



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Sixty-fifth session  
23-29 April 2009  
Bangkok

**SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION**

(Agenda item 1)

**Draft report**

**A. Attendance and organization of work\***

1. The sixty-fifth session of the Commission was held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, from 23 to 29 April 2009. The session comprised two segments. The senior officials segment was held from 23 to 25 April 2009 and the ministerial segment from 27 to 29 April 2009.

2. The session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members:

Afghanistan	Nauru
Armenia	Nepal
Australia	New Zealand
Bangladesh	Pakistan
Bhutan	Palau
Brunei Darussalam	Papua New Guinea
Cambodia	Philippines
China	Republic of Korea
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Russian Federation
Fiji	Samoa
France	Singapore
Georgia	Solomon Islands
India	Sri Lanka
Indonesia	Thailand
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Timor-Leste
Japan	Tonga
Kazakhstan	Turkey
Kiribati	Tuvalu
Lao People's Democratic Republic	United States of America

\* *Note:* List of countries/organizations attending the session in the present report is tentative and is subject to final updating on 29 April 2009.

Malaysia	Uzbekistan
Maldives	Vanuatu
Marshall Islands	Viet Nam
Mongolia	Hong Kong, China
Myanmar	Macao, China

3. By virtue of rule 3 of the Commission's rules of procedure, representatives of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Romania and Switzerland attended. Representatives of the Holy See also attended.

4. The session was attended by representatives of the following offices of the United Nations Secretariat: Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Regional Commissions New York Office, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Economic Commission for Africa and Economic Commission for Europe.

5. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: International Trade Centre, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Millennium Campaign, United Nations Office for Project Services and United Nations Population Fund.

6. Representatives of the following specialized agencies were present in a consultative capacity: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Meteorological Organization.

7. The following intergovernmental organizations attended as observers: Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, Asian Development Bank, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, International Organization for Migration and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

8. Observers were present from the following non-governmental organizations in general and special consultative status: Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Baha'i International Community, Disabled People's International Asia-Pacific Region, International Council on Social Welfare, International Federation of Agricultural Producers, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Planned Parenthood Federation, International Trade Union Confederation, LDC Watch, Muslim World League, Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises, World Conference on Religion and Peace, World Veterans Organization and Zonta Club of Bangkok.

9. Representatives of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies also attended the session.

10. The list of participants is given in document E/ESCAP/65/INF/8/Rev.1.

11. In accordance with rule 13 of its rules of procedure, the Commission elected H.E. Mr. Kasit Piromya (Thailand) Chairperson.

12. Following its past practice, the Commission decided to elect the following heads of delegations Vice-Chairpersons:

- H.E. Mr. Nazir Ahmad Shahidi (Afghanistan)
- H.E. Mr. Mashiur Rahman (Bangladesh)
- H.E. Mr. Ly Thuch (Cambodia)
- H.E. Mr. Liu Jieyi (China)
- H.E. Mr. Joketani Waqanivalu Cokanasiga (Fiji)
- H.E. Mr. Lasha Zhvania (Georgia)
- H.E. Mr. Kamal Nath (India)
- H.E. Mr. Anton Apriyantono (Indonesia)
- H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ghasem Hosseini (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- H.E. Mr. Nobuhide Minorikawa (Japan)
- H.E. Mr. Nurlan Danenov (Kazakhstan)
- H.E. Mr. Bounkeut Sangsomsak (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
- Hon. Ali Hashim (Maldives)
- H.E. Major General Htay Oo (Myanmar)
- Hon. Aloysius Amwano (Nauru)
- Hon. Guna Nidhi Sharma (Nepal)
- Hon. Harry Rubasch Fritz (Palau)
- H.E. Mr. Segfredo R. Serrano (Philippines)
- H.E. Mr. Kim Jong-hoon (Republic of Korea)
- H.E. Mr. Alexey N. Borodavkin (Russian Federation)
- H.E. Mr. Nickel Lee Hang (Samoa)
- Hon. Lotoala Metia (Tuvalu)
- H.E. Mr. Bakoa Mariki Kaltongga (Vanuatu)
- H.E. Mr. Doan Xuan Hung (Viet Nam).

