



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Subcommittee on Health and Development

First session
1-3 December 2004
Bangkok

**PROGRAMME MATTERS: REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE
FOR 2002-2003**

(Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda)

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

In line with the revitalization of ESCAP and the United Nations system-wide reforms introduced by the Secretary-General in 1997, ESCAP is making a full shift into results-based management. The results-based initiative allows the United Nations, including ESCAP, to determine more clearly and systematically the usefulness, relevance, effectiveness and impact of its work. The new approach also enhances ESCAP's accountability to its members and associate members in the use of resources and the delivery of results within its sphere of influence.

The present document contains the first results-based programme performance report for ESCAP, in line with the new reporting procedures established by United Nations Headquarters. It contains the consolidated achievements and results of activities undertaken under the ESCAP subprogramme on social development, including emerging social issues, and the lessons learned during the biennium 2002-2003. The results have been evaluated according to the "expected accomplishments" of the biennial work programme, as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. The document serves as a key instrument by which ESCAP members and associate members can evaluate the results, relevance and performance of individual subprogrammes.

The Subcommittee is invited to review and comment on the document.

INTRODUCTION

1. In line with the revitalization of ESCAP and the United Nations system-wide reforms introduced by the Secretary-General in 1997 (see A/51/950 and Add.1-7), ESCAP has adopted a results-based approach in the planning, management and reporting of its programme of work. The results-based initiative allows ESCAP to determine more clearly and systematically the usefulness, relevance, effectiveness and impact of its work. This approach also enhances ESCAP's accountability to its members and associate members in the use of resources and the delivery of results within its sphere of influence.

2. The present document contains the first results-oriented performance report of the ESCAP programme of work, in line with the new reporting procedures established by United Nations Headquarters. It contains the consolidated results of activities undertaken under the subprogramme on social development, including emerging social issues, and the lessons learned during the biennium 2002-2003.

3. The present document serves as a key instrument by which ESCAP members and associate members can evaluate the results and the relevance of ESCAP's social development, including emerging social issues, subprogramme. The results have been evaluated according to the "expected accomplishments" of the biennial work programme for 2002-2003, as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.¹ The primary means of determining or verifying the results achieved included a review of formal and informal records (for example, country papers submitted to ESCAP, reports of intergovernmental review bodies and expert group meetings, external or internal project assessments and mission reports); survey administration (including ex post facto surveys and end-of-workshop questionnaires); conduct of formal and non-formal interviews with direct project beneficiaries; and other methodologies, such as Internet research and tracking of the relevant media coverage.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/55/6/Rev.1)*, paras. 15.1-15.38; see also *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/57/6/Rev.1)*, paras. 15.1-15.40.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED FOR THE BIENNIUM 2002-2003

Subprogramme 7: Social development, including emerging social issues

Objective: To strengthen the capacity of ESCAP members and associate members in the development and implementation of policies and programmes to address persistent and emerging social issues in their evolving manifestations in order to enhance the productivity and quality of human resources.

Expected result 1: Higher priority accorded by national and local-level policy makers and programme managers to social development, including emerging social issues

Progress: The results of a survey of participants in the first session of the Committee on Emerging Social Issues indicate that higher priority is being accorded by Governments in the region to addressing health (especially HIV/AIDS), gender and disability issues. Fourteen countries reported having accorded greater priority to mainstreaming gender issues in development policies. Indonesia, for example, held a special session of the Cabinet to develop a HIV/AIDS national strategy for 2003-2007. Twenty-seven countries in the region, under the auspices of the Biwako Millennium Framework supported by ESCAP, have taken concrete steps towards extending human rights protection to persons with disabilities. Ten countries incorporated the issue of ageing as an integral part of their national development plans. The subprogramme contributed to that progress through a series of activities aimed at policy support and national capacity-building. A total of 2,133 participants, representing every country in the five subregions, benefited from a range of policy-oriented workshops organized by ESCAP, including those on ageing and demographics, child protection, adult literacy, gender mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS.

Expected result 2: Enhanced capacity of national institutions to undertake policies to address social development, including emerging social issues

Progress: ESCAP provided advisory services to enhance the national capacity of 15 countries in policy planning and analysis on issues related to follow-up of regional plans of action and international agreements, including on ageing, health, human resources development, gender equality, and population and poverty. Sixteen relevant government officials in Maldives and 20 staff members from national statistical and research institutes in Kazakhstan were also trained by ESCAP to undertake population and sectoral projections to facilitate relevant programme planning. In response to a survey of government representatives at the first session of the Committee on Emerging Social Issues, 12 countries reported that ESCAP assistance had supported effective programme planning.

