

Delegate Assessment

Committee on Environment and Development Sixth Session 9-10 December 2020

I. Introduction

The sixth session of the Committee on Environment and Development (CED-6) was held from 9-10 December 2020 as a hybrid meeting, welcoming both in-person participation at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok and through the KUDO virtual platform.

The Committee session discussed on the region's environmental challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and focused on necessary actions across four key environmental domains critical to the Asia-Pacific region:

- Raising Climate Ambition
- Safeguarding Ecosystem Health
- Clean Air for All
- Cities for a Sustainable Future.

The Committee reviewed the Secretariat's analysis of these issues and opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation to accelerate progress against the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. In advance of the CED-6, the Environment and Development Division delivered an Executive Training programme from 23-27 November 2020, structured around the aforementioned key environmental domains as a means to inform the discussions at the Committee.

Delegates to the CED-6 made substantive statements supporting strengthening environment and climate action, including ambition levels in Nationally Determined Contributions and the Climate neutrality pledges from a number of member States were noted. The Committee noted priorities on plastic pollution and opportunities to accelerate the application of ocean science during Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and also highlighted the new regional advocacy platforms on air pollution, including the first commemoration of the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies. The Committee also highlighted the important role that urban centres play in achieving sustainable development across the region, including through smart city initiatives.

As key outcomes the Committee recommended that the activities under the subprogramme on environment and development continue to be based on the objectives and priority areas identified in the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific, 2017, and the Regional Road Map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

Further, the Committee also decided to establish a Technical Expert Group on Environment and Development to enhance regional exchange and to mobilize technical expertise in support of the Commission's efforts to accelerate environmental and sustainable development action.

II. Attendance

The Committee on Environment and Development was attended by 56 per cent of all ESCAP members and associate members (35 of 62). Twenty-one delegations (60 per cent) were headed by senior/high level officials from the respective capital, including one deputy minister. In total, there were 167 individual participants from ESCAP members and associate members, of whom 76 were female (46 per cent).

Sixty-four representatives from other entities, including United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations attended the Committee. Of them, 26 were female (41 per cent). Therefore, the total number of participants from both governments and other entities is 231 individuals and the total number of female participants is 102 (44 per cent).

III. Respondent's Profile

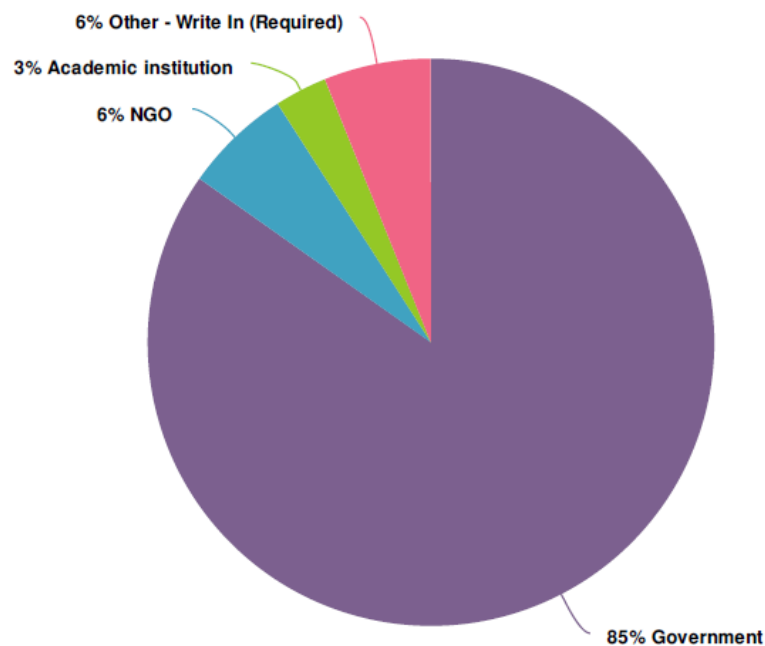
A total of 55 individual respondents from 18 member countries completed the questionnaire. 29 completed all questions and 26 partially completed the questionnaire.

Of this total, 18 are female, 15 are male, one selected the option "prefer not to indicate the sex", 21 did not respond to this question.

Among 33 respondents who responded to the "Type of organization" question, 28 respondents represent government, two represent NGOs, one represents academic institution, and other the other two represent other (public institute and UN).

