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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

Report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission**

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present document covers the activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission during the period May 2012 to March 2013. The Advisory Committee appointed H.E. Mr. Sohail Mahmood, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to ESCAP, as Rapporteur, with the responsibility of presenting the report to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session.

II. Activities of the Advisory Committee

2. During the period under review, the Advisory Committee held six regular sessions and two informal sessions to hear a briefing by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and on the Regional Implementation Meeting. At its regular sessions, the Advisory Committee discussed, among other things, the following subjects:

(a) *Outcome of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission:* In its review of the outcomes of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission, the Advisory Committee considered the major achievements of the session, including the adoption of 11 resolutions as well as a decision on the dates, venue and theme topic for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission.¹ The Advisory Committee commented that the session had been very successful primarily because of the strong partnership between member States and the secretariat, and that discussions had been very fruitful on a variety of issues, including on the theme study, the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and*

* E/ESCAP/69/L.1.

** The present document has been issued without formal editing.

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2012, Supplement No. 19* (E/2012/39-E/ESCAP/68/24), para. 289.

the Pacific, the high-level dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals, and the resolutions. The convening of the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries, in its elevated status as an integral part of the Commission session, had provided a vibrant forum for high-level exchange. The Advisory Committee commended the Executive Secretary and the secretariat for convening a successful session of the Commission, and expressed particular appreciation to the Government of Thailand for hosting the event;

(b) *Preparations for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission*: The secretariat informed the Advisory Committee that the Economic and Social Council had endorsed Bangkok as the venue for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission. The Advisory Committee reviewed the preparations made by the secretariat and provided advice and guidance on the dates and the provisional agenda for the session;

(c) *Resolutions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-eighth session*: The Advisory Committee provided advice and guidance on the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission;

(d) *Proposed calendar of ESCAP meetings and training in the period from January to December 2013*: The Advisory Committee reviewed the calendar and was provided with clarifications on the proposed items;

(e) *Review of the draft programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015*: The Advisory Committee provided comments and suggestions on the draft programme of work for further consideration by the Commission;

(f) *Review of the preparations for and outcomes of the following meetings*:

(i) Third session of the Committee on Transport;

(ii) Third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology;

(iii) Third session of the Committee on Statistics;

(iv) Seventh session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development;

(v) Eighth session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;

(vi) Eighth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;

(vii) Eighth session of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization;

(viii) Ninth session of the Governing Council of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture;

(ix) Ad hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on an Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports;

(x) Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing;

(xi) High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012;

(xii) Asian and Pacific Energy Forum.

3. The Advisory Committee reviewed the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). The Advisory Committee commented that the Asia-Pacific region had played an active and constructive role in the Rio+20 process and that it was high time to build on past efforts to review and follow up on the meeting's outcome. The Advisory Committee also expressed the hope that the outcome document could serve as a guide for all member States to move forward and act in unison on the agreed document. Further the Advisory Committee welcomed the reaffirmation of a strong role for the regional commission in implementing the outcomes and past development-related commitments.

4. The Advisory Committee was briefed by the secretariat and heard from the evaluation team on the review of the conference structure of the Commission, pursuant to resolutions 64/1 and 67/15. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation to the evaluation team for its work and commented that in going forward it was important to prioritize the recommendations and to identify how the recommendations would be implemented. The Advisory Committee agreed to hold informal consultations on the review of the conference structure.

5. The Executive Secretary also regularly informed the Advisory Committee of activities relating to the priority issues of the United Nations, as well as the outcome of her missions to ESCAP members and associate members, her attendance at major meetings and on administrative and budgetary matters concerning ESCAP. The Advisory Committee expressed its continued appreciation for the briefings of the Executive Secretary, noting that it found them useful and informative. On budgetary matters, the Advisory Committee expressed its concern that the proposed cuts to the secretariat's budget that had been mandated by the General Assembly would reduce the effectiveness of the work of the Commission. Some members of the Advisory Committee said that they would urge their counterparts to voice their concerns at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

III. Conclusion

6. In sum, the members of the Advisory Committee actively contributed to strengthening its deliberative and advisory role during the reporting period. The partnership between member States and the secretariat was further reinforced. The imperatives of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and impact were consistently emphasized. The Advisory Committee played an important role in the process of reviewing the conference structure of the Commission and the formulation of recommendations for the Commission's consideration and approval.

7. At the same time, the Advisory Committee remained conscious of the need for stronger measures to ensure fuller implementation of Commission resolutions, improved coordination among all relevant stakeholders and progress on the economic and social agenda of ESCAP, in accordance with the development priorities of member States. Continued constructive collaboration and mutual support between the Advisory Committee and the Executive Secretary helped advance the Commission's overall goals and objectives and enhance its international profile.