sharing of best practices.
- Panel discussion was not so intensive and attracting much attention from the participants.
- In the case of the Marshall Islands, items discussed and shared during the session and in the other side meetings, are relevant issues for the country.
- There should be more linkage to the work of other ESCAP bodies and formats, e.g. RECI, etc.
- Relevance to the work of other UN bodies, such as UNGA second committee, HLPF, etc., should be stressed.
- A one to two-day session specific to pacific SIDs to share common challenges in development and climate financing is suggested.
- To include topics on innovative models on R&D as means to enhance productivity in LDCs and emerging market economies.

Table 1

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100) ¹
The agenda items reflected the present development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	73
The agenda items are relevant to the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	67

IV. Effectiveness of the session

The respondents agreed that the session documents were high quality, concise and clear. The session was effective in identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region. Good reviews were made regarding promoting regional dialogue and subregional approaches. Respondents rated slightly lower the effectiveness in addressing gender related issues (See table 2).

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.

The formula we have used is based on the same principles as the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (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. For more detail, see http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2013_en_technotes.pdf.

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

- I would have like to see more engagement from participating countries. I understand the time constraint, but involved discussions would have made the session more effective.
- More research papers/ studies relevant to specific regions should be presented.
- Organize small group sessions among a number of member states on regional cooperation as side meetings.
- We encourage the secretariat to take care of language and use of technical terms more.
- Too broad based. It may be useful to increase focus of issue, so that countries get more time for discussion.
- Partners from UN sister agencies, especially from those having regional hubs in Bangkok (UNEP, UNDP, FAO, etc.), should be invited to take active part at the CMPPRFD sessions as to assure complementarity of action and avoid duplication.
- To encourage more productive and focused discussions based on analytical studies done by UNESCAP.

Table 2

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	75
The session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing development	70
The session effectively addressed gender-related issues.	68
The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear.	79

V. Efficiency of the session

The respondents agreed highly that the servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective and the communications to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective (Table 3). However, the respondents gave a relatively lower rating on the time available for discussion during the session

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

- Better time management is needed to ensure participants can effectively share their experiences.
- Secretarial provided the technical support efficiently. For timing issue, relatively fewer agenda items for deliberation will help time management in a much more efficient manner.
- More focus on issues may be helpful.
- I think the organization of the meeting was superb!

- Sessions' proceedings should receive more attention at the ESCAP website (podcasts, presentations, etc). Interpretation could be improved in particular, from Russian.
- Would have been better if the requests for country intervention in given topics were informed well in advance.

Table 3

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the session was adequate.	59
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.	82

VI. Other comments

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

- Enhance efforts to strengthen macro economic analytical capacity and continue explore innovate mechanism to finance development for which ESCAP's support would be critical.
- The Fijian government would definitely consider incorporating the findings and recommendations in its policies. Especially the country guidance document on PPP and SDGs, given Fiji has developed its new PPP policy recently. Therefore, we would be grateful if we can get access for guiding materials and experience from other country counterparts and also if UNESCAP can provide policy guidance and capacity building.
- Russia's government might consider supporting projects in countries with special needs in line with the committee recommendations. Russia will continue to support SPECA responding to demands by beneficiary countries.
- Report on update of the two-day sessions to Cabinet for information noting the experience shared by LDCs and SIDs.

VII. Conclusion

Overall, delegations agreed that the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, 1st session was successful. They indicated that the session reflected the present development trends of the Asian and Pacific region and the session documents were of high quality, concise and clear. The respondents gave a relatively low rating on the time available for discussion.