13. The senior officials segment of the session met in three Committees of the Whole. The following officers were elected:

(a) Committee of the Whole I:

*Chairperson*

Mr. Yuji Kumamaru (Japan)

*Vice-Chairpersons*

Mr. Janak Raj Joshi (Nepal)

Daw Aye Aye Mu (Myanmar)

(b) Committee of the Whole II:

*Chairperson*

H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark (Islamic Republic of Iran)

*Vice-Chairpersons*

H.E. Prof. J.B. Disanayaka (Sri Lanka)

Mr. John Walton Wasi (Solomon Islands)

- (c) Committee of the Whole III:

*Chairperson*

Mr. Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan (Bangladesh)

*Vice-Chairpersons*

Ms. Noumea Simi (Samoa)

Mr. Gafoor Dharmaputra (Indonesia).

14. The Commission also constituted a Working Group on Draft Resolutions, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ms. Latha Reddy (India) to consider draft resolutions submitted during the session. Mr. Syed Bakri bin Syed Abdul Rahman (Malaysia) was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Working Group.

**B. Agenda**

15. The Commission adopted the following agenda:

**Senior officials segment**

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening addresses;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission:
  - (a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development;
  - (b) Trade and investment;
  - (c) Transport;
  - (d) Environment and development;
  - (e) Information and communications technology;
  - (f) Disaster risk reduction;
  - (g) Social development;
  - (h) Statistics.
3. Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries:
  - (a) The food-fuel-financial crisis and climate change: addressing threats to development;
  - (b) Regional cooperation for shared prosperity and social progress;
  - (c) Summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to countries with special needs;
  - (d) Other matters.

4. Management issues:
  - (a) Draft programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011;
  - (b) Programme changes for the biennium 2008-2009;
  - (c) Strengthening the United Nations development pillar at the regional level: proposed ESCAP subregional offices;
  - (d) Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions.
5. Work of the ESCAP regional institutions.
6. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.
7. Dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission.

#### **Ministerial segment**

8. Theme topic for the sixty-fifth session: "Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in the Asia-Pacific region".
9. Addressing threats to development: key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region:
  - (a) Addressing the financial crisis and its convergence with other threats to development: towards a stable and supportive financial system for development;
  - (b) Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCAP region.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

### **C. Account of proceedings**

#### **Senior officials segment**

16. The senior officials segment of the sixty-fifth session was opened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP. The Executive Secretary delivered a welcoming statement.

#### **Ministerial segment**

17. The Chairperson of the sixty-fourth session, H.E. Mr. Kim Jong-hoon (Republic of Korea), declared open the ministerial segment of the sixty-fifth session of the Commission. Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, read out the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and delivered her welcome statement. H.E. Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of Thailand, delivered the inaugural address.

#### **Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations**

18. In his message, the Secretary-General thanked the Government of Thailand for their generous support to the United Nations over the years to ESCAP. He

complimented ESCAP for focusing on the critical issue of food security and sustainable agriculture, which had assumed increased urgency at this time of economic turmoil. He identified food and fuel insecurity as being part of a triple threat which included the economic crisis and climate change, which needed to be tackled in tandem.

19. The Secretary-General highlighted some of the key outcomes of the G-20 summit, which included the commitment of more than a trillion dollars to deal with the crisis, the reaffirmation of the Millennium Development Goals and the pledge to embark on a green recovery. He called for a truly global stimulus that advanced the interests of all nations. He called for more comprehensive steps to combat the food crisis including improving agricultural production, broadening social protection and ensuring that trade works for the poor.

#### **Welcoming statement of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP**

20. The Executive Secretary warmly welcomed all delegates to the sixty-fifth session of the Commission. She expressed her deep appreciation to the Prime Minister for taking time from pressing duties of state to inaugurate the session. On the occasion of sixtieth anniversary of the Commission's presence in Bangkok, the Executive Secretary conveyed her deep gratitude to Thailand for its commitment to the United Nations, and for graciously hosting the Commission, the regional arm of the United Nations, over the preceding 60 years.

