

## Summary Assessment

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### **Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, 2<sup>nd</sup> session**

Bangkok  
21-24 November 2017

#### **I. Introduction**

The Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, 2<sup>nd</sup> session was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 21- 24 November 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, 13 of the 39 members and associate members in attendance submitted questionnaires. The overall response rate is therefore 33 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 Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, 2<sup>nd</sup> session was attended by 63 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (39 of 62). Some 30 of delegations (77 per cent) were headed by officials from the respective capital, 11 of which at ministerial level (37 per cent); the remaining 9 (23 per cent) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok. In total there were 121 individual participants, of whom 39 were female (32 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 55 participants of whom 18 were female. Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities is 176 individuals.

#### **III. Relevance of the session**

Respondents agreed that the session was relevant to the needs and priorities of their countries and the agenda items reflected the present development trends and issues in the regional economic cooperation and integration in the Asian and Pacific region (See table 1).

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

- Yes, the sessions are very relevant. As a small island state with smallness is general aspects, we are fortunate to be part of ESCAP and share good practices with member states. We do support ESCAP on-going connectivity and integration agenda including the RECI agenda.
- Good relevance.

**Table 1**

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100) <sup>1</sup>
The agenda items reflected the present development trends/issues of the Asian and Pacific region.	88
The agenda items are relevant to the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	85

#### IV. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, the respondents found the session to be effective in identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region and highlighting regional development trends and issues. The session documents were found to be of high quality, concise and clear. Good reviews were made regarding promoting regional dialogue and subregional approaches. Respondents rated positively but slightly less in addressing gender related issues (See table 2).

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

- As usual, Executive Secretary always kick starts sessions with comprehensive and constructive remarks. Documentation is excellent.
- I would like to suggest for demarcation between country/organization statements and discussion in Agenda item 2 and 3.
- Sessions are effective.
- One problem encountered by my delegation is the late posting of presentations/statement on the webpage. As well there were limited copies of the declaration & meeting report available which prevent effective commenting on the two documents.

**Table 2**

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
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<sup>1</sup> 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 =  $\frac{\text{actual value of all aggregated responses} - \text{minimum value of all aggregated responses}}{\text{maximum value of all aggregated responses} - \text{minimum value of all aggregated responses}}$

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](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2013_en_technotes.pdf).

The session effectively highlighted regional development trends and issues.	<b>81</b>
The session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	<b>83</b>
The session effectively promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific	<b>79</b>
The session effectively addressed gender-related issues.	<b>67</b>
The session documents were of high quality, concise and clear.	<b>81</b>

## V. Efficiency of the session

Respondents agreed that the time available for discussion during the meeting was adequate and the servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective. Respondents also indicated that the communications to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective (See Table 3).

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

- We would like to receive advance notice enough time to prepare in attending all the session. We would like to have clear channel of communication with secretariat.
- Both meetings were organized well with meetings papers prepared well in advance. Only as participants we need to be on time in every session. ESCAP is doing extremely well.
- No comment at all because the efficiency and effectiveness of the organizational and servicing of the sessions are quite fine.
- Secretariat service is excellent.
- There was very little help from the Secretariat when we requested document.

**Table 3**

EVALUATED STATEMENT	INDEX (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the session was adequate.	<b>81</b>
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	<b>81</b>
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective.	<b>79</b>

## VI. Other comments

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

- Enhancing regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific to support the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
- The documents were excellent. Some of the resources person presentations were useful.
- The session on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration and connectivity are most useful for member countries.
- We need improvement in terms of finishing the draft declaration before the ministerial meeting. We have to ensure that we do not bring politics in ESCAP meetings. It gives representatives an indication that we have to read and understand the declaration well before the meetings. All sessions and subjects of discussion were very useful and relevant. Very encouraging to note of comprehensive and constructive inputs from governments in terms of country statements. Thank you so much ESCAP.
- It was a very good forum for exchanging experiences of the member countries, in which some members shared their experiences and lessons learned with others.
- We thank you for the opportunities given to be Vice Chair of the meeting, chairing opening the ministerial segment. We look forward for more discussions on sea locked small island nations and its challenges for the cooperation and integration in the region.
- The date of the next ministerial conference should be set by host organizer (ESCAP). The first conference was held in December 2013. The second conference is reserved to held on 2015 but it is postponed up to now (November 2017). So we cannot imagine for next conference whether 2019 or 2021. That's why draft ministerial declaration mention as 2021 is a good directive for us. So, my understanding is our ministerial conference will be held once in 4 years cycle.
- Conference is successful to discuss and deliberate on economic cooperation and integration of the region. Wish all the best for all.
- How the BRI relates to RECI in the Asia Pacific Region was very useful.
- There should have been coffee breaks with coffee provided as it allows a lot discussion to be done in an informal manner.

## VII. Conclusion

Overall, delegations agreed that the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, 2<sup>nd</sup> session was successful. The session was seen reflected the present development trends of the Asian and Pacific region and relevant to the needs and priorities of their countries especially the country from small island. The session was effective in identifying priority areas and emerging issues in the region. The efficiency of the session received positive feedback in servicing and communication to the member States by the secretariat and the adequate time available for discussion during the meeting. The delegations highlighted that the sessions and subjects of discussion were very useful and gave the opportunity to share their experiences and lessons learned with others. The present assessment was prepared based on questionnaire responses from 33 per cent of the attending delegations. The secretariat noted that additional measures are needed to increase the response rate of future assessments with a view to further improving the quality and utility of these assessments.

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