Expected result 3: Best practices in addressing social development, including emerging social issues, adapted by Governments and civil society to diverse environments

Progress: Ten countries in the region developed plans of action and implementation strategies to address ageing in their national development policies as a result of ESCAP advocacy and capacity-building activities, including the formulation and dissemination of the Shanghai Implementation Strategy: Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 and the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific 1999. The set of recommendations in the Bangkok Draft on rights-based approaches to disability, resulting from regional cooperation and the sharing of good practices, was used as a key working document for the preparation of the international convention on the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. A resource publication on good practices related to political and legal instruments to combat human trafficking in Asia was compiled and disseminated, receiving 28 requests from academic institutions, NGOs and other international organizations within a period of one month. Good practices on measures to eliminate violence against women were also promoted in a subregional training workshop, during which 88 per cent of 27 government and civil society participants, in response to a questionnaire, indicated the usefulness and relevance of the good practices shared.

Expected result 4: A greater ability of national and local personnel to plan and deliver more effective health and social services for socially marginalized groups

Progress: During the biennium, ESCAP trained 120 master peer educators in six countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal) who are expected to reach over 3,600 youth vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, under its project on integrating youth health concerns into non-formal education. Three countries (Cambodia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka) that had conducted the ESCAP national human resources development courses in conflict negotiation skills for youth, carried out follow-up training and awareness-raising for more than 130 youth workers and trainers from government agencies and non-governmental organizations, reaching over 4,000 young people. Following the ESCAP subregional training course on reducing drug abuse and delinquency among youth, four countries (China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam) initiated the development of pilot training programmes for community members, peer educators and service providers. Evaluation showed that the ESCAP national human resources development course on psychosocial and medical services for sexually abused and exploited children and youth had greatly enhanced national capacity in designing, managing and evaluating different types of services for young victims and children at risk of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Furthermore, training guides and materials developed by ESCAP on life skills, HIV/AIDS, substance use and sexual abuse were considered by users as practical and relevant and were in the process of being translated into seven local languages for use in diverse country contexts.

Expected result 5: The development and implementation of multi-sectoral programmes and projects by diverse national and local actors to address social development, including emerging social issues

Progress: Since the extension of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons in 2002 spearheaded by the Governments of ESCAP members and associate members, significant improvements in multi-sectoral collaboration and joint activities among Governments, civil society and international organizations were reported by member countries in 47 review papers submitted to the Committee on Emerging Social Issues at its first session, in 2003. As a result of the regional inception workshop organized by ESCAP and held in Bangkok in November 2003 to promote investment in health, five countries (Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand) expressed an interest in adopting the recommendations proposed during the workshop to scale up health interventions through multiministerial collaboration. In the area of population and ageing, with the participation of 25 countries in a survey, the Shanghai Implementation Strategy was formulated with recommendations in four key areas that require multi-sectoral collaboration to address ageing issues effectively.

Expected result 6: Greater commitments by Governments to further mainstream gender, HIV/AIDS and disability concerns in national policies and programmes

Progress: Fifteen of 16 countries surveyed during the first session of the Committee on Emerging Social Issues reported increases in relevant government policies and directives over the biennium, including the appointment of national focal points. Three countries (Afghanistan, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste) ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In Nepal, a national commission for women and a separate Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare were established. Seven Governments in the region have stated their commitment to gender-responsive budgeting. ESCAP contributed to that progress through a series of regional symposiums, workshops and advisory services to promote gender mainstreaming in all policy areas, including on the ratification of the Convention, and coordination with the women's national machineries in the region. ESCAP also contributed to the successful passage of the landmark Family Law Bill in Fiji through support for a campaign involving the Fiji Law Reform Commission and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. In the area of HIV/AIDS, Commission resolution 59/1 on regional action in follow-up to the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS was adopted by all ESCAP members and associate members, stepping up country commitment and efforts to mainstream HIV/AIDS in national development plans and policies. In the area of disability, five countries and areas (Afghanistan, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Turkey and Timor-Leste) signed the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region, bringing the number of signatories to 46, and two countries (Singapore and the Philippines) officially launched the national decade of disabled persons, following ESCAP's proclamation of the second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012.

Lessons learned

- The in-country training workshops proved effective in transferring and sharing knowledge on demographic analysis, population projections and population information. In-country training can be cost-effective in that a large number of national country-level personnel can be reached by ESCAP. The training modules prepared in one country can also be used by other countries for similar training.
- To translate conference commitments into action, the secretariat needs to invite more than one participant from each country, even if it means reducing the number of countries for each round of regional activity. A more clearly defined strategic approach is needed that has to be based on a realistic assessment of participating countries and end-users to achieve multiplier and demonstration effects.
- For capacity-building activities to be more effective, even greater attention should be paid to selecting the right participants, especially at the decision-making level, for training and policy seminars. A system needs to be devised for contact with participants, which should be initiated before their arrival and maintained over a prolonged period subsequent to their attendance, to track how they were able to use the knowledge, skills and network contacts acquired through the ESCAP activities, overall progress and any further capacity needs that ESCAP could address.
- Civil society participation is important for achieving tangible outcomes in social development. Efforts should be increased to identify more civil society organizations that are able to work strategically with Governments and to promote Government-civil society collaboration, especially on the emerging issues that will need to be addressed in the new bienniums.

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