21. The Executive Secretary noted that the region faces challenges that are global in scale, and more than ever, required building upon the collective strengths of the Asia-Pacific region to lead and respond. ESCAP was created so that the peoples of Asia Pacific can meet together, hold together and advance together to build a more inclusive, sustainable future with regional solutions to developmental problems.

22. The Executive Secretary noted that the region was facing a triple threat. For millions of people in Asia and the Pacific, the economic crisis was also a food crisis as jobs were lost and earnings disappeared. There was every reason to believe that the preceding year's fuel/food security issues would return once the economic crisis had abated. Climate change threatened to disrupt weather patterns and was expected to further disrupt agriculture and water security across the region.

23. The Executive Secretary emphasized that times of uncertainty could also be times of opportunity. The region's financial stimulus packages and reforms could be used to address systemic imbalances in order to make development more inclusive for the peoples of the region and more caring of the planet. That provided an opportunity to shift thinking from traditional, sectoral, approaches to one that was more integrated, more comprehensive and more coordinated. Food security issues could be addressed by developing the foundations for viable social safety nets in Asia and the Pacific while sustainable farming practices could help address pressing climate change issues. She noted that it was time to move from individual country strengths to collective regional strengths and to introduce balance back into the economic and social order.

24. The Executive Secretary noted that much progress had been made in transforming the secretariat into a regional hub for compelling analysis, sharing development practices and policy options, and building consensus, norms and standards on a range of economic, social and environmental issues, especially in areas such as organizing debates and dialogues in the region to provide policymakers with timely advice on how to deal with the economic crisis. She also referred to the significant progress in the work of ESCAP on low carbon green growth and the

development of a sustainable energy framework for the region. She also noted that the work of ESCAP on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway Network was critical for regional integration and economic development. The Executive Secretary also referred to the renewed focus of the Social Development Division on social policy and protection issues, in order to set a new social development paradigm for the region.

25. The Executive Secretary expressed her gratitude to the member States for the extraordinary support and encouragement extended to her through increased financial commitment and trust, and for their commitment to making ESCAP strong enough to help drive the development process in Asia and the Pacific. She expressed the view that, through cooperation, the Asia-Pacific region could turn the triple threat into opportunities and emerge a leader in the new global economy, shaping a new multilateral system in an emerging multipolar world.

#### **Inaugural address by the Prime Minister of Thailand**

26. The Prime Minister of Thailand extended a warm welcome to all delegates to the sixty-fifth session of the Commission.

27. The Prime Minister reiterated the steadfast commitment of Thailand to multilateralism and its support to the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies. He complimented ESCAP for performing an invaluable role in addressing and responding to the real needs of the people in the region.

28. The Prime Minister welcomed the theme of the current session, “Towards sustainable agriculture and food security in the Asia-Pacific region”, and looked forward to the policy recommendations that were expected to emerge from the discussions.

29. On the subject of the financial crisis, the Prime Minister briefed the Commission on his participation at the G-20 summit in London, and noted that, while major economies might bear the immediate brunt of the economic crisis, many emerging and developing economies were feeling the effects in their real sectors. Each crisis provides an opportunity to learn and grow so that lasting and sustainable solutions could be found. The food-fuel crisis highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing and transfer of technology on alternative sources of energy, and of sustainable patterns of consumption.

30. The Prime Minister highlighted the teachings of His Majesty, the King of Thailand, on moderation and living one’s own means. To achieve development that is inclusive and sustainable, weight had to be given to different areas of development in a balanced manner. He reiterated the intention of the Government of Thailand to continue heeding the wisdom of His Majesty and strive to create sustainable social safety nets for the Thai people in the gloomy economic times.

31. The Prime Minister assured the Executive Secretary of the unwavering commitment and support of Thailand to ESCAP and its member States far into the future. He expressed the hope that the sixty-fifth session of the Commission would yield satisfactory outcomes, and show that the region had the required strength and unity to overcome the crisis and attain inclusive and sustainable development for all.