



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 May 2017

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Seventy-third session

Agenda item 6

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

73/1. A conference structure of the Commission aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 71/1 of 29 May 2015 on restructuring the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to be fit for the evolving post-2015 development agenda, in which the Commission decided to conduct a review of the reforms initiated through that resolution at its seventy-third session and requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report, which would serve as a basis for that review, on the implementation of those reforms and include recommendations on further adjustments to the conference structure, if necessary,

Recalling also its resolution 71/11 of 29 May 2015 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management and resolution 72/6 of 19 May 2016 on committing to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific,

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

Having considered the note by the secretariat on the review of the implementation of resolution 71/1,¹

Having also considered the reports of the various committees, governing councils of the regional institutions, and the ministerial conferences held since the seventy-first session of the Commission, as well as the reports of the Third² and Fourth³ Asia-Pacific Forums on Sustainable Development,

¹ E/ESCAP/73/36 and Corr.1.

² E/ESCAP/72/16.

³ E/ESCAP/73/31.

Recalling General Assembly resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016 in its entirety on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,

1. *Decides* to revise with immediate effect its conference structure, to be fit for purpose and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁴ in the following manner:

(a) Each session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific shall comprise a senior officials segment followed by a ministerial segment, for a duration not exceeding five working days, and the duration of each segment shall be decided by the secretariat in consultation with member States;

(b) The subsidiary structure of the Commission shall also include the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, the terms of reference of which are annexed to the present resolution;

(c) No more than eight ad hoc ministerial conferences or other intergovernmental meetings shall be held in addition to the regular calendar of intergovernmental meetings during each biennium, and the total number of days shall not exceed 16, unless the Commission decides otherwise;

(d) Subject to the approval of the Commission, a committee may be convened at the ministerial level on an ad-hoc basis to ensure high-level engagement on the issues to be addressed;

(e) Regional institutions under the auspices of the Commission shall include the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management;

(f) Unless otherwise specified by the Commission, its rules of procedure, including those pertaining to the decision-making process, shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the committees and other meetings and conferences convened under its conference structure;

2. *Also decides* that the seating arrangement for the members and associate members of the Commission at its sessions shall be determined by drawing the name of one member for the first seat, with all other members following in English alphabetical order;

3. *Invites* development partners, in particular the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system, to collaborate with the Commission in promoting sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, through all appropriate mechanisms, including active participation in Commission sessions and enhanced cooperation on projects and policies;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to continue to strengthen and promote communication, cooperation and collaboration among the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system in Asia and the Pacific and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by member States in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness;

5. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to continue to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of the conference structure and its congruence with the programme priorities of the Commission with a view to increasing efficiency, effectiveness and synergies of the work of the Commission, keeping in mind General Assembly resolution 71/243;

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

6. *Decides* to conduct a review of its conference structure at its seventy-eighth session, in 2022, with a midpoint review at its seventy-fifth session, in 2019, and requests the Executive Secretary to submit a report in both cases, with a focus on the programme areas of the Commission, which will serve as a basis for that review.

*6th plenary meeting
19 May 2017*

Annex

Terms of reference of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

A. Overall functions

1. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development is an annual, inclusive intergovernmental forum. It supports preparations for the high-level political forum on sustainable development in the context of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

2. The Forum will serve as a regional platform for:

(a) Supporting countries, in particular countries with special needs, including through enhancing their capacity for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Providing a regional perspective on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by identifying regional trends, and consolidating and sharing best practices and lessons learned, taking into account the contributions of other United Nations system bodies at the regional level, other regional and subregional organizations and relevant stakeholders;

(c) Supporting follow-up and review of progress on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals at the regional level through: assessing progress and providing opportunities for peer learning related to the theme and goals that will be reviewed at the high-level political forum; supporting the presentation of voluntary national reviews; and undertaking periodic review of progress of the road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

3. These functions will benefit from inter-agency support including through the United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism.

B. Conduct of the Forum

4. As part of the conference structure of the Commission, the Forum will be convened annually as an inclusive intergovernmental forum ahead of the high-level political forum. The theme of the Forum should be consistent with that of the high-level political forum and the cluster of goals to be reviewed in-depth should be identical to the cluster of goals under the high-level political forum.

5. The Forum will not get ahead of, or pre-judge decisions of the high-level political forum, increase the reporting burden of member States or increase the regular budget of the Commission beyond what has already been approved by the General Assembly.

6. The current format, including the election of the bureau for each session, could be maintained and provide space for multi-stakeholder engagement for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in consultation, as appropriate, with member States.
7. The outcome of the Forum will be in the form of a report with a chair's summary annexed to the report.
8. The Forum may consider subregional perspectives on the themes addressed by the Forum. Preparatory meetings of stakeholders may be convened, within existing resources.
9. The Forum, including stakeholder engagement, will be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission as well as the modalities of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council as long as there is no conflict between them.
10. During each session, a member of the bureau of the previous session could report on the discussions at the intervening high-level political forum and on the conclusions of the previous session of the Forum.
11. The conduct of the Forum will avoid duplication with other regional forums and platforms; in the interest of efficiency, where appropriate, the Forum will be convened in coordination or collaboration with other forums and platforms.

C. Relationship of the Forum with the conference structure of the Commission

12. The report of the Forum as defined in paragraph 7 will be brought to the attention of the subsequent session of the Commission by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Forum.
13. The Forum could receive inputs from the committees that are subsidiary to the Commission as well as other relevant stakeholders.
14. The Forum could benefit from advice provided by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission as a modality for consulting member States between sessions of the Forum.
15. In the years when the high-level political forum meets under the auspices of the General Assembly at the summit level, which is every four years, the Forum may converge with the Commission session in April/May, and the Commission and the Forum will share the same theme, where appropriate. In other years when the high-level political forum meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the Forum shall meet at the senior technical level.
16. If requested by member States, the terms of reference of the Forum may be revised upon recommendation of the Forum and endorsement by the Commission, taking into account new inputs from the high-level political forum and based on periodic review by member States.