From 35 respondents who responded to the "Channel of participation" question, 80 per cent participated virtually while the rest were in-person participants attending the sessions

Figure 1: Respondent's profile by entity (percentage)



Delegation (country) by subregional

SEA	SSWA
Brunei, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste	Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan,
ENEA	Pacific
China, DPRK, Mongolia	Tonga
NCA	Others
-	France, UK

IV. Relevance

This component intends to measure the relevance of the event to the thematic areas.

Table 1: Respondent rating of relevance (percentage)
34 respondents

Relevance of the meeting	Rating of respondents in percentage on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)					Average 1-5
	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)	
1. The issues discussed reflected the present development trends/challenges in the environment section in the Asia-Pacific region.	2.9%	2.9%	8.8%	41.2%	44.1%	4.2
2. The issues discussed were useful and are relevant to the needs and priorities for my government/ organization	0.0%	5.9%	8.8%	41.2%	44.1%	4.2
3. The meeting addressed related gender issues and concepts	2.9%	11.8%	32.4%	29.4%	23.5%	3.6

More than 85 per cent of respondents indicated that the issues discussed reflected the present development trends/challenges in the environment section in the Asia-Pacific region with a high score¹. As high as 85.3 per cent of respondents confirmed that the issues discussed were useful and are relevant to the needs and priorities for my government/ organization, while 52.9 per cent confirmed that the meeting discussed related gender issues and concepts.

¹ The score ranges from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). The high score mentioned in the analysis includes responses with score 4 and 5.

V. Effectiveness

The component intends to measure the effectiveness of the event in achieving the results and approach.

Table 2: Respondent rating of effectiveness (percentage)
32 respondents

Effectiveness of the meeting	Rating of respondents in percentage on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)					
	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)	Average 1-5
1. The meeting effectively enhanced my knowledge of the issues discussed	3.1%	0.0%	25.0%	40.6%	31.3%	4.0
2. The meeting effectively promoted regional cooperation on environment and networking among participants	3.1%	3.1%	25.0%	28.1%	40.6%	4.0
3. The facilitators effectively engaged with participants in discussions	3.2%	6.5%	25.8%	29.0%	35.5%	3.9
4. Enough time was available for discussion	3.2%	9.7%	35.5%	32.3%	19.4%	3.5
5. The meeting documents and presentations were of high quality, concise & clear	3.1%	3.1%	21.9%	34.4%	37.5%	4.0

71.9 per cent of the total respondents confirmed that the meeting effectively enhanced my knowledge of the issues discussed. 68.7 per cent indicated that the meeting effectively promoted regional cooperation on environment and networking among participants. 64.5 per cent agreed that the facilitators effectively engaged with participants in discussions. More than half of total respondents confirmed that enough time was available for discussion. 71.9 per cent indicated that the meeting documents and presentations were of high quality, concise and clear.

VI. Efficiency

The component intends to measure the efficiency of the event in terms of logistical arrangements, timeliness, partnership and use of resources.

Table 3: Respondent rating of efficiency (percentage)
32 respondents

Efficiency of the meeting	Rating of respondents in percentage on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)					
	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)	Average 1-5
1. I am satisfied with the administrative and logistical arrangement of the meeting	3.1%	3.1%	25.0%	34.4%	34.4%	3.9
2. The meeting was organized in a timely manner and according to the programme	3.1%	0.0%	12.5%	43.8%	40.6%	4.2
3. The communications from ESCAP to the member States on the preparation for the meeting were effective	3.2%	0.0%	16.1%	41.9%	38.7%	4.1
4. The duration of the meeting was appropriate	6.3%	0.0%	21.9%	37.5%	34.4%	3.9

Around 68 per cent of respondents confirmed that they were satisfied with the administrative and logistical arrangements of the meeting. As high as 84.4 per cent of respondents reflected that the meeting was organized in a timely manner and according to the program. More than 80 per cent of respondents indicated that the communications from ESCAP to the member States on the preparation for the meeting were effective. 71.9 per cent agreed that the duration of the meeting was appropriate.

VII. Performance of the virtual tool

The component intends to measure the quality and performance of the virtual tool in servicing the event.

