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Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda

Management issues: Midterm review of the functioning of the conference structure of the Commission

Draft resolution

Sponsored by: Japan

Midterm review of the functioning of the conference structure of the Commission

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission,

Reiterating the Commission's unique role as the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region and its comprehensive mandate as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region,

Noting the importance of further cooperation between the Commission and international, regional and subregional organizations operating in Asia and the Pacific to achieve synergies, build effective partnerships and contribute to greater United Nations system-wide coherence,

Commending the Executive Secretary for facilitating the identification by member States of key issues for further consideration, and possible action, by the Commission,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the secretariat on the midterm review of the functioning of the conference structure of the Commission;¹

2. *Commends* the Executive Secretary for facilitating the revised conference structure to serve the purpose of improving efficiency and attracting

¹ E/ESCAP/67/15.

higher and wider representation from members and associate members and encourages the Executive Secretary to continue to do so;

3. *Reaffirms* that substantive activities of the Commission, including such activities as meetings and studies, should be in line with relevant mandates of the Commission;

4. *Commends* the initiative of the Executive Secretary to seek participation by Heads of State and Government at Commission sessions and associated events, as was done at the sixty-sixth session, and encourages the Executive Secretary to continue to do so;

5. *Reaffirms* that an annual session of the Commission is desirable as it ensures continuity in a fast-changing global economic scenario and serves the useful purpose of providing ministers with opportunities to engage with their counterparts bilaterally, in addition to moving forward the Commission's agenda;

6. *Emphasizes* that discussions during the Commission session should focus on the theme topic, other key issues of contemporary relevance for the economic and social development of the region and policy challenges identified by the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, as well as the review and endorsement of the proposed strategic framework and programme of work;

7. *Reaffirms* that country statements serve a useful purpose by bringing a country perspective, thereby enabling member States to highlight the steps that they are taking to address the issues on the agenda of the Commission session, and calls on the respective chairs to explore, with the assistance of the secretariat, better time management in order to make the most effective use of the limited time available for each session;

8. *Decides* to move towards paperless Commission sessions with the possibility of electronic early delivery of all pre-session documents and communications, with fewer but higher quality documents, and, in this regard, requests the Executive Secretary to submit to the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission at its 339th session a report that would serve as the basis for a decision at the sixty-eighth session of the Commission which would take effect as of its sixty-ninth session and affect the preparations therefor;

9. *Stresses* the importance of timely submission of draft resolutions to the Commission and once again strongly encourages members of the Commission intending to submit draft resolutions to the Commission to submit them to the Executive Secretary at least one month prior to the commencement of the Commission session in order to allow sufficient time for review by members and associate members of the Commission;

10. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to explore practical and cost-effective ways of convening the Asia-Pacific Business Forum in conjunction with the Commission session to facilitate bringing a business perspective to the discussion, at the same time ensuring that the focus on deliberations at Commission sessions, including on the theme topic, is not taken away by side events;

11. *Decides* that the subsidiary structure of the Commission, which consists of the eight committees meeting biennially with four committees meeting

each year, should be maintained until the final review of its conference structure, including its subsidiary structure, at its sixty-ninth session;

12. *Also decides* to reshape the list of issues addressed by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, namely moving the component “Information and communications technology applications for disaster risk reduction” to the agenda of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction;

13. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to ensure that Committee sessions are scheduled evenly throughout the year in order to provide sufficient time for their preparation and avoid overlap with other important intergovernmental meetings, as part of the proposed calendar of ESCAP meetings;

14. *Commends* the significant role played by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission in dealing with all matters related to programme planning, administrative and budgetary issues, including extrabudgetary funding, and encourages the Executive Secretary to continue close consultation with the Advisory Committee;

15. *Decides* to explore ways to strengthen the role of the Advisory Committee and entrusts this task to the Advisory Committee;

16. *Also decides* to entrust the Advisory Committee to review its terms of reference and submit the results of that review to the sixty-eighth session of the Commission;

17. *Further decides* to set clear rules of procedure for the Advisory Committee and for the Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions and, in this respect, requests the Executive Secretary to submit a proposal on each of the subjects to the Advisory Committee at its 337th and 338th sessions, respectively, which would serve as the basis for a decision that will have an effect on its subsequent sessions;

18. *Reaffirms* the utility of making available outcomes of expert group meetings to member States pending the final review of the conference structure;

19. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to carry out further study and analysis, as well as the formulation of a new comprehensive questionnaire to facilitate the final review of the functioning of the conference structure of the Commission, and to submit the findings, including the questionnaire results, and recommendations to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, especially on the following issues:

(a) The duration of the Commission session in order to gain efficiencies in time and cost;

(b) The governance structure of the regional institutions vis-à-vis the respective roles and relevant mandates of the Commission, the committees and the governing councils;

(c) With a view to further integrating the regional institutions into the work of the relevant subprogrammes, the relevance of regional institutions to each subprogramme and committee, and the review of budget allocations to improve support for regional institutions through such mechanisms as staff exchanges and joint projects to support their work;

(d) The feasibility of promoting and developing the role of the Advisory Committee in order for it to assist the Commission in carrying out and coordinating its tasks during the intersessional period;

20. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary, as part of the final review of the functioning of the conference structure, to carry out further study on proposals for improving the utilization of, and participation in, expert group and other meetings, and possible dissemination of outcomes, in order to engage more fully and constructively with member States and to provide a clearer contribution to the intergovernmental process and further strengthen programme delivery.