Table 4: Respondent rating of quality and performance of the virtual tool (percentage)
29 respondents

Quality and performance of Kudo	Rating of respondents in percentage on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)					
	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)	Average 1-5
The virtual platform that used for the meeting (KUDO) was user-friendly, efficient and allowed meaningful participation.	3.6%	17.9%	25%	28.6%	25.0%	3.5
I was able to hear others clearly (audio quality)	3.4%	20.7%	20.7%	37.9%	17.2%	3.4
I was able to see others clearly (video quality)	3.6%	21.4%	25.0%	32.1%	17.9%	3.4
Internet connectivity was satisfactory	3.7%	18.5%	25.9%	33.3%	18.5%	3.4

The duration of the virtual meeting was appropriate	6.9%	3.4%	17.2%	41.4%	31.0%	3.9
The screen sharing feature was effective	7.1%	10.7%	25.0%	35.7%	21.4%	3.5
Interaction tools (live polls, Q&A, etc.) were used effectively	7.4%	3.7%	25.9%	44.4%	18.5%	3.6
Adequate technical support from ESCAP was provided during the meeting	3.6%	0.0%	17.9%	32.1%	46.4%	4.2

Over half of the respondents reflected that the virtual platform Kudo was user-friendly, efficient and allowed meaningful participation. More than 55 per cent was able to hear others clearly, while 50 per cent was able to see others clearly. 51.8 per cent of the respondent was satisfied with internet connectivity. 72.4 per cent affirmed that the duration of the virtual meeting was appropriate. 57.1 per cent agreed that the screen sharing feature was effective. Over 62 per cent confirmed that interaction tools (live polls, Q&A, etc.) were used effectively. 78.5 per cent indicated that adequate technical support from ESCAP was provided during the meeting.

VIII. Concrete actions from Governments to decisions and/or recommendations of the sessions²

Please indicate any concrete actions that your government would take in response to the decisions and /or recommendations of the session.

- My government is working very hard to implement all the agenda 2030 and the recommendations giving
- In spite of so many constraints the job done by ESCAP was splendid. This is the reality that physical presence is the best but due to COVID-19 situation this arrangement was the best. Thanks once again.
- Seek for further actions to contribute to the expert group.
- Actions to address climate change, air pollution, sustainable management of natural resources.
- My Government is already engaged for providing clean environment and development to the people of the country through projects and interventions. Some of the important projects this current government has started plantation of 10 billion trees in five years span, launching of Cities Clean & Green Index (CGPI) through this initiative government hold competition on the given indicators and targets among the cities of Pakistan in the context of cleaning and greening and give awards to the distinct cities and individuals. My Government would take necessary action as per lessons learnt and cases are dealt by the region through the recommendations of UNESCAP for environment and development as well.
- Government response to the decisions or recommendations of the session will be informed properly after discussion.

² answers included are verbatim

- Will identify relevant actions and mainstream them into our policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- establishment of Expert group on environment and development and exchange of their skills and knowledge are useful for us and others.
- Speakers did generally not hone the time limit for interventions, which is of course challenging in a virtual setting.
- The Government of Tonga should/would take the session's decisions and recommendations further by tallying relevant developmental action figures. Country figures from all participant countries should be updated to the CED for further Asia-Pacific collaborations.
- No comments, as tasks / reports are examined for considering appropriate responses & I am not in a position to share my views at the moment.

IX. Suggestions³

The respondents provided suggestions on how to improve the efficiency of the organizational and servicing aspects of the session, including the use of virtual modality

- Maybe country interventions should 3-4 hours don't reduce the statement
- Reduce break times
- Investigate other types of Virtual material
- It really was difficult for me and support team to find technical problem that I faced during the first day. I missed the first day communication. Already I had problem with KUDO when I joined to regional Forum on Sustainable Development. I know we should use proxy for that.
- We hope to engage more constructively in the process but the digital divide, the limitation of the Kudo (which is unfamiliar to most of us and you cannot expect us to immediately understand the participation guide and in spite of the technical run, it is still insufficient to say the least. Maybe more time should be provided for participants to learn how to navigate Kudo. Thanks again for giving us the opportunity to speak.
- The impact of COVID-19 on human health and linkages with air pollution and economic and environmental degradation should be provided clearly by graphs etc. Virtual mode is alright, but background material may be provided during the session.
- Arrange the learning courses in such a way that regional participants can get insight of the environmental climate change issues. other than this try to set courses on Nature Base Solutions and Thematic areas should be Urbanization, Water, Sanitation, Wastewater Solutions and waste management and Air pollution. the air quality of the region is deteriorated with increasing number of industries. Give the recommendation through the courses that development should be based on Lower Emissions Development Strategy and Paths, eco-friendly.
- The virtual arrangement was satisfactory. Only some hiccups due to technical/connection issues, which are beyond our control.

³ suggestions included are verbatim

- More user-friendly and option of VC apps would provide flexibility for participants.
- I would suggest smaller group discussions and reporting the next day following each day's presentation for more participation and Government commitments in view of actions.
- Consider reviewing additional platform and not only kudo.
- For the presentation and materials to be share well before the meeting.
